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IDEALS OF RELIGION

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GIFFORD LECTURES DELIVERED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW IN 1907

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE

This volume of Lectures, given in 1907 by Andrew Bradley under the Gifford Endowment, has been transcribed from the difficult manuscript, with infinite care, by his sister and sole literary executrix, Marian de Glehn.

Circumstances had prevented him from revising the lectures before his death, and Mrs. de Glehn decided that, at the cost of much that he might have wished done to transform spoken lectures into written chapters, it was all-important in a work of this nature to adhere strictly to his own wording as it stood. The Lectures are therefore now printed as he wrote them for delivery, with only such trifling emendations as were necessary in order to preserve clearness of expression and unity of form.

Consistently with this decision Lecture I, of a purely introductory character, has been omitted ; it was left, not as a more or less finished script, but merely as arranged material for a speaker. It is therefore represented by a summary founded on that given to the Press in 1907 by Andrew Bradley himself, and slightly amplified from his original manuscript.

Mrs. de Glehn died just as the book was ready to be put into type; and the Preface she had planned must remain unwritten.

She was deeply grateful for the invaluable and untiring help of the late Professor Joachim, in all difficulties of her work; and her warm thanks would also have been given to Mr. Geoffrey Mure for his assistance.

30*th September*, 1939

INTRODUCTION

According to the intention of the founder of these lectures Natural Theology in its widest sense was to be their subject, and their condition freedom for the discussion of such questions as the origin and truth of man's conceptions of God or the Infinite, and the belief in revelation. With the whole of Natural Theology so defined no lecturer is likely to wish to deal, and I, like others, must make a selection; but I wish also to extend my subject, and to consider some aspects, not merely of theology, but of religion. These are evidently not the same thing; a man may be a skilled theologian without being specially religious, and equally may be deeply religious without being a theologian at all. Religion is not a mere state of activity of the intellect; it is worship—inward if not also outward. It implies and includes, no doubt, an intellectual activity, some idea, belief, theory, science or logos, concerning the object of worship. But this is very far from being all: religion is a movement of the whole soul. Theology, as such, on the other hand, is simply and solely an intellectual activity just as much as is mathematics. Hence it can collide directly with the natural sciences, history or philosophy, for these are simply

intellectual; whereas religion could not come into direct collision with any of them. I propose then to look at some aspects of religion, and not merely of theology. I say 'not merely' because it is not my intention to give a purely anthropological and historical account of various religions without ever raising the question of the truth of the ideas, beliefs or theories contained in them.

Now I believe there are few things more irrational or more injurious than the disproportionate importance attached, in controversy about religion, to the question of its truth. If religion were merely a theory of the world, competing with natural science or philosophy, this question would be the only question at issue, But if the need to understand truth—the desire for truth—are never solely, mainly or at all the needs that produce religion—if religion is not mainly intellectual—then, even if you could settle off-hand that its ideas are mostly or wholly false, you would not have done with it either as an object of theoretic interest or as a practical problem. For these needs are not disposed of by the demonstration that they have not led to truth. They are still there calling for satisfaction and capable of producing the most tremendous effects.

Is it not better then to begin by inquiring, not into the truth of theology, but into these needs, into the nature of religion, the impulse from which it arises, and the object at which it aims? That inquiry ought to show what part had to be played in the function

of religion by ideas, beliefs, theories; whether or how far it is necessary to that function that they should be true; whether and in what sense those who held them believed that they were true; whether it is impossible that they should all be more or less untrue, and yet religion be the best thing in the world.

There is another reason for the substitution of 'religion' for 'theology', namely that words have a way of bringing silent assumptions with them, and it is so with theology, which means the doctrine or the science of God. The word theology thus suggests that religion is always the worship of God—in a much more specific sense the worship of 'the Infinite, the One and the sole Existence' or even of what we in particular believe to be God; and we know too well how congenial that idea is to the average religious mind, how it is always tempted to assume that religion means its own religion.

Now all through the nineteenth century there had always been arising in one quarter or another, in one or another form, the question: 'Is not religion possible without any belief in a God, any belief that could be called Deistic, Theistic, Pantheistic, Polytheistic, Christian?' Surely that is not a question which serious men can simply ignore or can answer without consideration in the negative, and surely to answer it you must first try to make out what religion is and what are the needs which it has to satisfy.

The mere existence of the Gifford Lectures is significant and startling. The times are not very

far distant when a man of any denomination or of no denomination, or of any religion or of no religion, if invited to speak on religion, not to a private audience of theological students but in public, and invited not to give a historical survey of religious beliefs but to discuss their truth with entire freedom, would have answered, unless his orthodoxy were immaculate or his ambition of martyrdom unqualified, 'I dare not accept your invitation and I wonder that you dare to offer it.'

It is to the nineteenth century that we owe the conditions in which we stand. The earlier part of it, judged by some of its greater men, was a wonderful time, full of confidence and inspiration, and therefore in a high degree creative. It may be that ages to come will look back to it as the seed-time of their own harvest, or the day when the vision of the victories they have painfully to win dawned in such splendour on men's eyes that they were ready to believe these victories already won. In our country, these greater men were chiefly poets and might be called optimistic; the creative spirit is always so. But they do not stand alone. The same intensity of mental life appeared also in others to whom the world bore a different aspect.

A familiar but striking feature in the life of the nineteenth century was the severance of culture (to use Matthew Arnold's favourite term) from the received forms of religion. If we took a list of men famous in literature, art, science and philosophy,

the creative spirits of the century, and asked how many of them habitually or in their work looked at the world from a so-called orthodox point of view, we should find these a very small proportion; and in the rest we should find a gradation either rising from attachment, modified by considerable deviations, or sinking downwards therefrom to indifference and repugnance.

This state of things repeated itself with tolerable accuracy as they descended to the lesser men, and again with modifications among those who, though they did not produce, took a great interest in literature, science and the like, and this severance, though probably less marked in Protestant countries than in Catholic, and probably less marked in Britain than elsewhere, was everywhere obvious, and was, of course, a fact representative of many other facts.

Do we fully realise the result of these facts? Do we realise how utterly different from the picture of the world which would have been sanctioned by an orthodox theologian a hundred years ago, is the picture habitually presented to and active in the average cultivated European mind of today in regard to the beginning and history of the earth and man, or their possible or probable future, or the causation of events, whether usual or unusual, that happen here or anywhere else in the Universe? It is easy to say that all that is unessential and does not concern ultimate matters at all—only opinion; but then this opinion itself is the reverse of orthodox.

On the other hand take the list of famous creators, and strike out from it the names of purely scientific men, consider the philosophy and the sources of literature of the nineteenth century, and ask the question, 'Is it, on the whole, irreligious or even non-religious?' No thoughtful man would answer 'Yes'. On the contrary, it may be answered with much more truth that no secular products of the higher kind since the Renaissance have been so religious as those of the nineteenth century. We have as something apparently characteristic of the nineteenth century this contrast, that the creative minds as a rule have not thought or worked in the medium of the received theological ideas, and yet that their work is pervaded by what in a vaguer sense must be called a religious character.

Meanwhile the century saw a great change in the body of these ideas themselves, a change not officially recognised but none the less effectively used. The consequence is that, if we try to describe the general view of the world held today by the majority of educated people, we shall find it to be the product of three distinct influences which modify one another—that of religion in the accepted sense, that of science natural and historical, and that of ideas derived from philosophy and imaginative literature. And it is perhaps not too sanguine to believe that the further consequence is a decided tendency towards closing the rift between progressive culture and religion.

The Trust Deed, however, did not provide that the Gifford lecturers should be prophets. In trying to arrive at some conclusion I have thought it best to begin at as great a distance as possible from philosophy, to which such inquiries are bound at last to come. We are to begin, therefore, by looking at the phenomenon called religion—what everyone understands by that word—and we are to take it as a mere fact, simply attempting in a general way to discover what it consists in, what are its distinguishing elements, and what needs of human nature it is directed to satisfy. We may then consider briefly what is meant by religion, or by the statement that one religion is higher than another, and finally we may try to come to some conclusion, however tentative, as to what religion is and what it seeks.

CHAPTER I

THE IDEAL OF THE SPIRIT

OUR first task must be to get some notion of the phenomenon of religion, and the nature and limits of this inquiry.

First, then, the fact or phenomenon is religion in the common acceptation of that word.[1]

This phenomenon we are to take at present, as a mere empirical fact which we want to analyse, setting aside all questions about its ultimate nature or its value in human life, about the truth it conveys or fails to convey, and any distinction of truth or value between one religion and another. One difference, indeed, we cannot wholly ignore, that between less developed and more developed religions; but we are to regard it as we should the difference between a simple and a highly complex kind of flower.

On this matter there are two points to be considered by way of preface.

We want to observe the common nature of all forms of religion. But this does not mean those

[1] If we have a private opinion that any ideas or feelings or notions not commonly called religion ought to be so called, we must ignore that opinion. It can be considered in its place; but at present we understand by the word 'religion' what is understood, let us say, by a person making a catalogue of books according to their subject.

beliefs and usages which appear in all religions. Even if there were such common beliefs and usages (which may be doubted), they would be so very few that an account of them would leave out the greater part of every religion. The common nature we want to see is rather the scheme or plan of functions which takes a different shape in each religion, just as in all flowers there is one scheme of organs, parts and functions, though it is worked out variously in the various kinds of flowers.

Next, we are not inquiring into the origin and growth of religion. Its origin—in the sense of its historical beginnings—must be utterly indiscoverable unless we are to reject all the conclusions to which our knowledge points. It must be tens of thousands of years behind us, in a past which has not left, and could not leave, any records of its inward life; and for anything we can tell, the simplest forms of savage belief and usage may be immensely superior to those first beginnings. But even if we could discuss those beginnings it is not the origin or growth of religion that we want to trace, but the common nature or function. And though we want an account of this common nature which will be true of the simplest religions known to us as well as of the most developed, we cannot expect the simplest to show this nature fully. On the contrary, just as the nature of society is least clearly and fully exhibited in the groupings of savages, and the nature of poetry and music in their songs and chants, so it

is with religion. It follows that an account of religion as an empirical fact must be more completely applicable to the higher forms than the lower, and in its application to the lowest must often be taken with some abatement or reservation.

This difficulty is unavoidable, unless you are prepared to take the absurd position that the nature of a thing, for example of a flower, is to be identified with the earliest and simplest sort of flower you can find, and that nothing whatever that comes later belongs to the nature of flowers. And that line of argument will soon lead you to deny the simplest flower too, and drive you back to the position that nothing belongs to the nature of things except what is absolutely undifferentiated, pure matter or pure being or pure thought. The difficulty, then, is unavoidable and it is also great; and, in any detailed attempt at an account of religion, scrupulous care ought to be taken to point out the place at which statements are made which are not fully applicable to the lower forms of religion. But in a brief analysis which makes no pretence to be exhaustive we may be content, perhaps, with a general warning on this head.

This brings me to another matter. The further we go from our own religious experience, the less do we really understand the facts called religion: for we really understand religious experience only by recreating it, and this is more difficult to us, say, with Greek religion than with Hebrew, and much

more difficult with savage religions than with Greek. What this means—and it cannot be too distinctly recognised—is that a mere account of religion, such as we are to attempt, is no understanding of religion and is in many cases no more than the description of its dead shell. If I read an account of a poem in a history of literature, I know something about it; but it is equally true that I do not thereby know the poem at all. I do that only in so far as it relives itself in me and becomes, in imagination, *my* expression. Hence it is possible for a man to know, in one sense, all the poetry that exists in the record of mankind and yet never, in a true sense, to have come into contact at all with the fact called poetry. So it is with religion. I may with sufficient labour know all that can be known about the outward facts of a given religion—its beliefs and acts and institutions; but all this is a mere *caput mortuum* unless I can in some measure relive in imagination the inner experience that formed the soul of this body.

Now to do this is, in many cases, possible only in the most meagre degree, and that is the reason why the study of religion is in some ways so disappointing. We know that such and such a people worshipped, as we say, such and such a god. But what this really means, what they felt in worshipping him, what made them regard him as adorable, what (as we say) went on inside them, how exactly, for example, a man imagined and felt when he bowed

his whole soul before a thing in which we see next to nothing—this we cannot get at: and, if we cannot get at it at all, then I say we are no more in possession of the whole fact of that religion than a perfectly prosaic reader is in possession of a poem. We must recognise therefore that the fact we have to give an account of is hardly ever the whole fact, and is removed from it in various degrees and on the whole most removed from it the more distant a given religion is from our own experience.

And—if I may digress for a moment—these remarks really apply to religion all around us. Men belong, as they say, to the same religion and share the same religious ideas, but their actual religions are infinitely various; and it is both foolish and mischievous to expect them to be otherwise. A man with a buoyant temperament and a man with a depressed one never have the same religion, nor a man born to long for understanding and a man born with a keen sense of beauty. One man is nowhere more conscious of the divine presence than when he is wearing himself out in effort for social reform; to another this is nothing but a painful duty in which he does not himself feel the divineness which he acknowledges to be there, but alone among the hills he knows the peace that passes understanding. How can they have the same religion? Yet for our purpose, or that of the historian, one and all may be grouped under a rough head, for one and all may be, even in the narrowest interpretation of the term,

Christians. That is a very important fact, but it is only a fragment of the whole fact. The whole fact, the actual Christianity, is something infinitely more various than the core of common beliefs and feelings and acts in Christians; it is their whole spiritual experience in its interminable variety. Before that the analyst or historian stands helpless. And what then must he feel when he is confronted by the whole spiritual experience of all the religions that ever were? What a miserable fragment of it can he hope really to understand!

There is another point on which a word of preface is required. I propose to begin by considering religion on its inner side—as a state or activity of the soul, apart from its outward expression. And the soul, of course, as an individual soul. Now this plan may be objected to. But in attempting some account of religion we must, at least at first, look at it as it exists in the individual soul. This is what we mean when we say of a man that religion was the centre of his life. The word, of course, has a different meaning when we speak of the religion he belongs to, or the history of a religion. It then means a body of beliefs, feelings, actions, rites and institutions, which we regard as in some sense a unity having a continuous life lasting through many generations; and we regard the individual as dependent on this unity, or perhaps as one of the organs in which for a time this vaster life exists. Now it is sometimes said that this is really the only

true way of looking at the matter, because religion is always and essentially something social, that of a family, or clan, or city, or nation, or church, and that the individual gets his religion, and keeps it, only as a member of some such body; so that we misrepresent the facts in a very grave way when we propose to examine religion as something existing in the individual soul. In that way, it may be said, you vitiate your analysis at its very beginning, just as you vitiate an analysis of morality if you ignore the fact that it too is social, and if you try to discover what it is by looking at an individual all by himself and asking what is the end and purpose of his being.

But we may fully admit what is true in this objection, and yet remain convinced that, as a matter of method, it is most convenient to look first at religion as something in the individual soul. For that larger religious unity of family, clan, city or church with its continuous life still exists, at any time you choose to take, only in individual souls; they are its necessary organs; it is they who believe and feel and act and sustain institutions. If you set out therefore to describe the religion of a clan or a church, you will find yourself at once describing processes in individual souls, or acts and institutions directly dependent on such processes; and, conversely, if you describe processes in individual souls, you do not thereby deny the membership of these units in a larger unity and their dependence on it

for the character of their religious experience. There seems therefore no objection to beginning in this manner. To do so is also to begin at a point at which on the other method you must soon arrive, and moreover it is to begin with what is simplest and most easy to observe.

But that is not all. This plan is also safer, because, in following it, while you do not deny that in most cases the religion of an individual is that of the member of a distinct religious body, you do not assert that in all cases it is so. And that assertion would certainly be questionable or ambiguous. It is doubtless true that no man makes his religion wholly for himself; he can no more do that than he can make his mind for himself; but it does not follow that there is no religion except that of religious bodies, or that religion is, in that sense, essentially social. Those who assert this and who lay such exclusive stress on the idea of the community or church do more than merely assume that in their own day there is no religion outside the churches, an assumption which might be defended when the word is being taken in the universally accepted sense, but they forget that some of the greatest religious movements in the world's history have sprung from the initiation of individuals who were not, so far as they were initiators, members of religious bodies at all, or who broke with that to which they belonged. The two principal religions of the world now, I suppose, are Buddhism and

Christianity. Can the religion of Buddha, or the religion of Christ, then, be accurately called that of a family, clan, city, nation, or church? It was, on the contrary, at the beginning, the religion of a single individual and no more. And movements of reform, again, such as that of Luther, or of Wesley—must we not say that these generally spring from a religion which was primarily that of individuals and not that of the bodies to which at first they belonged? These are facts of great importance, and their importance is not lessened by the consideration that, in all such cases, the religion of the individual was doubtless formed in part by influences in the general society around him and that, again, it speedily led to the formation of a distinct religious body.

We begin, then, with inward religion, the state or activity of individual souls.

Our best plan in tracing the outline of religion will be to distinguish and consider in turn what may be called its various elements or factors. Only, in doing so, it is essential to remember that in religion what we thus regard apart does not itself exist apart, and also that in the total fact these elements are not added together but fused in one experience; just as in a poem there is not one separate thing called the meaning, and another separate thing called the form, but the two co-exist in such a union that neither by itself could possibly be a poem, and that,

if the one is modified, the other is of necessity modified with it.

That being understood, religion, we may say, contains in the first place an intellectual or theoretic element. This does not mean that every man's religion contains a theory, for this would be quite untrue. 'Intellectual' here means only that in religion there are always perceptions, ideas or beliefs—something which by itself is neither emotional nor volitional. 'Theoretic' has the same meaning. Religion is worship; worship, therefore, of something, of an object; and a man cannot worship this object without perceiving it, or having some image or notion of it, or some belief or knowledge concerning it. That perception, image, notion, belief or knowledge, then, is the intellectual or theoretic element in his religion.[1]

What then is the content of the idea or belief, what is the object worshipped? The obvious answer 'A god or gods' is either false or it tells us nothing. If it means that the object is always something which we should call a god, or which would have been so called by Hebrews or Greeks or by our Teutonic or

[1] It may perhaps be objected that a man may *feel* religious, at some given moment, without having any idea before him of the object of his religion. I will not enter into this question at present, but it will be admitted that, if this is so, the condition is transitory, and is also dependent on the fact that the man *has* at some time had ideas of the object in his mind. We shall have to consider this matter later, but for the present it is best to accept the statement that there is always a theoretic element in religion.

Celtic ancestors, the answer is not true: and if by the word 'god' is meant merely whatever any man as a matter of fact has worshipped, the answer tells us nothing. We want to know the characteristics of this, whatever it may be, that is worshipped: and the mere name 'god' gives no information on that head. We may use the name, however, for the sake of brevity, so long as we remember that we do not yet know what it means, but have to find that out. And it is exceedingly hard to make a statement on the subject that will be true of all religions. Perhaps, however, we may say as much as this:

(1) The object is a being or beings conceived as, in some respect or in respect of certain qualities or powers, superior to the worshipper; usually as greatly superior; frequently and, in the higher religions perhaps always, as incomparably superior. I use the word 'being' here as the vaguest I can find: 'something' would answer the purpose equally well if it had a plural. 'Being' includes animals, plants, fountains, what we should call 'things', as well as ancestors or quasi-human beings, or beings that we should count superior to man. I use the word 'superior' rather than 'higher' because to us the word 'higher' suggests spiritual or moral superiority. But while in the more developed religions the object is conceived as superior to man in that respect, this is not so in all religions. It is a matter of doubt whether in the lowest forms of religion there is any connection at all between religion

and morality. And indeed, even in the higher, such as Christianity, it is not uncommon for the worshipper to attribute to his god what he would be ashamed to attribute to the best men of his acquaintance. What seems essential to religion, what induces worship, we must say more generally, is great superiority in quality or power of some kind—a superiority which excites a high degree of fear, wonder, or admiration. The fundamental thing, in other words, is that the god can do what the man is far from being able to do—whether it is shining, or raining, or knowing, or loving. If we take care to use the word simply to convey this, we may say the object or god is superhuman.

(2) So far I think we are safe. But we are not perhaps quite so when we say that there is a second superiority. But certainly, almost always, and perhaps absolutely always, the object of worship is conceived as having a mode of existence or operation different from that of the worshipper as he knows himself in his ordinary waking life—different, that is, from the mode of existence of that which he would call himself. That this is so in the more developed religions is clear: the god is not only much stronger and usually wiser and better than the worshipper, but he has a different *sort* of existence or operation: thus he is not subject in the same degree, perhaps not at all, to limitations of space or time, or to those of the body such as hunger and thirst and disease and death. And although

all this cannot be said of the object in the lowest forms of religion, yet everywhere that object seems to be conceived as in some way superior in mode of existence to man. In other words it can not only do more fully what he can do, but also what he cannot do at all, or is free from certain limitations and evils to which he is subject. This could not be said, no doubt, if it were the case that religion is ever literally a worship of stones or trees or animals, or even the sun or moon. But this, it seems clear, is not the case. For what we mean by this is that men, conceiving stocks and stones and the rest as we conceive them, worship these things; whereas it is practically certain that they no more do this than we ourselves do. The stone the man worships is not to him a dead lump of matter, but (if we must use our language) a body which is also soul, the two undistinguished; or at a rather later stage, where this distinction is somehow apprehended, the sensible object is the dwelling-place of a spirit, or the sign or medium or instrument through which unusual powers are exerted, different in kind from those which the worshipper himself is conscious of possessing, and different again from those which he attributes to his ordinary fellows or to the mass of things around him.

It is tempting to sum this up in the statement that the object or god is supersensible or supernatural. But, if we use these words, we must be very careful to limit their meaning, and to under-

stand by them merely the characteristics we have just observed. Clearly, in the mass of undeveloped religions the object (in the obvious meaning of the word) is sensible and natural—as we say, a part of nature or a power of nature, if not a thing—though it may be said to have supersensible powers. 'Supernatural' in particular is a dangerous word, not only for this reason, but because it suggests to us an antithesis between nature, or an order of nature, or laws of nature, and something beyond this nature, order, or laws, and perhaps breaking through them. This antithesis, however, does not exist for the early mind, any more than it does now for the mind of a young child, which (I may add) is the best key to the understanding of primitive religion. And at the other end of the scale there are religious ideas which do not include the notion of a fracture of the order of nature. What seems essential, and what we must understand by the words supersensible and supernatural if we use them here, is the contrast between the ordinary and the extraordinary, the superiority of the god in certain powers, and in mode of existence or operation, to the worshipper, to his companions, and to the things around him, as he conceives himself and them in the usual course of life.

(3) We may now go on to a third point. In spite of this essential difference between the object and the worshipper himself, the object is yet akin to him. On one side it shares his nature. Though super-

human, it is human. If it is what we should call a thing, a plant, or the like, yet it is also what we should call animated: it has (like a man) feelings and, *inter alia*, a capacity for putting forth its powers or withholding them. In the stage when the god is a being like Apollo or Thor the kinship to man is obvious, and so it is in most of the highest forms of religion. Even in the philosophical forms of Eastern religion the statement may still hold. The object may be called Being or even Nothing, but it is usually also called Self. It is Thought in its utmost abstraction, thought which has abstracted from every particular content, and thinks merely itself, its own form. That is so more or less in man also, i.e. is human. And in many cases this kinship between man and the object appears in the shape of a belief that man is in some way descended from the god or is, so to speak, his blood-relation, whether this relationship is conceived in a more physical or a more spiritual manner. Apart from that, and in the more general sense, the kinship of the god with man seems to be as essential to religion as the difference—his superiority to man. One might even say in this vague sense that the idea of the unity of god and man is essential to all religion.

We have now, if we have been fairly right, an abstract account of the nature of the object in religion, or the content of the worshipper's idea of it or belief about it. And we may now go on, by an artificial separation, to ask what he believes about

its relation to himself—for without some belief on this head there can be no religion. Not only does he believe the object to exist and to have a certain nature (as we believe of a triangle or a crystal), but he believes it stands in a practical relation to himself and is capable of benefiting or injuring him, influencing him for his weal or woe. And, what is more, in almost all religions he believes that he is in turn capable of influencing it, so that whether he receives from it weal or woe depends in some way and degree on his attitude or action towards it. It is possible for him to be at peace with it or at discord, in communion with it or out of communion, reconciled with it or shut out from it. These phrases will mean very different things in different cases, in accordance with his notion of himself and of it, of what his weal and his woe consist in, of what communion with it means. But without some belief of this kind (we must say) there may be a theological opinion but there is not a religious belief. We might perhaps lay it down that such a belief is not merely that the object exists and stands in a certain relation to the worshipper, but that this may be a working relation. And this formula will be found inaccurate, I think, only when thought is very highly developed, is in fact philosophical.[1]

[1] We can hardly in strictness speak of a working relation, or an influence, on the part of the absolute being in the philosophical form of Eastern religion, for example. The process by which the worker 'rises to it', by negating in himself everything distinct from it, falls not in the object itself but in the world of illusion

We must dwell for a moment longer on this belief in a practical or working relation between man and his god, for it concerns the essence of religion. The more the subject is examined, the more clear, I think, it becomes that the main impulse to religion is not curiosity or the desire to understand or find the causes of things. Nor yet is it aesthetic, the desire to satisfy the sense of beauty or sublimity. These intellectual and aesthetic impulses undoubtedly play their part, but the main origin is practical need, the pressure of present evils, the fear of worse, the wish for unattained goods. And the purpose or end of religion is of the same kind. It is to escape evil and to obtain good: however these words are understood. Taken at a low stage, religion means 'I am surrounded by all sorts of beings or agencies, in one way or another much more powerful than myself and able to hurt me dreadfully or give me delightful blessings; and I can, and therefore I had better, work on these beings and induce them to save me from the first and bestow on me the second'. Taken

which does not exist for it at all. But still, if we are to use the language of that world, as we do in speaking of his 'rise to it', we may equally well say that it raises him to itself, since that which moves in his self-negation is the idea of *it*, and this idea *is* it.

On these cases I need not dwell. Indeed it seems doubtful whether such forms of religion ought to be referred to at present at all. If we exclude from view philosophical interpretations of Christianity, why should we include philosophical forms of Brahmanism or Buddhism, which are worlds apart from the popular creed?

at a very high stage, religion means: 'the sense of my own imperfection and evil is unbearable to me, and I can escape it, and therefore will do anything to escape it, and obtain peace and blessedness, by union with that which is totally free from this imperfection and evil.' But in both cases alike the mere idea or knowledge of the power beyond and of its nature is, broadly speaking, not an end in itself, but a means to that union which, indirectly or directly, is freedom from evil and attainment of good. Of course 'good' *may* include knowledge, but those to whom this is a prominent kind of good are a very small minority of mankind. Hence the idea of the object is essentially an idea of it, not in itself and apart from man, but in its working relation with man. That is the centre, though doubtless about this centre there may gather many ideas or beliefs (e.g. mythological ones) which have comparatively little practical or, for that matter, religious import.

And now, summing up our results so far, we may describe the theoretical element in religion roughly thus: it is an idea of, or a belief about, a being or beings (usually called a god or gods) greatly superior in one or more respects to the worshipper, and differing from him in its mode of existence—and, in this sense, supernatural—but yet akin to him and standing in such a practical relation to him that it is of the greatest importance to him to be in union with it. This union either 'is', or is effected by, religion,

and the idea or belief is the theoretical medium through which it is effected.

Further ideas are of course involved in religion. In addition to this notion of God (his theology, to use the word loosely), the worshipper will have some notion or theory of the world and its relation to his god (his cosmology), especially as the evils he fears or suffers from, and the goods he hopes for or enjoys, arise largely from his own dependence on the world. And he will have again some notion of himself and man in general, and how they came to be, and perhaps what is likely to become of them. But these ideas in so brief an account as ours may be passed by, and some others cannot be conveniently mentioned at this point.

Union with the god, we saw, is effected by religion, and the idea or belief is the theoretical medium through which it is effected. Nothing therefore can seem clearer than that this idea or belief is not religion itself, but only an element in it, and that, when it is not this, it is not religion at all. And it is hard to think that any religious man, at any stage, if he understood these statements would dispute them. He may indeed hold that a correct belief about God is requisite to union with him. This is a sufficiently terrible belief, but very common in religion and not, on the face of it, absurd. But to hold that a correct belief *is* religion would seem possible only through great confusion of mind.

This can hardly be produced simply by language, but—and this has often been observed—it may be facilitated by language. Such words as *πίστις*, *fides*, *Glaube*, belief, are all ambiguous. I may believe in God in the sense of believing that he exists and has a certain nature. Such belief is a purely intellectual state, no more religious than the belief that he does not exist. I may also believe in him in the sense of having (in the Pauline sense) faith in him, assuredly a religious state or act, but by no means a merely intellectual one. Being told, then, that I may be justified or saved by my belief in the latter sense of faith, it is only too easy for me to transfer this power to belief in the former sense, of intellectual assent or conviction. This intellectual assent or conviction is now nearly equivalent to religion itself, and the want of it to irreligion, which means perdition. This confusion, with its results, is written on the pages of Christian history from the time of St. James's Epistle until today: and on many pages it is written in fire and blood.

What now does religion contain besides this first or theoretical element? In the second place, certain feelings or emotions directed to the object of worship. A man who has no such feelings has not religion.

These feelings naturally will vary with the worshipper's ideas regarding his god, the world, and himself (the feelings and the ideas growing up together and determining each other). They will

therefore differ considerably in different forms of religion, one being relatively strong in one religion and weak in another, and they will differ again with the temperaments of individuals and the chances of their lives. But, remembering this, we may arrive at a general truth about their feelings by recalling what we found to be a general truth about their object. This object is something greatly superior to the worshipper, and he believes his welfare to depend on his harmonious or discordant relation to it. The feelings it causes in him, therefore, will be of two main kinds, which we may call negative and positive. The thought of it will depress him because it will make him feel his own littleness, weakness, and need of help, and these may be called negative feelings ; on the other hand, because it is so superior to him in qualities which he would like to have, he must view it with wonder and admiration, and these are positive feelings. And, considering the great gap between him and it, and the difference between its mode of existence and his mode, these feelings may well tend to be extreme and to be accompanied by a sense of mystery. Again, on the one side he will fear it, because he is ignorant of the limits of its powers, or convinced that they are limitless, and because therefore it can injure him so much ; and on the other side it will inspire him with longing, hope or aspiration through the thought of the good that he may attain by pleasing it, or the share that he may have through his union with it in that which

it possesses and he lacks. Or again—especially in the higher stages—if he is conscious of his disunion with it he may feel troubled, self-abased, remorseful or even desperate, while his consciousness of union with it will be accompanied by joy, gratitude, and love. And further, if the object is conceived as in some sense moral, the negative feelings of self-abasement and fear and the positive of admiration and aspiration will combine in what we call reverence. It may be difficult for some of these feelings to exist when the object of religion is conceived in a certain way, and there may be religions of peoples or of individuals in which feelings of the one kind—those I have called the negative, or, again, those I have called the positive—may predominate so much that the one may get the title, say, of a religion of fear, and the other of a religion of love; but it would seem that there can hardly be a religion in which either class is wholly absent.

If now we suppose that with the theoretic element of belief there is also present this element of emotion, are we to say that religion is present? In one sense we may answer 'Yes', for probably no man could habitually feel the emotions in question unless he were in some degree religious. But then he would not be religious merely by virtue of feeling them, but because they would imply something besides themselves; and if a man *could* merely feel them without, as we say, anything coming of it, we should certainly deny that he was religious, though we

might admit that his temperament inclined him to religion. People often talk as if religious feeling amounted to religion, but no simple religious mind, at any stage of culture, if it could understand this position, would assent to it. 'Do you suppose,' the savage would reply, 'that my god will do anything for me if I do nothing for him and merely feel about him?' And the reply of the simple Christian would be practically the same, except that he would ay less stress on outward action and more on inward. A man is not religious, in short, unless his *will* is in tune with his emotions and his belief, unless he submits his own will to the divine will, and tries to fashion himself in accordance with it and to carry it out in his deeds. Till he does that, we should say, he may torment himself with fear and even with remorse, or drown himself in dreams of his god as blissful as a lover's, and none the less remain without religion.

For the present we may ignore the outward acts, for we are considering religion only as a state or act of the soul; but it is emphatically an act of the soul and not merely a state. It is, at any stage, in some sense devotion, the devoting of a man's self to the object he worships. That is willing, and the habitual repetition of such acts of will produces that permanent direction of will, or that inward disposition of character, which we call piety. And piety is another name for the whole of religion on its inner side. This whole, then, whether as the single act of

devotion or as the permanent disposition, is essentially volitional. But there is included in it, fused with the element of will, both the theoretical element of belief and the emotional element of feeling. For the devotion of the will to the object worshipped implies on the one hand an idea of the object or a belief about it, and on the other the presence in some degree of those feelings towards it of fear, reverence, aspiration, or love, which impel to union with it.

We may sum up our account of inward religion, then, as follows. It is an attitude or activity of the whole soul or personality containing a mode of belief about God, and about the self and the world in their relation to him; a mode of feeling concerning him; a direction of the will towards him or a union of the will with his will;—no one of these alone or merely side by side with the others. But, in view of what seem errors on this subject, I will venture to urge that, so far as these three aspects can be regarded apart, the last has a certain preeminence, or occupies the central position. For a mere belief about God is not religion; a man may believe and believe and be a villain. And emotions towards God, so far as they exist apart from acts of will, are not religion and may be a morbid perversion of it. But the devotion of the will to the object, if it exists at all, *is* religion; and it may exist in great strength and purity, and perform its office of effecting the communion of the worshipper and his

god, although his belief may be meagre, confused, and to the minds of others even ridiculous or shocking, and although he is aware of little or no emotion towards his god. Hope and love and even fear may seem to be dead within him, and yet he may devote himself in sadness and shame to the divine will. And, if he does so, doubtless his religion is not what religion may be, but still it is religion.

CHAPTER II

THE IDEAL OF THE MIND

FROM our outline sketch of the phenomenon called religion we come now to consider, equally in outline, what progress in religion means, or how the less developed forms differ from the higher. And here we leave the purely empirical point of view, and are obliged more or less to pass judgment. We cannot avoid this, for to speak of development or progress is to imply a standard by which we judge the phenomena. We need not make this a standard of truth, indeed, which would be to prejudge the question whether all religions are not equally false; but any reasonable man who held that view would still distinguish religions as lower and higher, less or more worthy of human nature at its best, less or more likely to stimulate the believer to a good life. Nor do we really abandon the empirical position or simply judge by a standard in ourselves and our society: we are still observing facts. For what we call the progress from lower to higher is the way in which, as a matter of fact, religions do change. It is a change observable, on the whole, within single religions, and again, on the whole, in the supersession of one by another. Finally, we can

see that this movement, with all its eddies and relapses, still answers to the nature of man and of religion. What we call the higher stage is a working out of the same needs and tendencies that operated in the lower but were not fully satisfied in it. In short, we are judging as we judge when, for example, we call the movement from earlier forms of community to the city-state and from that to the national state 'progress'—not merely because the later is nearer to our private ideal, but because it does more completely what was done less completely by the earlier.

There are, however, certain things to be borne in mind in thinking of this progress. We must not assume that, because one form is higher than another, it is therefore higher in all respects. Progress is not of that nature. It is always a losing of something in order to gain more of something else. When, having admired anything greatly, we find it unsatisfying and transfer our admiration to something better, we are apt to lose our sense of that which really was admirable in the first. And so it is on the larger scale. To suppose that the national European state is superior in every point to the Greek city-state, or Christianity to Judaism or Greek polytheism, or one form of Christianity to another, is blindness. And we may go lower. People who worshipped, in some sense, the sun or a spring or fire or a cat, must surely have seen in them or felt about them much more than most of us, perhaps any of us, see or feel. We can-

not worship the spirits of our ancestors, nor yet our king, but we shall hardly maintain that our piety produces such a flame of patriotism, and such a hatred of life, when duty calls for death, as we heard of in the common Japanese. Special sensitiveness to that which is divine on earth is scattered over the whole globe and down the whole history of man; it issues in the ideal of the one religion which includes all and cannot possibly be exhausted in a single form. But, perhaps we may say, this unrealisable ideal of a single religion would be to re-vivify, within its own sphere and in the spirit of that sphere, the intuitions which had given their peculiar truth and beauty to each of its predecessors.

In the same way the movement within a single religion is never an unmingled progress. When, for example, a religion is definitely that of a limited being like a people, the decay of that people may involve the inward as well as the outward decay of its religion. And when this danger is not equally present or not present at all, when a religion has its main origin in a historical founder, this means—whatever else it may be held to mean—a person of extraordinary religious genius; and his experience, like all the experiences of great genius, in spreading itself into inferior minds, or elaborating itself to suit more logical minds, is always both attenuated and coarsened, even when it is not overlaid with legend or externalised into a ceremonial system.

Lastly, the religion of a higher stage, if you take

it in the concrete in the minds of the mass of its adherents, never belongs wholly to the higher stage. It always contains much that belongs to the lower, relics persisting and reasserting themselves untransformed by the principle of the higher. Thus among Christians the idea of God actually used, as distinct from that explicitly acknowledged, is frequently more Hebraic than Christian; and, to go lower, relics of pagan ideas and customs are found in all Christian countries. Sometimes again, when such relics do not appear, you can still only understand a man's religion by remembering the forgotten religion of his ancestors. For instance the stoicism, grim or cheerful, of the best peasants in the Teutonic parts of our island, which certainly forms a part of the faith they live by, cannot be understood if you consider Christianity alone: it is easily understood if you read Icelandic sagas or the documents of early Teutonic religion. Most of us, too, perhaps have superstitious feelings, however much we may decline to be influenced by them, which may remind us of the religions of savages, dim fears of disaster to come from unknown capricious powers, shadowy notions of things lucky and unlucky, alarms from dreams, coincidences, the unaccountable suddenness with which ideas present themselves apparently totally disconnected with our overt consciousness. These are the spirits of our distant ancestors imprisoned in some Hades deep within ourselves, where they still perform their

mysteries and senseless rites. And not all of us exclude these rites from our religion. A good many hold a mixed religion. One day they believe that the world is governed by perfect wisdom and goodness, and the next they are afraid of the number thirteen, go to a fortune-teller, or refuse to be married in May.

Let us now try to distinguish certain main lines of advance in religion, which we shall find to be connected. And the first will be a tendency to monotheism, which, we should observe at once, does not mean merely the worship of one god but also the belief that there *is* only one. It is natural to the early worshipper to deify everything that strikes him as unusual and greatly superior to himself in some way, without looking for any connection of one thing with another; this idea of connection or order or law is beyond him, and both nature and human nature are to him mere aggregates of independent things or powers. Hence he has a great number of separate objects of worship. And this polytheistic tendency persists, of course, for an immense time, so that much later a man worships, for example, the sun and fire as perfectly independent deities, in spite of what to us is the obvious fact that they both do the same thing—give heat and light. The process towards unity goes through intermediate stages, differing in different religions: the gods come even to be conceived as an order or system in which one is more or less supreme, as in

Greek religion ; or a people from worshipping a number of gods passes to the worship of one only, though it continues for a time to believe in the existence of the others, as with the Hebrews (according to the theory now usual) ; or, in a religion, there may be a belief in two independent principles, though only one of them is worshipped—as in the religion of Zoroaster. Monotheism is reached only with the belief that there *is* only one God. Other superhuman beings may be believed in, as e.g. in Christianity, but not as gods, not as beings independent of the one God. Distinctions again may be admitted in God, but not a distinction fatal to his unity.

The belief in one sole God is evidently the correlation of the perception of the unity in human nature, intellectually of the unity of reason. To the modern mind, accordingly, in which the working of this unity is powerful, any notion of reverting to polytheism in any shape seems at first almost absurd, and any idea even of dualism, of the notion of two independent principles, is also repugnant. Apart from more specifically religious feelings, these ideas are felt to run directly counter to the impulse of the intellect, as seen, for instance, in science, and beyond it in philosophy—the impulse to find unity, to connect everything with one cause or at least in one whole.

Connected with the advance to monotheism is the advance to the idea that God is the God of all men,

not merely of an individual, or a family, or a clan, or city, or nation or race. And here the correlation to which I have just referred is even more obvious. The sense of the identity of human nature, familiar to us but a comparatively late development, goes along with the growth of the monotheistic idea, though the two do not necessarily advance at the same rate.[1]

The influence of this belief in one God as the God of all men is an example of the double-sided character of human progress. It would seem that it must necessarily make for peace and unity: perhaps on the whole it does so now; but in the past, translated into the idea that all men must believe and worship in the same way, it has been the source, perhaps, of more evil than was ever caused by the ambition of kings, or the animosities of peoples—evils so terrible that an impartial visitor from another planet might wonder whether things were not better when each people had its own gods, and viewed the gods of its neighbours, for the most part, with indifference if not with kindness. The idea of the universal god again has another danger of an opposite kind, religious individualism. When a man's deity is the god of his country it cannot be simply his: but the god of all men may become mine in particular, and

[1] This is shown in the history of the Jewish religion. Yet there we see in the post-Exodic literature, as the monotheistic idea becomes purer and purer, the growing of the idea that the God of Israel is to be the god of all nations.

I may be so absorbed in my personal relation to him as to forget that my country's claim on me is his claim. It is not hard to understand how Hegel in his younger days, face to face with the impotent divisions of Germany, was drawn rather to Greek religion than to Christianity. Still, with all its drawbacks, the idea of God as the God of all men unquestionably, as an idea, is the goal of religious advance on one line.

The two movements we have now glanced at are connected, thirdly, with another, progress to the idea of God as infinite. This appears as a tendency to magnify his power, and ultimately to conceive it as unlimited. When there are many gods, or even two, sooner or later the idea of their collision arises: it is the reflection of the war in nature and in human nature. But the one and only God has no rival, as the god of a people may have, nor any one to quarrel with, as Hera quarrelled with Poseidon. Neither is he limited by a Fate in the darkness behind him. And if evil spirits and evil men oppose his will, it is only by the permission of his will. Nature and everything else that is finite is completely dependent on him: he is their creator, or their source, or in some sense includes them. Or else they do not really exist: he alone really is. In one way or another he is conceived as limited by nothing; that is, as infinite.

It would not be difficult to bring all that has been said under a fourth and last heading, progress in

spirituality, advance from sense or from nature to spirit: for it is sense and nature that divide and are multiple, and therefore cannot be one or self-dependent or infinite. The beginning of religion, as known to us, is the belief in 'spirits', its advance is to the belief in spirit; to conceptions drawn from the higher intellectual and moral life of man, but freed (at any rate in intention) from the limits of that life. We may trace the advance in several ways.

(*a*) The god is gradually freed from nature. At first he may be called an animated and conscious natural object—sky or sun or tree or animal. Then he becomes a magnified human mind, still, however, in some special connection with a part of nature and really limited by it. He lives on a mountain, for example, and has to journey about the world. Then he is liberated from nature: he is not a part of it, nor the aggregate of it, nor dependent on it, though it is dependent on him. Hence at last any language which implies spatial or temporal limitation, and has come down from earlier stages, is regarded as figurative.

(*b*) The god, freed from external nature and thought of as like a man, escapes from the natural or physical in man. At first he has a body, just as a man has, though it has greater powers. He has eyes, hands, face and so on, quite literally: but all this, with his dependence on the physical needs and appetites of man, is gradually discarded, and language implying it is regarded as figurative.

(*c*) The notion of his soul, if I may put it so, naturally advances at the same time. At first he is frequently as monstrous and cruel as the forces of nature sometimes appear to us. Then he becomes a powerful monarch, sublime and sometimes gracious, but arbitrary, irritable, given to favouritism, open to bribes, subject to jealousy, envy, revengefulness. We may say that the idea of him becomes more ethical in two senses. He is the revealer and patron of all ethical institutions and of the arts and sciences, and the guardian of justice and truth; then he himself becomes just, kind, and pitiful, and at last is the ideal of perfection. Everything therefore which comes down from an earlier stage and contradicts this ideal has in some way to be removed. But the formula as to the idea becoming more ethical is not wide enough, for there is a parallel advance on the intellectual side. The earlier god, though superior to man, has man's intellectual limitations, and is partly ignorant and subject to misapprehension, sometimes stupid and easily outwitted; much later he is still in blindness regarding the decrees of Fate; at last he is conceived as, in some way, knowing all things and knowing them completely, the future equally with the past and present, the ideal of intelligence as well as will. But we must add that he is thus conceived with the proviso that his immeasurable distance from humanity must not be obscured or diminished.

Perhaps we may sum up, so far, by saying that

religion appears to tend to an idea of God as one infinite perfect spiritual being, the source in some sense of nature, and both the source and the goal of humanity. And the worship of this being, it appears, would attain completely the end of religion, which is to procure for the worshipper freedom from his limitations and from evil, through union with something which itself is free from them.

(*d*) Parallel with these changes in the idea of God run changes in man's notion of himself, and of the good and the evil which he seeks from, or in, the union with the god. He is at first mainly a natural being and his good is to him chiefly the greater security and fulness of this natural being. The notion of his good is gradually expanded and dignified and moralised, and the more natural elements are subordinated to higher ones, until the most spiritual are regarded as alone unconditionally good, and the others as receiving goodness only from relation to them. Hence there is a growing recognition of the fact that the highest good is attainable only by sacrifice of the lower, and even that this sacrifice is an essential part of it and therefore not evil at all. And in Christianity this idea of sacrifice, of affirmation through negation, appears in a sense even in the conception of God. Thus, with the rough truth that alone is possible in these broad statements, we may say that religion itself, the union with God, becomes more and more an end in itself. At first it is scarcely more than a means to natural good ; then you have

stages where it is realised that in itself it is a great good, though it is also a means to prosperity (success in war and the like) and this prosperity, though semi-moral, is still an independent good ; then there grows the perception that union with God is the first good, that a large self-denial is necessary to its attainment, and that, if necessary, it is not only right but the most desirable of things to give up everything else in order to attain it. 'Evil' now means separation from God, and nothing is really evil except that, or what leads to that : 'good' means union with God, and nothing is in the end good except that and what leads to it or results from it.

Hence, if we consider the religious feelings, we see that these change their character ; and we may also say, again with a very rough truth, that the negative feelings tend to lose and the positive to gain. The fear of natural power passes into fear of the moral superior, whose displeasure means inward pain as well as outward adversity, and this into fear of separation from the supreme object of desire or love. This does not imply that the negative feelings in some form can be lost, but that the positive gain upon them, as God is regarded more and more as the highest good.[1]

Hence, finally, the notions of worship are gradually spiritualised. But in the instances of prayer and

[1] One has to ignore, of course, in such a general statement as this the great differences that arise from the character of peoples, e.g. Greeks and Hebrews.

sacrifice we have already seen examples of this advance, and it need not detain us. Its goal would appear to be the perception that union with a spiritual being can exist only in purely spiritual activities, and that outward worship can have religious value only as the means to such activities, to their completion or expression.

One general remark remains to be made, before we pass on, regarding all that has been said as to progress in religion. The point is of importance but it also involves difficulties, the consideration of which would be out of place here, and I will deal with it as briefly as possible. Progress is made in religion, as everywhere, by negation, and the new idea is therefore apt to appear as the blank denial of the old one. But, throughout, we must be careful not to assume that this is more than a transitory stage or that it forms the goal of advance. That, we must say, is rather the restoration of the old idea within the new one; that is to say, the restoration of it not in its original shape but as an element of the new one. Thus, if the multiplicity of polytheism has to be denied, that does not mean that the goal of religion is an idea of God as abstract unity, whether personal or impersonal. If God from being national becomes universal, that does not mean that all peoples or individuals must be in equal measure his instruments, or that he is not manifested in national history as much as in individual. If God ceases to be material, and if the life of mere sense has to be

reckoned un-divine and to be sacrificed to the spiritual, that does not mean that in the most developed religion matter is regarded as evil or incapable of manifesting God, or that physical health and what is called worldly prosperity may not be elements in spiritual life. And if man comes to find the unity of his being in his spirit, that should mean, not some hidden centre or residuum of his concrete activities, but one life or force pervading all of them. In all cases the abstract denial, necessary perhaps as a stage, tends to pass into re-affirmation, in a changed form, of that which was denied, and if this does not happen that which was denied tends to assert itself afresh, not in subordination, but in its original and now perverse independence.

We have now in a preliminary manner completed our outline of religion considered as a state or activity of the soul. We may call it inward religion. But there remain the outward expressions of this activity, and the outward media connected with it. They will constitute outward religion, a phrase which we must use without implying by it any shade of depreciation, or any opinion that outward religion is inessential, or that inward could be complete or even exist apart from it.[1]

We shall, however, arrive most rapidly at some account of outward religion if for the moment we

[1] The phrase means merely religion as it can be observed from without or shows itself without.

ignore its relation to the inward and treat it as merely outward. And to do this let us take what lies nearest to us and imagine how a stranger quite ignorant of the religion of this country might describe its outward worship. At certain recognised times, he would say, a man goes to a recognised place, where he meets with others assembling for the same purpose. Here, partly perhaps directly, and at any rate through a recognised person or persons, they offer prayers, read passages from sacred writings, and join perhaps in a sacramental action. Their prayers they sometimes speak of as offerings or sacrifices, and some of them also describe the sacramental action as a sacrifice. In prayer a particular bodily attitude is adopted, and in some assemblies many gestures or movements are used by the ministrant. Most of the worshippers also have at some time been baptised; that is to say, some part of the body has been touched or washed with water. This, of course, would be a merely external description and also a partial one; but it may answer our purpose. Equally from the outside, and equally partially, we may say that generally in religion we find an outward worship in which there is prayer or sacrifice; we find gestures and movements, lustrations and other rites; sacred times, sacred places, and frequently sacred writings; often special persons considered sacred, by their office or in some other way; generally some definite community united in and by the worship. All this and

more of the same kind we may perhaps include, for the sake of brevity, under the head of outward worship, as consisting in that or closely connected with it, but we must not assume that this is the whole of outward religion.

We need not examine outward worship fully, but I must touch briefly on its relation to inward religion.

In the first place, to the great majority of worshippers of all times and places, though doubtless more at some times and places than at others, it is a matter of immense importance and a most vital part of religion. A savage would be much amused or horrified by the suggestion that his gods would dispense with prayers or offerings, and the average Christian would hardly agree that a man may be religious though he does not go to church. Any tendency to depreciate the importance of outward worship is out of harmony with religion in the accepted sense of the word—the phenomenon we are considering. It is natural, therefore, that in the study of religion as a phenomenon of human history outward worship or the cult should occupy a very large space, a space as large perhaps as that given to ideas and beliefs, and in recent times perhaps even larger. And these two aspects, outward worship and the theoretical element of religion, in this study overshadow the aspects of inward feeling and devotion. This is inevitable, for they are much more open to observation ; but it is also unfortunate, because it exaggerates the great importance attached

to beliefs and outward acts of worship in religion itself. It is unfortunate also in this way. The beliefs and outward acts, in the case of religions not shared by the observer, often appear to him absurd or immoral. He is ignorant of the feelings and the inward devotion which accompany them and which no considerate man would wholly despise, and so he is tempted to regard all strange religions as mere superstitions, or perhaps to extend that view to all religions alike.

There remains in regard to part of an outward worship (e.g. prayer and sacrifice) the question 'How is it related to inward worship?' This question is a very difficult one, and I doubt if an answer can be given to it which would be true of all religions. Can we describe the one, for example, as merely the expression of the other? If we think of such a prayer as 'Thy will be done', or of the sacrifice of a contrite spirit, it is natural to regard these as the expression of the inward devotion. But even in the higher forms of religion prayer is often a request for some more or less outward good. In the lower it sometimes appears as a present made to the god, a kind of flattery which is thought likely to dispose him to make a substantial return. Or, again, it is a species of food which strengthens him, and so enables him to operate more vigorously in favour of his worshippers. Or it may even be a magical charm which forces him to do what is wanted whether he likes to do it or not. Obviously you

cannot describe such prayer—nor perhaps prayer on the whole—as a mere expression of inward worship.

Sacrifice, again, some of us may think, must be purely spiritual. That which is sacrificed is the natural desire, or rebellious will. Or, if it is something outside the worshipper's soul, his time, or money, or health, it is not supposed to have any value to God except as a symbol of inward devotion. God cannot care about having the man's money as money, or his health as health. But sacrifice in religion is usually much more than this—or rather much less, for the hardest thing to sacrifice is a man's heart. The offering at one stage is perhaps like the prayer or gift that pleases the god, not because it betokens anything, but because it is itself. He likes a sweet smell, or the taste of blood, or he wants nourishment just as the worshipper does or as the ghosts of his ancestors do. Or, perhaps, the sacrifice is not this, but an actual communion, as we should say a physical communion, in which the life-blood of the slaughtered beast is regarded as also the life-blood of the god, and becomes by being devoured the life-blood of the worshippers. In none of these cases, which are typical of many others, can the outward worship be called a mere expression of inward religion: it is either a means to union with the god, or it is that union itself. And even when prayer and sacrifice are regarded in what some will think the most spiritual way, they seem still to be

more than a mere expression. They appear—at any rate in many cases—to be required in order to make the inward act complete, to clinch the man's resolution, to commit his will fully, even to show him clearly what it is that he wants. And so they are really part of the inner act and not only the sign of it,[1] just as expression in art is not really mere expression, that which is to be expressed is only fully formed by being expressed.[2]

Thus it seems that whether you take the outward worship in its crudest or in its most spiritual form, still it cannot in strictness be distinguished from inward religion as a mere utterance or a mere symbol. But the relation in which the two stand to one another appears to differ so greatly in different cases that it is difficult to see how to include them all under one head, and therefore one can only describe them indefinitely as outward worship.

This is all that can be said here of outward worship. But the question remains: Is outward worship the whole of outward religion, or only a part of it?

Outward worship is sharply separated from the rest of outward life. It is called, for example, sacred or religious, the rest profane or secular; and this

[1] Or again it is a communion of man and God, for to the worshipper the strength by which he prays that God's will may be done, or sacrifices his heart to God, is not his own but comes from God.

[2] This bears on the question whether religion may not be complete though merely inward.

sharp separation, which of course extends also into the inner sphere of belief, emotion, and volition, is characteristic of the phenomenon of religion. But in most of the higher forms, apart from misunderstanding or perversion, religion would not be regarded as complete, or even as genuine, if the inner state produced only an outward worship, and did not flow over into action on the whole field of life. True religion, we hear, for example, is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. To the true worshipper of the civic or national god good citizenship was a religious duty. And a famous modern philosopher, reproached by his landlady for absenting himself from divine worship, replied 'My good lady, thinking too is divine worship'. Perhaps we may say that, on the whole, outward religion is held to consist partly in outward worship, but partly and essentially also in the doing, as a religious duty, whatever it is right to do—that is, in religious morality. And so the sphere of outward religion will be the whole of life; nothing can fall outside it, except through the defect of the worshipper; just as the spheres of morality or art or philosophy are limited only by subjective defect, not in their own nature.

But we can only say this on the whole, or speak of it as what ought to be. For, in the first place, in human development something which we must call religion appears sooner than what most of us would call morality, and the earliest undeniable morality

seems not always at any rate to be referred to a divine origin or sanction. Religion, then, seems to have a private sphere of its own, not co-extensive with life.[1] Again, at the other end of the scale, we sometimes find a detachment of religion from active morality, both in the higher religions of the East and, as we all know, in Christianity. This would seem to arise usually not from lack of religion but from mistakes in theory. And the mistake reappears often enough in accounts of religion. It is not a rare experience, though a melancholy one, to read elaborate descriptions of religion which treat it as though it were a thing shut up in a hothouse, and never so much as mention the actions of a good man. Yet in any but a low stage these surely must be counted to belong quite as essentially as does outward worship to outward religion.

We have now considered in outline, first, religion on its inner side as an attitude or act of the whole soul, theoretical, emotional and volitional ; and then religion on its outward side as outward worship and religious action.[2] It remains, finally, to notice a religious belief which could not be considered

[1] I use guarded expressions because the matter is not so clear to me as it seems to be to some anthropological authorities, while I am not competent to check their statements of fact. It is, however, certain, I suppose, that in very low stages there is nothing like the intimate connection between morality and religion which is general later.

[2] In so doing, prayer was considered only as it appears in outward worship ; but it may of course be also considered as an element in inner religion.

until we had glanced at outward worship or the cult.

This, to use the word in its widest sense, is the belief in revelation. In well-nigh all religions, if not in all, it is believed that man's knowledge of the god and of his will, including the forms of worship and religious morality, comes from the god, is divinely communicated. And this is regarded as absolutely essential: the security and sanctity both of the worshipper's beliefs and of his worship (the means of union with his god) depend on it. So also does the possibility of his knowing the future, his ignorance of which is one of the most prominent evils of life from which he desires freedom. The revelation may take place in many different ways, most obviously by the occasional appearance of the god, or by his incarnation, but again through oracles, messengers, signs that have to be divined, dreams, visions, supernatural events, an inward inspiration issuing in prophecy or in sacred writings. In all cases there is something extraordinary, wonderful, in later language, miraculous. The original revelation is handed down by tradition, and in the less developed religions is lost in antiquity, and described only in mythology, but in other cases, such as Christianity, Mahommedanism, Buddhism, it attaches to historical figures. Any attempt to depart from it is commonly regarded as in the highest degree impious and therefore dangerous, though religions differ according as they attach the greater

importance to the revealed ideas or to the revealed cult.[1] The main general idea is that the religion must not be altered, though the content of revelation may be explicated. If the fact of change is forced into consciousness, there is disquietude or alarm. If, on the other hand, the need of change is felt, it tends to take the form of an attempted return to the original revelation, unless there is the intense consciousness of a new one, when, given an appropriate soil, a new religion may be founded, as in the case of Buddhism and Christianity.

[1] The Greeks, for instance, were comparatively lax about the former.

CHAPTER III

THE INADEQUACY OF NATURAL RELIGION

In a former lecture I explained that, after sketching in outline the nature of religion in the usual acceptation of the term, I proposed to take up another point of view and to consider whether, if all such religion is dismissed on the ground of its contradicting positive knowledge, or going without reason beyond it, any sort of religion is consistently possible; and if so, how far it can do what we have found to be done (with or without intellectual justification) at least by some of the higher forms of religion we have been examining. We are now to begin this task: but before we come to it, I wish to say a few words from a point of view more in sympathy with these phenomena, though this is not meant as a final point of view.

We have so far been looking at these phenomena in the barest abstract and outline, but this is a very different thing from the full and coloured picture which anyone sees who has been trying to learn in detail about the religious ideas and customs of man in the past and present. What is the impression it makes on him if he tries to keep his mind open, but

in his study sets aside for the time (in order that he may get the phenomena clearly before him) the ideas by which perhaps he would seek to interpret them? The spectacle must surely seem to him very strange and disconcerting. We know what religion at the best is to its votary, the truest and most sacred thing in the world; but we wander on among ideas and beliefs, of which some appear not only utterly absurd but disgustingly immoral; others fairy tales, sometimes silly, sometimes charming, rarely elevating; others noble and profound in meaning, or lit by gleams of sunny or perhaps unearthly radiance, yet, as they stand, incredible, irreconcilable with what we know, or have good ground to believe, about the universe; a few at most (in many religions, none) that seem to us either perfectly true or perfectly good. And of the rites and customs we can say nothing better. Some appear childish or even senseless, some horrible, bloody or obscene; and those which symbolise a deep or beautiful meaning seem too often to sink into petrified forms or mischievous superstitions. And the outcome of it all, while in part of priceless value, is manifestly in part shameful; unworthy hopes and degrading fears, cruelty, hypocrisy, madness, and bloodshed, as though man formed a notion of God only to become a torment to himself and the enemy of his brother.

These impressions and reflections are partial, no doubt, but even when the most painful of them are dismissed, or are softened by other thoughts, there

remains, I think, an overwhelming feeling of the strangeness of the spectacle—somewhat the same feeling that comes over us when we spend an afternoon in a great Museum of Natural History, which shows us not only the wonderful creatures that are, but reconstructs for us the still more extraordinary that have been. There we see marvellous beauty and grace and design, and then what seems merely ugly, shapeless, or even monstrous. And the latter, and in some degree the former too, strike us as exceedingly strange and sometimes grotesque, as if they were made in jest. It would never have occurred to us even to wish to make a great many of these creatures; they remind us only of what creates itself in our dreams—sometimes in our nightmares. 'Yes,' we say, idly musing, 'the imagination that works in nature is like the imagination that works in dreams. It creates exquisite things, far beyond the power of our conscious mind, but it has a great liking for the quaint and grotesque and even the horrible.' Well, that is much what may be felt in studying perhaps the majority of religious phenomena, when our moral repulsions are ignored, and also any theoretical interpretations we may cherish.

But perhaps when we leave the Museum the impression of strangeness, though it does not vanish, suggests further thoughts; and these may have some bearing on the spectacle of these strange religious phenomena. 'After all,' perhaps we say to ourselves, 'why should you be surprised, even

if you think the nature that produced all this is in some sense divine? You surely did not suppose that *your* notions of beauty and ugliness, or (for that matter) of good and evil, are final and absolute standards? Perhaps if you could enlarge them, these things that seem to you so ugly or monstrous would not seem so. We must be true to ourselves, no doubt, and not call a thing beautiful if we see it as ugly, or good if we see it as evil; but we know very well that we are apt to take our first rough judgments for final, and then to discover that they were very narrow. The music that on a first hearing was almost meaningless, or downright repulsive, we discover to have that difficult beauty which is sometimes the highest. The peaks that almost all men used to regard with mere aversion and dread, and that some still perhaps find cold and cruel, are quite otherwise to him who sees more. The whole history of art is, in one aspect, the discovery of beauty in apparent ugliness and harmony in what sounded discordant. To an empty mind tragedy is mere sensation, to a contracted mind a mere exhibition of evil, but, to anyone who can see, a glorious as well as a terrible thing. As for these creatures or phenomena being quaint or grotesque, do you know any reason why the power that produced them should not be pleased with quaintness and grotesqueness? But as for their being ugly or monstrous, doubtless they have not the kind of beauty that a gazelle or a hummingbird has (and presumably you would not

wish everything to be exactly alike), but you find them ugly or monstrous largely because you are too ignorant or indolent to imagine the surroundings in which they live or lived. The hippopotamus is not the war-horse, but the author of the Book of Job could see in him the grandeur that you blaspheme. In like manner if you could see the strange religious ideas and customs, that startle you, in the minds that they inhabited, perhaps they would appear to you, not certainly the fitting medium for your worship, but no such unfit medium for theirs, something possibly as true and good as they could apprehend, though neither true nor good for you.'

As I said, I am not putting forward this train of thought as anything final or wholly satisfactory; for example, we ought never to take for granted that a religious product is due *only* to religious needs; and its defect may be due to the unconscious co-operation of other influences. Nor am I suggesting that the impression of strangeness can be entirely removed, or that what shocks or horrifies us in these phenomena can ever be seen to be good; but before passing to judgments of another kind on these phenomena, I wished barely to indicate another direction in which an interpretation might be sought.

We come now to those other judgments, and to the conclusions which may flow from them.

'Religious ideas', it may be said, 'differ in regard to their beauty and their moral significance,

but as regards their truth they are substantially on one level. They are all mere projections of man's mind into the world without. Certain things in nature make a strong impression on him, and his imagination, stimulated by fear, admiration, or hope, magnifies them into gods whom he has to conciliate. Or he finds within himself certain powers, impulses, and wishes, checked by the resistance of nature or of his fellows, or by their conflict with one another: and he unconsciously constructs a being consisting of these powers, impulses and wishes, fully satisfied, and he appeals to it to give him what he cannot get for himself. And if he is of an intellectual turn of mind, finding that he cannot discover the causes of all things or cannot connect them all in an intelligible whole, he imagines a mind which is, or knows, their single cause or unity. But in all cases he makes God in his own image, and is himself the father of the being he calls father. His deities are in the end his own wishes, and at the best he abases himself before the wish that he counts worthiest or most comprehensive. The psychology of his constructions is quite easy to follow. As to their truth, no one supposes that the great mass of them are anything but fictions, and even the most refined, the idea, for instance, of an infinite spiritual being, is probably of the same kind. In any case it clearly goes beyond the limits of positive knowledge, and we possess no rational ground for believing it true.'

From this kind of view, which may be held of course with various modifications, more than one practical conclusion may follow, and I will set out three.

First we may say: 'It is time to have done with religion. It was well said long ago to be composed of a geological dream, a historical romance, and a treatise on morals. Its sole value lay in the last of these, and that we have in our own moral ideas. Moreover there we have it in its pure form. For these ideas are not only wider and higher than those of most religions, and perhaps of any, but they are freed from the false or, at best, ungrounded belief that they represent an external authority. Our knowledge of the world outside us is one thing: our moral ideas a totally different thing. They rest on themselves. They are not theoretical assertions, but judgments of value. They make and involve no statement about the world, and therefore cannot, like religion, conflict with our knowledge of it. They represent our wants and wishes for ourselves and others, which is all that religion could do: or rather, they represent those wants and wishes which we feel or find to be superior to the rest and to claim precedence and authority. To work for their realisation is to work for our own good and that of the race, for the progress of humanity. How far they can be realised we cannot tell, for that depends partly on outside forces. But this cannot affect our duty, for certainly their realisation depends partly on

ourselves and our efforts. We and our successors can increase good and diminish evil, and may hope at least to succeed, perhaps even to succeed entirely. And even if we had reason to think that the task was already accomplished in some infinite being elsewhere, how could that help us to accomplish it here under conditions totally different from his? '

We may call this the view of morality in place of religion. ' Much of this is very true,' it may be answered, secondly, ' but it does not follow that religious ideas, or rather the more beautiful and moral among them, should be wholly dismissed. They have the great merit of presenting those higher wishes and aspirations of ours as bright and ideal realities, and not as mere ideas or commands ; and that is both comforting and stimulating, just as the ideal figures of painting and sculpture and poetry both satisfy and inspire us more than do precepts or theories. And even the momentary illusion that these beautiful and moral religious ideas are more than our own wishes and aspirations, and in some way represent a power beyond us and a future that is assured, is not to be despised : some illusion of the kind is perhaps even indispensable to us under the hard conditions of human life. Certainly it is imperative that the illusion, if we admit it at all, should, as in the case of painting or poetry, be momentary and not serious. But, if that condition is observed, there is no reason why we should deprive ourselves of the great advantages which religious ideas

have certainly brought in the past and still may bring.'

Thirdly, and lastly, we may take a view still more hopeful, but in one respect quite different from these two. It affirms the possibility and necessity of religion, though it denies, or at least dismisses from view, for the purpose of discussion, religion in the usual sense, the religion we have been analysing. It would say to the adherents of the two views we have sketched something like this: 'What you call religious ideas are ideas about a realm beyond our knowledge or about what is called the supernatural. One of you says they are to be dismissed: the other says some of them, though dismissed as truth, should be retained as poetry. But I say that, quite apart from them and within the region of the knowable and certain, we may find objects of religion, and that, since without religion life is a poor affair, we ought to find them. For the essence of religion is a certain attitude of mind, an attitude of awe, admiration and devotion. That is the fundamental thing in it. But the direction of these feelings to one particular sort of object, a supernatural or non-phenomenal object, is not fundamental nor in the least essential to religion. Wherever that attitude is, there is religion, whatever the object may be.

'Now within the sphere of our positive knowledge there is plainly that which forms an appropriate centre for wonder, awe, and admiration. There are, first, the objects of our higher desires and aspira-

tions; and we may sum them up as goodness, truth, and beauty, which, so far as attained, we approve and love, and which we long to attain more fully. This is in essence the same as what you call morality. And these objects we take simply as you do, as being supremely desirable and making a claim on our devotion, without saying or implying anything as to their existence or foundation in the world outside us. But, secondly, there is what we actually and scientifically know in the world outside us, in nature. In nature itself we find and can verify something very like that which the old religions told us to worship beyond it; a unity of powers unbounded in time and space, in other words, a power infinite, omnipresent and eternal, which produces phenomena often far more beautiful and sublime than anything we can produce. In its presence, therefore, we may feel, if not moral emotion, yet in the highest degree wonder, admiration, awe; while towards the ideals summed up in goodness, truth, and beauty we may feel not only this but love and devotion. We *may* then have religion, and we ought to have it; and so far as this religion implies statements about the world outside us, it cannot possibly conflict with scientific knowledge, for it is founded on it and goes not an inch beyond it.'

These three views agree in certain points. They set aside religion in the accepted sense. As I shall have to refer to this often some shorter name for it is wanted; and as 'supernatural' is very ambigu-

ous, and as the holders of these three views object to it mainly because it professes to go beyond what they would call the sphere of phenomena, we may call it ' non-phenomenal '. In the lower form it is not strictly so, but the question really concerns only the higher. The three views agree in setting it aside and in insisting that we must not go beyond the phenomenal sphere. They agree also in laying great stress on morality or moral ideals, for we may without straining include under this head the object of all the higher human aspirations referred to. We must accordingly, in considering the substitutes for non-phenomenal religion offered by these views, bear in mind two questions : Can these substitutes do what non-phenomenal religion does? and, secondly, Do they themselves succeed in avoiding that reference to the non-phenomenal to which they object? And do those of them which profess to be *merely* moral and to ignore even nature, succeed in ignoring it? I need hardly point out that, however these questions may be answered, the replies will concern these substitutes alone, and will not tell us anything of the truth or untruth of non-phenomenal religion. That would be a further question.

I do not mean to enter on a formal criticism of these views and the substitutes they propose, nor on a formal discussion of these two questions. We shall have to criticise the views, but my first object is to learn from them. For whether they themselves are satisfactory or not, they all seem to contain

elements of truth which (as well as their errors, if they are in error) may contribute to positive conclusions on religion, may tell us something about any religion that can satisfy us now.

Let us begin with the positive idea which appears in the third view and separates it from the others—that there may be religion apart from any belief in the non-phenomenal or supernatural, because religion is, essentially, not an attitude of mind towards a particular kind of object, but simply an attitude of mind. This idea, it appears to me, must be accepted as perfectly true and highly important. And I should express it thus, in the language I used in analysing accepted religion :—religion is worship or devotion. Wherever you find those feelings and the direction of will and action that we described, you find religion, whatever the object may be, natural or supernatural, phenomenal or non-phenomenal. Worship of a phenomenal or of any finite object we may find to be imperfect religion, but it *is* religion.

I will try to make this clear by an illustration of an extreme case. Bring before your mind what you would call without any hesitation a religious attitude, and consider whether these statements hold good of it. (1) The worshipper feels himself to be entirely dependent on the object of his worship, submits himself wholly to it, and would not for anything lose it or be cut off from it. (2) He is prepared, if necessary, to sacrifice to it everything in

himself which is alien to it or impedes his devotion—his comforts, pleasures, health, the cultivation of his mind, and even his dearest affections. And (3) he finds in it, in return for all his sacrifices, what he longs for, a satisfaction which, whatever resignation it has involved, is still complete. This does not profess to be a full description, but something like this may be gathered from the language of the most religious men.

Now what do you suppose I was trying to describe faithfully in these sentences? A miser. And, paradoxical as it may sound, I am confident that you will find the description almost entirely correct. The miser does feel himself entirely dependent on the object he worships, submits himself wholly to it, is agonised at the thought of losing it. He is not only prepared to sacrifice to it, but often does sacrifice, himself, his comfort, pleasure, health, the cultivation of his mind, even his dearest affections. He does find in it what he most longs for, a complete satisfaction, or one incomplete only in the sense that, though he possesses this object and is possessed by it, he desires to possess it more and more. The description then is true of him, and it is also true, as far as it goes, of a very religious man. And the miser has in his own way, but in a high degree, on one side at least, that without which religion is impossible, the central essence of religion.

This consideration will be found to apply to other cases—to any case, in fact, where a man is truly said

to worship or, as we often say, make a god of a phenomenal object, person, thing, or pursuit. We often exaggerate, no doubt, and use these phrases when the absorption in the object, and the devotion to it, hardly deserve them, where the religion is half-hearted. But it does not cease to be religion for that, any more than the half-hearted Christian is to be called a man without religion. It is possible also for the religion of the visible phenomenal (as we may call it) to be, like other religions, polytheistic—though not highly so: a man may worship riches or social position at the same time that he idolises his child. But in its most developed form this religion, like other religions, is monotheistic, and we may confine our attention to that, and to the highest degree of it, and we should not think specially of the miser.

Now before we inquire into the imperfections of this religion, I should like to make two remarks on the positive side. And, first, I must insist in all seriousness that, whatever its defects, there is in it, just because it is religion of a kind, something of value which we are bound to recognise. This adoration of a person or thing may be most dangerous; it may narrow a man terribly, and diminish, if it does not destroy, his usefulness in the world; but, to say nothing of the fact that the same may also be said of higher religions, he has discovered in a fashion the secret of life—that life means self-devotion. And in that he is exceptional. The life of slothful,

respectable idleness or frivolity, where the soul gives itself to nothing—*that* is atheism. But this man is not an atheist. His religion may be a perversion, but something great is perverted in it. Its end may be tragic; but to be capable of tragic error is no little thing, and we regard him, if we have eyes to see, with something of the fear and pity of tragedy. He gives to the finite, if you will, what only the infinite can claim: but he gives his infinite soul and not a stingy fragment. In a word, under however baffling a disguise, there is in him the greatest thing in the world—religion.

These cases, secondly, seem to point to a conclusion which now we must accept regarding any more satisfactory religion. Any such religion, clearly, at our stage of history, must so far resemble this that its object must be something the soul *wants*, and something capable of exciting passionate desire and giving intense joy. It cannot, that is to say, be merely or even mainly a power to which we have to submit or resign ourselves; it must be a power in which we also gain the satisfaction of our own souls or find ourselves.[1] And further, like the object of this imperfect religion, it must be wanted for its own sake, and not as a means to something else. The miser worships money for itself, not for its uses. All he wants is to possess it and be with it. And so it is with the man who worships political power, or fame, and with the mother who idolises her child.

[1] Schleiermacher.

Regarded merely on this side, these imperfect religions are nearer to what religion now must be than any worship of the non-phenomenal in which the worshipper regards the object mainly as mere power and therefore mainly with fear, and tries to please it, not because he aspires to it as something intrinsically desirable, but in order to get from it a good beyond itself, or avoid the further result of its displeasure. If that is a sound conclusion, it is a considerable one.

Why, then, are these religions of the finite, the visible phenomenal, imperfect? Doubtless for many reasons, of which we need consider only two. Whether we judge them by comparison with the highest forms of non-phenomenal religion or by the tendencies visible in themselves, they have two characteristics which appear as marked defects. And these defects appear both in the object of the religion and in the state of the worshipper. The first is the obverse of the excellence just mentioned, i.e. that these are religions of aspiration or love. It is that the object lacks power. It certainly exists: and here there is no need for faith as opposed to sight. And it has abundant power over the worshipper, and, when it is a person, can agonise him with fear of its displeasure. But it has not enough power over the world. On the contrary, being itself a mere finite thing among others, it is at the mercy of power outside it. Any day he may be robbed of it, or it may sicken or die. In fact, on

this side, it is in no way superior to himself. And the consequence is that he is in perpetual disquietude concerning it, and, whatever else it can give him, it cannot give him peace.

But peace is exactly what the people commonly called religious want, and say that they find. They go to religion because they cannot get this peace and the sense of security anywhere else, and there, as an observer cannot but see, they find it. And they do so because they are sure that the object of their religion is far more secure against injury and has much more power over the world than they themselves. It seems clear, further, that this security cannot be complete, and that religion cannot be considered perfect, unless its object is even perfectly secure because entirely self-dependent or infinite. And we have seen that the progress of non-phenomenal religion is on one side a movement towards belief in such a being. Considering these things, then, we may perhaps arrive at another general conclusion. Any religion will be in some degree imperfect and will fail to do its whole work, unless its object, besides being the object of supreme desire or aspiration, is also conceived as unlimited in power.[1] Judged by this standard, the religion of the visible phenomenal is clearly on one side imperfect in a very high degree, for the power of its object is extremely limited.

But it is also imperfect on another side. For its second obvious defect is that, instead of going be-

[1] We need not discuss here the exact meaning of this phrase.

yond morality, it falls short of it. Neither the desire of the worshipper, nor the object of his worship, can be called in the full sense good. And this, which will be admitted at once, appears in several ways. The object is not one he is bound to worship, whatever his personal wishes may be. On the contrary, his relation to it is merely personal ; he wants it merely for himself, and, instead of uniting him with others, it isolates him. It itself clearly is not goodness, nor can he connect it harmoniously with his desire for goodness. Hence, on this side again, it fails to give him peace. He is divided in himself. And, if this is not so, if his conscience does not in some measure protest against his religion, that, we should say, is so much the worse for him. It means that his passion has perverted his moral nature.

If now we generalise again from the judgment we thus pass, the result would seem to be as follows. However matters may have stood in the past, no religion *now* can be satisfactory which is not the further development and consecration of morality. Worship, though it may be more, cannot be less than aspiration towards, and devotion to, goodness ; it cannot collide with that, and must include it. Its object, phenomenal or more, human or superhuman, finite or infinite, can contain nothing which our conscience condemns. More: if it is not itself the ideal of moral effort, yet it must be conceived as connected in some positive manner with this ideal. Otherwise, at the stage we have reached, we could

not worship it even if we wished to. And, though we are bound to enlighten our conscience as much as we possibly can, and not to forget our necessary ignorance, still we cannot judge against conscience, we must accept its judgment of good and evil.

This conclusion, I believe, accords so completely with what is deepest in us that it would probably be generally accepted now, if not stigmatised as a commonplace. But, if we accept it, we must realise what it means. It means that we cannot accept anything as divine merely on the ground that it is, or proceeds from, omnipotence. For mere omnipotence is no moral ideal; resistance to mere power is frequently a moral obligation. It means that the statement that a thing is God's will is simply irrelevant, unless we also believe that God's will is good or directed to good. It means that it is monstrous, as well as ludicrous, to credit God with feelings and actions which we should not dream of suspecting in the best men and women we know, and should be heartily ashamed of in ourselves. It means refusal to attribute to the object of worship anything, vouched for on whatever ground, which our conscience condemns, and refusal to tamper with conscience by admitting that such an attribution can possibly be true. These are far-reaching results. And they cannot be avoided by appeals to our ignorance of what a god's will free from all our limitations may do. The appeal is certainly very just; but what it properly amounts to is that if we accept the

attribution to this will of something which our conscience condemns, we also assert that this something is not what, on the face of it, it purports to be but totally different, though we have not the knowledge to say what it really is. But, if that is so, it is a misuse of language, and morally a dangerous misuse, to speak of it as what it purports to be and is naturally understood to be.

We may now leave the kind of religion we have been examining, a real religion but a manifestly imperfect one, and, starting from the point we have reached, we may ask whether we can find some form of religion which shall be consonant with and rooted in morality, but which shall rest merely on human experience, find its object within humanity, and assume no knowledge and require no faith which goes beyond phenomena. Certainly, it would seem, some such religion exists, and, although men who hold it would describe it in very various ways, we may perhaps determine with a rough truth its general type by using alternative phrases.

'My morality', we may say, 'is my obedience to the higher law within me, the moral law or duty; the suppression of whatever within me opposes it; and the effort to carry it into action. Or it is my effort to realise in myself and others what I regard as the higher in human nature, or that true happiness which is to be found only by the subordination of certain gratifications to certain others. Or it is the identification of my particular will or my personality

with the good will in me which binds me to others.' If we ask what the object aimed at by this good will is, or what that true happiness consists in, it seems to be, in the end, human life raised to its highest possible level, or human possibilities fully realised; and this we may call, for the sake of brevity, human perfection or ideal humanity. If again we try to define this more exactly, we may say (without pretending to be able to imagine it in detail) that it would include, first, morality itself, raised to its highest power—goodness of will or character exerting itself to the full in all the relationships and social functions of life. It would also include the highest and widest attainable degree of what we may call culture, the exercise of the intellectual and the aesthetic powers, the realisation of truth and beauty as well as goodness. All this would of course imply whatever outward conditions are necessary for it, and would include the happiness which must accompany it. My morality then will consist in my effort, in spite of inducements to the contrary, to contribute to the attainment of this ideal in myself and others, the character of this contribution depending largely on my particular qualities and position in the world.

The corresponding religion will be this morality intensified, so that a man feels that his whole life depends on this ideal object and his relation to it. Set against it, he is of no account; when by his sloth or sin he is out of harmony with it, he is at

discord with himself, unhappy and remorseful; when he is in concord with it and devoted to it, he is at peace with himself. In what particular way a man represents to himself the object worshipped will vary, and is a matter mainly of psychological interest. One might say that he worshipped Duty, and that would mean the power that lays on him the obligation to serve this ideal. Others may think directly of the ideal itself, of the perfection of man; and others of the powers which work for its realisation and also form part of it, e.g. the Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love, to which Blake says we pray in our distress. These human powers like Duty or Freedom, and like Beauty and Truth (which a few would single out as special objects of adoration), are all either forms or objects of that good will with which the man identifies himself. And perhaps the simplest account—I am not aiming at philosophical precision—is that he worships the good will as operating in himself and others, and leading on to its own perfection. Lastly, if the worshipper means by the word 'humanity' this, and whatever else is consonant with it in human beings past, present, and future, and regards these human beings as forming somehow one being, he may worship humanity as in the religion of Comte.

Now unquestionably this kind of worship thus sketched is religion in our present sense. And in the last hundred years it has been the religion of many men who have lived noble and fruitful lives

in the strength of it, though many would say, and some of them would themselves have said, that they had no religion. No one, unless from ignorance or prejudice, will deny this, however much he may be convinced that his own religion contains all that is true in theirs, and something more.

And three things at least may be said in praise of this religion. Its basis is a conviction of the intrinsic value of certain activities, and primarily of those which, using the word in a broad sense, we may call moral. This surely is the basis of any religion that can now satisfy. There cannot be any question of removing this basis; there can only be a question of adding to and remodelling what is built on it. But people deeply attached to their Christian beliefs seem frequently to be unaware of this. They are so ready to quarrel with the idea that goodness, when it reaches a degree that is adorable, is human, and that its adorableness may be perceived without a special revelation, that they forget that their own religion rests on this adorableness, and that the content of an idea is precisely the same whatever its origin may be. Would it not be truer and more fruitful to take the position that the good will which these men worship, though conceived no doubt in too limited a manner, is, in fact, so far as it goes, precisely the same thing as what Christians call the Spirit of Christ, or the Holy Spirit; and though it may be called human, its humanity, according as it does accord with the fundamental principle

of Christianity, can hardly prove that it is not divine?

Secondly, from the nature of the case this religion, unless it organises itself into a church, is free from the diseases which infect in some measure ecclesiastical religion. And, thirdly, it lays the greatest stress on those activities which appear in social duty and in the effort to attain truth and create and appreciate beauty. And therefore it is free from and ought to help to correct those defects (if they exist) which have been so often attributed to Christianity in most of its usual forms—its dualism, its hard and fast antitheses of church and world, earthly and heavenly, sacred and profane, spirit and flesh, and its denial of any independent value to earthly life. These defects, it may be said, have been exaggerated, have arisen, so far as they existed or exist, from misunderstanding, are not inherent in the Christian principle. That may be, but that they have existed abundantly, and still exist though less abundantly, can hardly be denied : and in fact their existence has been the cause of the alienation of many naturally religious minds. The religion of ideal humanity is entirely free from them, and the influence of the strain of thought and feeling which issues in such religion is also a main cause of the diminution of these defects in popular Christianity itself.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELIGION OF IDEAL HUMANITY

IN the course of the last lecture we made a fresh start with the idea that religion consists essentially in self-devotion, not in self-devotion to one particular kind of object—a non-phenomenal one. We accepted this idea and verified it in cases where a man is said to 'worship', 'idolise', 'make a god of' some finite person, thing, or pursuit. This, we found, *is* religion; but on examination it showed itself to be imperfect religion, mainly because the object of worship is fatally deficient in power over the world, and because the religion is not moral or more than moral, but unmoral or immoral.

We then passed to a second kind of religion, based on morality, but still not the worship of anything non-phenomenal or beyond man—a purely human religion therefore. The object here may be called human perfection, or ideal humanity, human nature completely realised and enjoying true happiness, though we saw that what the worshipper has before his mind in worship does not of necessity take this form; he may worship, for example, the powers, human and moral, which work towards the realisation of this ideal and will themselves be perfected

in it, powers all describable in the end as forms of the good will.

We saw that this *is* a religion, and also that, if it is not entirely satisfactory, still, any more satisfactory religion would not be the denial of it, so far as it is positive, but must contain it while also going beyond it.

We now pass to some examination of it, and we must at once observe that there are many persons who hold it confessedly as in part a matter of faith. That is to say, it involves, in their case, beliefs, about the world, or universe, and man's place in it, which go beyond positive knowledge, though they do not contradict it and are held to be far less extensive and hazardous than the beliefs of supernatural religion. With these persons, however, we are not here concerned, but only with those who hold this religion in its strict form, and according to whom its peculiar advantage is that it does not involve any faith (in that sense), implies no belief about the universe or nature of things, but is purely human. 'Human beings, we ourselves,' they would say, 'produce or create the ideal we worship; and, again, the *content* of this ideal is human nature or ourselves perfected. We freely set it before ourselves, it is not imposed on us. We say and believe nothing whatever about its relation to anything outside us. It is not based on theoretical judgments as to what *is*, but on our judgments of value, as to what is desirable, good, satisfying, what should be.

It cannot therefore conflict with our knowledge of what *is*.'

Now it is obvious at once that on this view, consistently held, the religion before us cannot do all that other religions have done, because its object is defective in the element of power. Power it certainly has, for the constructions of morality are solid and immense ; but then they are confessedly imperfect, and the ideal which they only partially realise is, as such, something that ought to be, and possibly is to be, but at present is not. Nor has the worshipper, whatever he may *hope*, the slightest guarantee that it ever *will* be, or indeed that it may not gradually die away or be blown into star-dust to-morrow, for he excludes any belief as to its relation to the nature of things. Meanwhile there is plenty of evil within him and around him. Non-phenomenal religion provides the worshipper with an escape from this evil in his identification of himself with something actually existing and free from it. But the worshipper in our human religion has no such escape, for the something he worships does not yet exist. To say this is not, of course, to imply that his religion must be false, and he may reasonably reply that it is the best available, because we have no ground for belief in a power actually existing and free from evil. I am only pointing out—what he himself admits—that his religion cannot do what (legitimately or otherwise) other religions have done and what it is clearly the ideal of religion to

do. His religion, that is, is on one side very imperfect.

This admitted, the further questions will be (1) 'Does this religion after all keep within the bounds assigned to it? Does it involve no belief, however latent, about the nature of things? Does it really confine itself to judgments of value and keep entirely to the human sphere?' And (2) where its object is said to be merely human or ourselves perfected, and again to be produced, created, freely set up by man or ourselves, what are we to understand by 'human', 'man', 'ourselves'? But, as before with the religion of the visible phenomenal, I do not wish simply to criticise this religion, but also to see what can be learnt from it about any religion that can now satisfy, and also to deal, in connection with it, with some of the ideas contained in those three views from which our examination of religion in the wider sense began.

(1) In the first place, then, when the object of worship here is said to be a 'human' product, this cannot mean that, for the worshipper, it is the product of fancy, whether his own or that of other men. If he so regarded it, he could not regard it as his moral ideal, something which lays an obligation on him, neither could he worship it. To this he would at once assent; and I dwell on the point mainly for the sake of the general conclusion it carries, and in order to dispose of the notion mentioned earlier,

that religious ideas, though regarded as mere constructions of fancy, should yet be retained for the delight or exaltation they bring; just as we value highly in this way the creations of poetry or other arts, though we are well aware that they are mere inventions. Now, accepting for the moment the statement that we do regard these creations as mere inventions of fancy, I wish to insist that to treat an idea thus is not to treat it as a religious idea at all, nor even as a moral one. For (you will be weary of the assertion, but there is no assertion which in these matters requires more repetition) morality and religion are not mere contemplative activities; they are movements of the will, the obedience or devotion of the will to an object; and you simply cannot regard as rightly claiming this obedience or devotion what at the same time you regard as a mere invention of fancy. To retain religious ideas, therefore, as mere beautiful fictions, is not to retain even a shred of their religious value, and the proposal to do this has no connection with the problem of a positive religion.

'Well, but', it may be objected, 'surely we do find more than aesthetic pleasure in some creations of poetry and other art? We get inspiration from them, and they even affect our will; for the ideals they represent appeal to us as the very thing we should wish to be, and that stimulates us to imitate them, and to try and carry them out in our lives. In a sense we may even worship these ideals; and so

the work of art is a vehicle of worship, though not itself the object of worship.' 'Certainly,' I answer, 'this is so, but then it is so because you do not really regard the work of art as a mere fiction or product of fancy. Or, if you prefer to put it thus, you regard the work of art itself as such a product, but you do not so regard the ideal which it represents. Shakespeare made or invented his Cordelia; if he had never lived she would not have existed. But the ideal qualities embodied in Cordelia he certainly did not make or invent. And, if you thought them the mere product of his fancy, the picture of them would have no effect upon your will, either morally or religiously.'

This is clear enough in a case where you can actually name some of the ideal qualities exhibited in the fictitious character. But it is equally true where that which is represented or symbolised is much less distinctly conceivable or is not clearly conceivable at all. Take, for instance, the passage where Wordsworth speaks of

> Something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air.

If a man thinks this 'something' a mere fancy of Wordsworth's, that need not destroy or perhaps diminish his sense of the beauty of the passage, but he certainly will not be affected by it religiously. If he is thus affected, it is because, knowingly or not, momentarily or permanently, he takes this

'something' to be more than any man's fiction—though that need not mean that he takes what the poet says of it to be a perfectly adequate expression. We have the same thing when a man is religiously moved by music—I mean purely instrumental music. The composer made or invented it, but it conveys to the hearer (as perhaps it did to the composer) something which he could not define, and probably would not think of defining, but which stirs in him this sense of religion. And the composer did not make or invent that: if the hearer thought he did, his religious feeling would die in an instant. On the contrary, he would probably say, that made the composer and his music, and in some sort reveals itself through them.

You cannot, then, treat religious ideas as you do poetic ideas and yet treat them religiously, if, that is, you take poetic ideas to be mere fictions or inventions. Whether, supposing you regard poetic ideas as more than fictions, as imaginative symbols of realities, you can or should regard religious ideas in the same way, this is not the place to ask.

(2) Let us return to the object of worship in the religion of ideal humanity. This, we saw, though human, is certainly not, to the worshipper, the creation of his or any other man's fancy. Are we to say, then, that it is made by his fancy out of his wishes or desires, and that it is thus ultimately produced by them, as according to one view the God of super-

natural religion is produced? Clearly not:—in a moral religion that cannot be, for the object of worship does not consist of these wishes or desires fully gratified. It consists (if we use the word 'wish' at all) only of the higher or good wishes or those that the good will in the man approves; or it consists in those powers in man which work for the realisation of those good wishes. And they can be realised only by the subjugation of many other wishes. It is therefore quite inaccurate to say that the object of worship in this religion (or for that matter in any moral non-phenomenal religion) is man's wishes imagined as perfectly fulfilled. And indeed, strictly, it is inaccurate to speak of wishes or desires at all; for a moral religion has not to do with what I merely wish, but with what I, as religious, *will*, and one may even say that what I want in religion is to be rid of the clamour of my mere wishes and desires.

Let me put this in another way. The ideal in this religion, we saw, may be defined as human life raised to its highest level, or the fullest development of humanity. But that cannot mean the greatest possible affirmation or intensification of human life, or of men taken as empirical facts, as they stand. That would be the perfection of folly and wickedness as well as of wisdom and goodness. Nor again can it mean the intensification of man's natural being, for that is a collection of impulses, each of which wants its own gratification and cares nothing for that of the rest; and simply to develop that

would be to develop anarchy. The idea of a merely affirmative progress of man, though it is so popular, is evidently, when you think of it, an empty delusion; and the perfect man, supposing him possible, would be harmonious only because he was the result of a prolonged process of conflict, in which the higher in him had subdued the lower and made it serviceable to other ends than its own.

And this the religion we are considering implicitly recognises, for it is a moral religion; it starts from the basis that we set an absolute value on certain activities (or on a certain kind of happiness) and subordinate others to them. When, then, it says that its object of worship is human, or the perfection of man or of ourselves, this 'humanity', 'man', or 'ourselves' is emphatically not the man or self we find existing as an empirical fact, nor is it what man, as this or that empirical individual, taken in the lump as you find him, sets freely before himself; but it may be something exceedingly different. It is what the good in him, or the ideal itself in him, desires and sets before itself. That is the reason why the ideal appears to him, as this empirical individual, on the one side as an object of aspiration, but on the other as a demand, an ought-to-be, which imposes on him an obligation, and one which inevitably entails not the fulfilment but the sacrifice of many of his wishes and the non-development of many of his possibilities. His religion is the devotion of himself to this power, or the identification of

his will with its will, which suppresses his humanity in one sense while affirming it in another, and which itself contains the same suppression of humanity.

As the ideal, then, *consists* in the perfection of man only in this sense, but not in the intensification of man as he stands, or taken (if I may put it so) in the lump, so it is not the product or creation of man so taken, but only of the good in man. Selfishness, ignorance and ugliness, if they created an ideal, would not create the ideal of their opposites but of themselves. The object of worship cannot be *their* creation. If not produced by itself, still it can be produced only by an imperfect form of itself:—not by me therefore, so far as I am alien to it, nor by me as the phenomenon in which good and evil are at war, but by me solely as akin to it. This means by me as a good will, together with such other excellences—physical, intellectual or aesthetic—as harmonise with that and are approved by it. And it is only thus that I can call it *my* product or the product of myself.

Obviously, therefore, it is only in this sense that it is any other man's product or again the product of all men. It is not the fact that another man, and not I, wishes for something that can make the something right or give it a place in the ideal; another may want something foolish and bad just as much as I may, and it is not a whit the better because it is he that wants it and not I. Nor would it be the ideal or a part of it merely because all the people in the

world, the whole of existing humanity, wanted it. It is so only because the good in all these people wants and wills it. Comte understood this quite clearly. The collective humanity, the 'Great Being' of which he speaks, is not the aggregate of men, past, present and future, taken as empirical individuals. It is an organism, and the evil in these beings is expressly excluded from it.

Now what does all this imply? It implies that the man or humanity, or human nature, which sets up the ideal, pursues it and, if perfected, would *be* it, is something common or universal in individual men, i.e. the good which wills in them and which, in that sense, is their will, though not the will of them as particular or as mere empirical individuals. And this is not difficult to see though the phraseology may be disliked.

When I will the ideal, I put aside, ignore, am prepared to sacrifice, every impulse and wish in me which is opposed to it and is not its impulse and wish. These belong to me as apart from it, mere me. If they assert themselves, the will which seeks the ideal, the will of the ideal in me, presents itself to me as a moral law forbidding me to pay any attention to them. And so it does in every other particular person. It is in that sense a universal will.

In the same way it says to me: 'You are not to consider your particular interests or life before those of others, except in any case where I tell you to do so. And I shall not tell you so out of any regard for

you in particular, for neither you nor anybody else, as merely particular, is of any consequence to me at all. I care for nothing but the good in you and the rest.'

Again it says to me: 'You have particular capacities and opportunities and a particular position in the world. And therefore the things I bid you do are not exactly the things I bid any other man to do. But your obligation to do your particular duty is precisely the same as every other man's obligation to do his, and has nothing to do with your peculiarities or his. It is universal.'

It would be easy to extend these reflections, but to do so probably would not make clearer the point I am trying to bring out. It is that the 'man' or 'self' which produces the ideal, and in whose perfection the ideal consists, is not the empirical individual man or self, nor any number of them. If the adherent of this religion objects to calling the ideal the universal substance or essence of man, and to calling the will that seeks it the universal will, on the ground that these are metaphysical figments, he must still make a distinction in the individual man or self. That which produces, and which, perfected, would be the ideal, is not this whole man or self, but a part of it, and the perfection of this part can only be sought and gained by its subjugating and moulding to its own likeness the rest of the man or self.

Well, then, this universal substance or essence, or this part of man—is it what the adherent of this

religion would call a phenomenon which falls within the limits of positive knowledge? Is it not, in reality, what he would call a metaphysical figment, and is he not unconsciously basing his religion on, and taking for the object of his worship, something non-phenomenal? It would appear that he is, and if his religion is that of Comte it appears quite clear that he is. A humanity like Comte's, a 'Great Being', not an aggregate but an organism, and one from which the evil in man is excluded, surely takes us a long way beyond the region of phenomena and positive knowledge and what is commonly called man?

The object of worship, the ideal, is not determined by any theoretic judgments as to what *is*, but by judgments of value, as to what is desirable, what ought to be, what would satisfy, what we *will*. It is an end or aim, that we freely choose, not something imposed upon us, not something that *is*. These seem to be correct statements about a moral ideal. And yet they can hardly be the whole truth. For, as we have just seen, it is not every act of will or judgment of value that goes to determine the ideal or is in consonance with it. On the contrary, many conflict with it. There are desires for happiness which are not desires for our true happiness or what really would satisfy us; and there are activities which, as they stand, could form no part of the full development of humanity.

But what does all this imply? Does it not imply

that this true happiness, this state that would satisfy, this full development, is something which, though not yet in being, has nevertheless a thoroughly determinate nature, a nature which is not settled and cannot be altered by our desires and wishes, nor even by our will, any more than the course of a planet can? That we can make mistakes about it, and will against it, must mean that there is something to make a mistake about, a not-yet, which all the same, if it ever is, will be definitely of one kind and not of another. That is the peculiarity of a moral end or idea. On the one side it is an end, an object of desire, our satisfaction, not imposed on our will but the very thing our will wants ; we are free in pursuing it, we ourselves construct it and bring it partially into being, and it never can come into being except by our willing it and bringing it into being. All that stands firm. But, on the other side, it appears that it does not lie with us to choose what it shall be ; we cannot say ' this and that *shall* satisfy us ', but have to discover what *will* do so. There is a law of our nature or will, and our freedom is agreement with that. We do not merely set one end before us, but there *is* an end set before us. Our end is also our destination. Our judgments of value are also theoretical judgments which may be false or true ; and in moving towards the ideal, we are not merely changing ourselves into what we wish and will to be, but discovering what we really are. I do not see how this conclusion is to be avoided, but

it certainly could not be gathered from the statement that man's ideal is determined simply by 'man' and his judgments of value. His ideal seems rather to be determined by something working in him of which he becomes partially conscious, so that he forms an idea of it and makes it an object of his will, and then its will is also his will. But he also forms very inadequate ideas of it, makes mistakes about it and wills against it, and, it would seem, never could form a perfectly adequate idea of it until he himself *was* it.

You may call this something 'human', for it certainly is *in* man, but as certainly it is not the empirical phenomenon man; and if it falls within the realm of positive knowledge, that term cannot bear the sense commonly assigned to it by adherents of this religion.

Thus we have found that (1) and (2) both show the same thing—that the adherents of this human religion fail to appreciate the double-sided nature of man—that there is something more in him than he actually is, something beyond him, but which is, in some guise, a fact.

(3) And now there is a third point. The safety of this human religion is supposed to lie in its confining itself to man and implying no belief about the rest of the universe. But by what right do we separate this 'man', and what is in him, from the rest of the universe or the nature of things, and talk as if his will and his judgments of value were things

independent of all others, and operating *in vacuo*, so that in speaking of them and his end or ideal we can avoid any assertion about anything except himself? Surely that is a most extraordinary assumption, and one that goes in the teeth of appearances and of our positive knowledge? And yet it is made, apparently without any hesitation, not by some fanatic in the supposed cause of free will, but by those who make a point of not going against or beyond phenomena. Surely we are bound, unless we have some excellent reason to the contrary, to respect the obvious appearance of man's being (at least on one side) a part of the universe, dependent on other parts; and surely we are bound in some sense to attribute to this universe whatever we find in any part of it? Then we must say, whatever else it may be, the universe, or nature of things, is such as to produce the creature called man—a creature with capacities of so definite a kind that their complete realisation and his complete satisfaction are attainable, if at all, only in a definite form, the character of which it does not lie with him to choose, though the process of seeking and attaining it requires that he should form ideas of it and endeavour to carry them out. All this, I say, the production of man, his capacities, his consequent end, his ideas of it and his effort to reach it, we must, *prima facie*, attribute to that nature of things of which he forms a part. To do, without reason given, anything else, and to suppose that you can say any-

thing about man which is not a statement about the nature of things is an immense assumption, though it is made as if it were a self-evident truth.

(4) I come to a fourth point which is not so clear as the others, for it depends on a certain interpretation of the state of mind of the worshipper of the moral ideal.

On this view—a view which, as it stands, I do not assert to be complete—man's ideal is in a sense determined by, and an expression of, the nature of things. But, it will be observed, it does not follow that it is a perfectly true expression, or indeed truer than any chance fancy of his. For all the evil in him and all his fancies and false notions of happiness are, *prima facie*, on this view equally products of the nature of things, which may have settled (so to speak) that, if he is to be satisfied, it can be only in one way, but may also have settled that he is not to be satisfied but to be the transitory prey of illusions. Nor does this seem, on the surface, very improbable, for the nature of things produces a great deal that appears to contradict and oppose his ideal.

But—this is the point I want to bring out—the worshipper of the ideal does not believe that things stand thus with it. We have seen already that he could not worship it, if he took it for his own or any other man's fancy. And it appears to me he goes much further. Though he professes to say and imply nothing about the nature of things and to speak only of man, I think he unconsciously but

practically believes that, in some way and to some extent, his ideal and his judgments of value are true and essential expressions of the nature of things—so that, in his pursuit of the ideal, he has behind him or in him (it makes no difference) a power or force much greater than his own. I do not mean that he implicitly believes more than this—that he believes, for instance, that this power is the central principle and only ultimate power in the universe, so that everything in himself and outside himself that opposes the ideal is somehow overruled and forced to contribute to it. That would be religion complete, and I do not say that he even approaches it. But his attitude does seem to imply, to put it at the lowest, a belief that the production of his ideal is no mere freak, or accident, or result of forces utterly alien to it or so trifling that their efforts are doomed to utter failure. I find it impossible to imagine how, without such an unconscious belief, he could persist in his worship, could resist the doubt whether his ideal was not a fancy, or, if he resisted it, could escape despair; and much more how he could feel that energy and even joy and peace in its service that in some cases he does show. And in almost all cases that I have known it has seemed to me that such a faith as I describe was unconsciously present, though its existence might be denied.

In this connection it must be remembered that we are never without evidence of the actual power of the ideal, and that it cannot fail to influence us.

Though in its fulness it is for the worshipper a mere ought-to-be, it is not merely that, but partly already is and acts; for, to the believer, everything good that man does is its partial realisation. And of this there is much, however some believers may in their haste belittle it: and mercy, pity, peace and love are no impotent agents in the world. But suppose this were quite otherwise. Suppose the amount of good were infinitesimal. Suppose that the worshipper found that its operation in him and others was almost wholly without effect, that it was as weak as a broken wave, while the evil within him and around him stood as firm as a sea-cliff, what would happen? According to his theory his worship ought to remain unaffected, and mercy, pity, peace and love would seem just as adorable as before. But what would happen in fact would be, I cannot help thinking, in almost all cases, that he would gradually come to think that his ideal and the obligation it imposed on him were fancies, and his religion would die, unless indeed he himself preferred to die. And if this were not so, it would be because, unconsciously, he was relying on the faith that, although for the time the universe seemed to be almost wholly against him, yet in it there was power on his side which, though latent or defeated now, would some day assert itself. And this, if true, may serve to show that a religion of mere aspiration, a religion whose object is adorable but of inconsiderable power, if possible at all, must be extremely imper-

fect; not because to the religious mind power adds to the adorableness of the object, but because, if this power is inconsiderable, it is scarcely possible to believe that the object is more than a beautiful dream. A man may believe in his ideal, though the enormous majority is against him, and I suppose he might believe in it though every other man on earth should disbelieve; but it would be because he also, however unknowingly, believed that his ideal represented something beyond all human opinion—in fact, that the universe (to use the vaguest term) had revealed to him a part of its meaning which was hidden from all other men.

The total and ultimate separation of might and right is, I venture to say, a thing man cannot believe in; and for this there are good metaphysical reasons.

If these ideas are sound, and unless some justification can be shown for the total separation of man from the world, it follows that a religion of ideal humanity must really include some belief about the nature of things, and that its minimum requirement is a belief that the object of worship, and the forces that work for it, are expressions of a considerable power in the universe. And indeed this seems to be the minimum necessary for any worship beyond that of a visible finite person or thing.

But, it may be said, suppose this belief is not attainable, what is to happen? And the obvious answer is that we must then fall back on mere moral-

ity, as has been done, openly, or more often silently, by many men who have found in morality a firm foundation for noble living.

Yet I venture to doubt whether this answer, however practically sound, expresses the truth. For all morality that rises at all high, like the morality of these men, seems to me to involve religion. I am not referring to the fact that the morality of the great majority is bound up with their religion—religion in the accepted sense—in such a way that they do not clearly distinguish between the two, and, if asked why they should do their duty, would answer, in one form or another, that it is God's will. What I mean is that, where morality is dissociated from religion, in the ordinary sense, and professes to stand by itself, and where it is not conventional but a powerful force, it implies that same unconscious belief of which I have been speaking. The moral law or the types of excellence to which the man devotes himself have, for him, a constraining obligation or absolute value which distinguishes them sharply from the wishes, desires or opinions of himself or any number of other men. And though he may perhaps theoretically account for this obligation or absolute value by attributing the feeling of it to accumulated experiences of expediency which he has inherited from his race, still when he feels it and is conscious of its reality, he does in effect regard it as rooted in, expressive of, deriving its power over him from, something in the nature of things. It is true that it

is difficult, or impossible, for anyone to be certain of this in the case of any mind but his own, and that it appears impertinent to pretend to go behind what many very able men have reported of their own minds; but in reading these reports I find it impossible not to believe that they are incomplete.

It may be worth while, before we proceed, to illustrate some of the points touched on in this lecture by reference to a religion which was a religion of ideal humanity, but of something more, and which may show the direction in which such religion naturally moves when the intellect permits.

The religion of Mazzini, though it included the idea of God, was closely allied to the human religion we have been examining. It rested on a conviction of the supreme value of those powers of good that appear in the human soul. It was also a religion of progress; he believed that humanity was slowly but continuously advancing to a more perfect state on earth, a much fuller realisation of its possibilities. But then this progress was for him inherent in man, the law of his being; the end he struggles to gain is also his destination; and in each forward step he is not merely changing himself into something he wishes to be, but is discovering what he really is, and is destined to be. And this is so because the gradual discovery and application of the law of man's life is the progressive revelation of God. God is eternally, that is to say, all and much more than

all that man longs and strives to be, and man's striving is at the same time the manifestation and fulfilment of the divine purpose—a purpose which cannot be thwarted, since, for Mazzini, in spite of all appearance, there is no force anywhere in the universe that can resist God.

If this had not been Mazzini's creed, he never would have acted as he did. But his passionate insistence on the necessity of religion was a matter of surprise to many of his fellow democrats. They could not make out what he wanted with a God, the belief in whom seemed to them to ally him with the powers of reaction. But the necessity of this belief to him is not hard to understand. It was, doubtless, in part intellectual—without it he could get no way of looking at the world that could satisfy his mind. But that, I think, was not the principal need for him; nor was this the need of what is sometimes distinguished as personal religion, for he had a strong feeling that a man should think much about other people and not much about his own soul. But he was engaged in the gigantic work of creating a nation and altering the map of Europe, at the cost not only of great unhappiness to those he personally loved, but also of the lives of some of the best young men of his generation. He could not have done that without an absolute conviction that he was doing, not his own will or any other man's, but God's will, fulfilling the purpose of that perfection which alone can assign his duty and his end to man. You may

say this conviction was a great presumption, and I might answer that prophets have a way of being presumptuous; but in fact this conviction in some form is essential to religion. It is the inmost tendency and requirement of the religious mind to hold that its ideal must be given to it or forced on it, and not made by it—must be the expression of a power immensely greater than its own, and even of a power in which the ideal which ought to be realised *is* realised. And this requirement, as I have tried to show, appears secretly where, owing to intellectual difficulties, it cannot appear openly.

CHAPTER V

THE IDEALS OF SEELEY AND MILL

We have seen that a religion of ideal humanity which involves no belief as to the universe, cannot fully perform the office of religion because its object is deficient in power. It has appeared, secondly (though this I do not assert to be unquestionable), that this religion does really, though unconsciously, involve a belief that the ideal is in some way an essential product or expression of some considerable power in the universe.

Assuming these results to be accepted, then it seems that we must enlarge our religious view. We may still regard as the immediate object of worship what we have called ideal humanity, though we have seen that the words 'human', 'man', 'self' are ambiguous; but we must try to form some notion of the relation this object bears to the universe and so in the first instance to nature, that part of the known world that we are accustomed to distinguish from man or man's mind.

At present we are still to assume the position of the believer in a religion of ideal humanity, and to ask how he might remedy the deficiencies that have appeared in his religion.

We may first observe that this 'human' religion at any rate excludes one belief on this subject, I mean Materialism. For Materialism is the doctrine that the sole ultimate reality is mere matter, the opposite of mind; and, as the ideal is certainly in some sense, and to a large extent, mind and the product of mind, this doctrine means that the ideal is not an essential expression of any power, considerable or inconsiderable, in the ultimate nature of things. And, at the stage we have reached, this result is enough for us, for we have found it a necessity of this religion to believe that the ideal *is* such an essential expression. Hence we need not raise the insoluble theoretical difficulty how the ideal and the mind that forges it could possibly issue from their mere opposite, or ask whether there is really any meaning, anything you can think, in the statement that they do so.

But, it may be said, we are too hasty. For some adherents of a human religion have as a matter of fact been materialists, and others have held that it makes no difference to religion whether or no we suppose the sole ultimate reality to be matter. And this is true: but then the answer is that they have not really been materialists. Knowingly or unknowingly, they have believed in a matter which is far from being the mere opposite of mind. They have, for example, like Tyndall, thought of matter as 'the promise and potency' of all that issues from it, and therefore of mind and the products of mind. Now

such a 'matter' is not mere matter. Here again we have not to ask whether there is any meaning in speaking of a promise and potency existing on its own account and in the absence of mind. For, supposing it can, and supposing it is the promise and potency of mind, it has then an essential relation to mind; it is part of its being that it 'promises', and is able to issue in, mind; and such being is certainly not the mere opposite of mind, but is potential mind. If you took matter in this enlarged sense for the ultimate reality, you might quite well continue to worship your ideal, for this would then be no casual by-product, thrown off in some unintelligible way by the reality, but its necessary and essential expression or development. Nay, you might even succeed in worshipping this matter itself as the source of your ideal, as something of whose essence it is part to give birth to the ideal, though this part of its being is at first 'potential' and not actual. Such a religion might not be satisfactory or secure against attack, but it would neither rest on materialism nor be consistent with it.

We may glance next at the proposal (mentioned some time ago) to take nature by itself and to worship it on its own account, without attempting to form an idea of its connection with the human ideal. We should simply add it to the latter. That would be one object of worship; nature would be another; but we should worship the two apart, as two separate constituents in the whole of things. This whole

somehow produces in us the ideal: it also produces nature: we do not ask how the two are connected, but we worship each for itself. Nature we take simply as science discloses it to us; we mean by it solely what science means, and thus, in our religion, we shall be secure against that conflict with exact knowledge and with the prevalent conception of universal law, which has so greatly shaken the position of supernatural religion. A proposal of this kind was made some twenty-five years ago in Seeley's book on *Natural Religion*—a remarkable and valuable book—quite apart from this proposal, and I may illustrate the idea by reference to that book, though it would hardly be just to identify it with Seeley's total view.[1]

It is an idea very attractive to many minds, because it seems to fall in with ideas of their own and to harmonise with their love of nature. Nature, we say to ourselves, used to be worshipped in many religions. It was for a time degraded, and rightly so, in those forms of religion which give the first place to ethical or spiritual qualities. But since that position is now secured to them, surely we ought to find a place beside, or in subordination to, them for the power and glory and mystery of Nature and to regard her as, in some way, a revelation of the divine soul of things.

Thus many of us are inclined to welcome a proposal, such as Seeley's, to worship nature as disclosed by science. But we shall find, I think, (1) that

[1] Seeley's book was published in 1882.

the nature which Seeley describes as the nature known to science, and proposes to worship, is much more than that and quite different. And (2) we shall find that what we really want is to regard and possibly to worship nature not as something side by side with our ideal and separate from it, but as standing in an essential relation to it and qualified and spiritualised by that relation. If we really took nature simply as disclosed to science, and took it as standing merely side by side with our ideal, we should never dream of worshipping it. While if we take it otherwise, that may be very well, only we renounce the promised advantage of worshipping an object guaranteed by science.

Let us first see how Seeley describes what he supposes to be nature as known to science. He wishes to show that, quite apart from any ideas introduced from any other quarter, it is adorable and in fact is adored. He does not say that it would be a satisfactory god, but still he says it may be and is a god. For it is, to the man of science, a power which is not himself and is immeasurably above himself: a power in the contemplation of which he is absorbed; in the knowledge of which he finds safety and happiness. . . . The scientific man *knows* him—this power—to be eternal: and in astronomy, in geology, he becomes familiar with the countless millenniums of his life-time. The scientific man strains his mind actually to realise God's infinity. As far off as the fixed stars he traces him, 'distance inexpressible by

numbers that have name.' Meanwhile to the theologian infinity and eternity are very much empty words when applied to the Object of his worship. He does not realise them in 'actual facts and definite computations'. Nor is this all. Nature, besides all this, is to the man of science a power infinitely beautiful and glorious, and a power with which he has a sense of personal relationship, because he lives and moves and has his being in it.

Now we are not directly concerned with the comments a theologian might make on these statements. He might ask in what sense nature is immeasurably above man; whether much safety and happiness can be found in contemplating what may knock me on the head to-morrow; and whether 'actual facts and definite computations' are not strange places in which to look for infinity and eternity? But, passing these doubts by, we must notice that the question is not at all what nature is to the 'man of science', but what it is to science. The man of science is a man; and like the rest of us he may regard nature as power and unity and glory and infinity, and ought, I am sure, to wonder at it and admire it more than we ignorant people can. But the question here is what he knows as nature, what it is to his science, and I imagine that from that point of view he might say to Seeley something of this kind:—

'Elsewhere in your work you describe nature as

"a number of co-existences and sequences", and again as "certain laws of co-existence and sequence in phenomena". If I may unite these expressions in the phrase "an indefinite number of co-existent and sequent phenomena which behave and occur, so far as our knowledge goes, in certain regular ways," I accept that as an account of the nature known to me. But that is not the nature you propose to worship. You speak of a power, and of this power as being one, and of its being infinite and eternal, and of all phenomena as its appearances, and of all the glory and beauty you perceive in them as its glory and beauty. But science knows nothing of all this: we do not know that all phenomena form a single unity, much less that they are appearances of a single power. We are ignorant whether they come to an end in space or in time, and you convert this ignorance into a positive knowledge of an infinite and eternal power. What you propose to worship under the name of "nature" may be a reality or a fiction of your imagination; but science can give you no information on the subject.'

Now, if the nature proposed as an object for worship is not nature as known to science, it is equally clear that nature as known to science is no object for worship. Phenomena and their laws are very interesting to the intellect, but nobody would be inclined to worship them if he did not regard them as in some way the expressions of a unity, of one power or one mind manifesting itself in a variety of aspects or in

subordinate unities. Even the impressions of sublimity we derive from the endlessness of phenomena depend on our regarding the phenomena in some such light, and as having some unity. When endless distances appear sublime, it is because we unconsciously take them as distances traversed or established by something which knows no limit. There is nothing sublime in a mere indefinite repetition of units of time or space. Wherever natural phenomena make the kind of appeal that could issue in religious feeling, we shall find that we are going beyond the point of view of science, and of course we habitually do so; but then we habitually interpret the world by ideas which science cannot guarantee, ideas which do not belong to what is called positive knowledge.

Our second criticism referred to the proposal to worship nature as something merely side by side with the moral ideal. Anything like religion, we said, requires more than this: it requires that we should be able to connect nature with the moral ideal in such a way that it would be qualified by this connection. An illustration may be enough to show this. Suppose science did reveal to us that nature is a single power manifesting itself in endless phenomena, and suppose that by this revelation at once of nature's unity and of its infinite power religious feeling were stirred in us. Still it would not be a moral power; on the contrary, as Professor Seeley himself asserts, nature seems to be quite indifferent to moral-

ity. We should then have before us two objects—one, called nature, exhibiting boundless power but nothing, or less than nothing, of the qualities which are immeasurably more sacred to us than power; and another, the moral ideal, consisting of these qualities brought to perfection. And it is suggested we should give to each of these two objects a perfectly distinct worship, without allowing our thought of the one to influence our thought of the other. Now I will not say it would be impossible to do this, but considering the unity of human nature it would surely be very difficult, and it seems most likely that anyone who attempted the feat would find sooner or later that he had shifted his position. Either one of his worships would have driven the other into the back of his mind, or altogether out of it, and he would have concentrated his religion simply on a moral ideal or (less probably) on a non-moral power of nature. Or else he would insensibly have so far fused the two together that the regularity and beauty of nature would appeal to him as an expression of one and the same power that also produced his moral ideal; or this ideal would appeal to him as the goal towards which nature was struggling, in spite of the resistance of some irrational or non-moral element.[1] But in any of these cases he would not be worshipping two distinct objects kept side by side without being allowed to influence one another; and in none of them would

[1] [Within nature.]

he be worshipping nature simply as known by science.[1]

It would be a great advantage if we could dismiss from our minds completely the dream that science can provide us with an object of worship, and also the extraordinary notion that its inability to do so is something to its discredit. It surely is not so in the least. To do this is no part of the business of science. Religion implies, like philosophy, some sort of notion of the *whole* of things, and of the relation of one sphere to another. Natural science makes no profession to provide such a notion ; and if a man of science makes such a profession, he does so as a philosopher or teacher of religion. Science deliberately limits itself to a certain part of the universe and considers it in abstraction from the rest. It is possible for it to do so and essential for its purpose that it should do so. The relations of nature to man's mind and to the principle of the universe—whatever that may be—are apparently of such a constant kind, that they do not affect the behaviour of nature which it is the interest of science to discover and determine. Science is therefore able to ignore them, and it does well to ignore them. For the history of science proves that to consider them only introduces danger and confusion into the attempt to investigate phenomena and to explain them, in the scientific sense of that term. Such questions

[1] The following paragraph was written in brackets, whether for publication or not is uncertain, but is given as showing Bradley's considered view of Seeley's theories.

as whether nature is independent of mind or is an appearance of mind or to mind, and, if so, of or to what mind, or whether nature is beautiful in itself or only to us, or how it is related to our moral ideas, are perfectly useless—or worse than useless—for the purpose of discovering the manner in which phenomena behave. And therefore science ignores them. But for that very reason it is idle to expect that the knowledge it gives can satisfy demands or interests of human nature which go beyond and necessarily raise questions about the relations of nature to the rest of the world: and while it is, as it appears to me, perfectly reasonable and of the first importance that in seeking an answer to such questions we should not *contradict* what science tells us of nature, it is mere nonsense to ask that we should not go beyond this, and a prejudice to require that, in doing so, we should employ only the methods which are suitable to the special requirements of science. But the prestige, the fully justified prestige of science, is so great that it has generated a vague notion (which affected, I think, even Professor Seeley) that science may be expected to accomplish not only its own task but all the other tasks of the human mind, and that we ought to sit waiting with hopes and fears, but without beliefs, until it has done so.

We must return, then, to the position from which we set out. The religion of the ideal is to include some notion of the universe, therefore some notion

of the bearing of nature on the ideal. Let us, then, without confining ourselves to the scientific view of nature, which has a special and limited purpose, consider, at least in a popular way, what impressions nature makes on us in this respect. And let us understand by nature, first, nature outside man—external nature.

It soon becomes clear that nature makes apparently contradictory impressions, or presents two faces. That is what is so puzzling, alluring and frightening about her. On the one hand, it may be said, she seems to have nothing to do with our ideal. She is for ever thwarting our effort to reach it. She is so stingy that man has to spend far the greater part of his time labouring to exist—and his existence is only tolerable because he subdues and improves her. She vexes him with weakness and disease, ends him at the best before he has accomplished a hundredth part of his aims, and holds out no hope of his being able to take up elsewhere the task, or pursue elsewhere the ideal, which is left frustrate here. She shows further no discrimination between the good man and the evil, but feeds and murders both alike ; and unless we thought her blind, we should esteem her utterly unjust and even maliciously cruel. The same thing is evident even if we put ourselves out of the question. It is her constant rule to make her children fight together, and live on one another. Her world is full of change, pain and death. She is so busy with the latter—with the decay and death of

animals and plants and even of worlds—that we are astonished that she should care to create existence at all. If there is anything permanent in her, it is atoms or something like them, the very things whose existence would seem to us by itself worthless. For the rest she is one never-resting process of idle change. These are some of the charges that may be brought against nature.

On the other hand, the force of these charges depends, in part, on our rhetorical way of talking as if nature were not blind but a conscious agent ; and, again, as if the worlds and creatures who exist or change and enjoy and suffer, were something different from her, on which she operated, instead of being parts or phases of herself. And, further, our charges are hasty, and we get from nature impressions of quite a different kind. We complain of the want of permanence in nature, but are we really prepared to say, for example, that it would be better if the same clouds and plants and animals and men went on for ever and there were no new ones ?

If we observe quietly and dispassionately, can we really think that there is more pain in nature than enjoyment, or anything like as much ? And to come to ourselves, while it is true that nature thwarts our effort to reach our ideal, on the other side she certainly seems to forward it, for what sort of creatures should we be if she did not force us to labour ? Again, if we set aside what seems an incipient morality in her animals, it is true that nature appears to be

quite unmoral and not to discriminate between our good and evil. Yet it is curious that our own moral method of making one part of ourselves live by suppressing another part has a certain likeness to her unmoral method of dealing with parts of herself. Neither is it wholly true that she does not discriminate between good and evil; for some of the most prominent forms of evil she avenges by weakness or death, and perhaps most of what we call good makes for physical health and vigour.

Again, while she is unlike us in being unmoral, there seems to be in her something like us on the intellectual side. She does not reason, yet her laws are intelligible to us and so of kin to our reason; she appears to be an excellent mathematician; and, rightly or wrongly, the adaptations of her organic products often suggest to us the action of something like contriving intelligence. Thus, though our love of goodness (one aspect of the ideal) finds perhaps no satisfaction in her, or but little, our love of truth finds a great deal. And, finally, our love of beauty finds still more. And how does it happen that some men, perhaps many, appear to find in contact with nature so deep and strange an answer to their spiritual being? You may say they are deluded and really commune with themselves: but, even so, how is it that they cannot commune thus with themselves except in contact with her?

I have tried to put these double-sided, even contradictory impressions fairly. Let us pass from

nature outside us to nature in ourselves. We are accustomed to speak of ourselves, or our minds and their products, e.g. our ideal, as distinct from the natural impulses and activities obviously connected with our bodies. We need not ask in what sense we ought to do that, but, accepting the distinction (which in some form we must make), let us see what impression this nature in ourselves makes on us. It is again double-sided, if not contradictory.

On the one hand nature here too seems to stand in our way. Our progress means leaving it behind or subduing it. We want, for instance, to get at truth, and to do so we have to abandon our blind sensations and to rise to a region of laws and conceptions ; and that which limits us seems to be mainly the fact that our material comes bit by bit through the body and therefore neither is nor can be complete. And our advance in goodness is equally checked by the nature in us. It is lazy, sensual, revengeful, quarrelsome ; it urges each of us to pursue his own advantage and make himself the centre of things. No doubt these impulses are not in themselves morally bad, for nothing merely natural is so ; but they become bad the moment we consciously adopt them, and they are powerful so much sooner than our higher being that we can hardly escape adopting them. All our moral education therefore, and later our moral effort, is directed against them. Most of us remain more or less subjected to one or more of them ; none of us fully overcomes them ; and it is

difficult to imagine how, so long as human beings are born and do not drop ready-made from heaven, this can be otherwise. In short it seems that, while we have in us wonderful possibilities and longings, nature in us, like nature without us, condemns them to remain unrealised.

Yet, on the other hand, nature in us seems also to have a positive relation to our ideal. The stuff that clogs this ideal forms also the body in which it is partially realised, and without which it would be but a ghost. We want really not to abolish this stuff, but to transform it. Thus everything beautiful implies either sense—something visible or audible—or an imaginative matter which has the colour of sense. Again, we could never rise to truth from our sensations unless we used them, and the truth we aim at seems to be not bare thoughts, but thoughts which would find in sensations nothing alien to themselves. And so it is with goodness. Some of our natural impulses and feelings, though not good in themselves, are friendly to goodness—for example, the social and sympathetic feelings already clearly shown by some of the lower animals. And even those impulses, which so readily give rise to evil, become also the material and basis of good. Refined and transfigured, they reappear in civil society—one of them in the family, the mere acquisitive self-assertion in property, revenge in justice and law. And so, again, we think of the ideal character not as a man with no nature in him, but as one in whom nature has become

the perfect instrument and expression of mind and will. But all this seems to mean that, though nature has to be resisted and denied, it has yet in it something akin to the power that denies it and transforms it. If it prevents this power from realising itself completely, without it this power could not realise itself at all. It could not do so even in part in a material wholly alien to it ; and in fact it masters one impulse of nature by turning against it the forces of another. No nature, no morality.

Thus, though we set nature in man on one side and this power of mind or spirit on the other, the antithesis cannot be absolute. Nor have we any experience in ourselves of a mind that does not involve nature. I do not mean merely to repeat that an ideal which abolished nature would be empty, I mean that the very process of suppressing and transforming nature appears at least to be on one side natural. Thinking and willing are much more than changes in the organism, but the most obvious facts suggest that they are such changes and that, in every act by which, as we say, the mind overcomes the body, the body overcomes itself. So that, in worshipping the ideal which is at the furthest remove from nature, we worship something which implies nature, and can say nothing about it which is not implicitly a statement about nature too.

Hence, if we look back for a moment, it seems now quite hopeless to attempt to worship the ideal without forming some idea of its relation to nature

and the whole of things. This attempt, we saw, seems really to imply not the absence of any such idea, but the presence of the assumption that the mind with its product is perfectly independent. And now that assumption seems to be not merely unproved but in contradiction with the appearances we have been observing. These point to some kind of opposition, but equally clearly to some kind of continuity, between nature and the mind—such a continuity that we can hardly speak strictly of the ideal as the product of mere mind. They suggest that one and the same power is active both in nature and mind ; or at any rate that, if there are ultimately two or more powers, they are active in both spheres.

We may now proceed, therefore, to a sketch in mere outline of two main types which, on consideration of these appearances, might arise in the mind of our believer in the ideal. It is evident that such views must go beyond the observed and certain facts ; it must be a philosophical theory or a faith ; and, on the other hand, in our believer at least, we may presuppose the acknowledgment that his view must not contradict these facts but must be based on them, at any rate in part.

(1) First, then, the view taken may be, more or less decidedly, dualistic. The contradictory phenomena are here interpreted by supposing two independent principles, substances, or powers ; one highly, if not perfectly, rational and good ; the other

of an opposite nature. The latter may be conceived as a personal being, and there have, of course, been dualistic religions of this type—though Christianity, I may observe, cannot be reckoned among them, since it does not hold an independent principle of evil. But we must not linger over this type since, for reasons which would be interesting to discuss, a worship of the human ideal does not tend to develop in this direction.

(2) We may pass therefore to a second type, in which the resistance to reason and goodness is otherwise explained. An example may be found in the Theism which J. S. Mill was inclined to advocate, not as a view fit to found a religion by itself, but as capable of combination with the worship of humanity (he means Comte's humanity; that is, humanity without evil). This we may call the 'theory of a limited or finite god.' The evidence, Mill thought, points, though not with certainty, to the existence of a being possessed of superhuman and perhaps unlimited intelligence and desirous of the happiness of his creatures—though, the facts suggest, not of that alone. The unreason and suffering in the world would then be due, perhaps in part, to a defect in the intelligence or in the benevolence of this being, or in both; but in any case to want of power. And that might be due to his having to deal with a material which he did not create but could only order and arrange; the character of this material (the uncreated matter and force of the universe) preventing

him from carrying out his intentions fully. But, Mill thought, the appearances on our earth point to his increasing mastery of this material, and man may regard himself as a fellow-worker with God in the effort to carry his purposes to final victory,[1]

The main appeal of such a view and of a religion based on it lies in its moral purity and intensity. It is vehemently hostile to any worship of mere power. It emphasises the existence and prevalence of evil in the world, and the difference between evil and good. It appeals to the aspirations of the worshipper, his consciousness of freedom, his sense of duty, of loyalty—one may even say, of chivalry. He is dependent on God, but God is also his leader, who does not command his obedience but asks his aid in fighting for the good cause in the world. On this side it is a religion which appeals powerfully to a certain number.

It has, naturally, corresponding defects. Apart from theoretical difficulties, it almost ignores the implication of good and evil and the plain fact of religious experience that what is counted evil often turns out good, that 'natural' evil is 'religious' good.[2] And on the other hand it offers no present release from evil, which remains in the worshipper

[1] Those who adopt a view like this generally, I think, set aside the possibility of defect in anything but the power of the god, and ascribe the imperfection of the world solely to the intractability or resistance of the material.

[2] Very curious that Mill seems hardly aware of the existence of this fact—I say 'fact', not view.

and the world a solid reality, not sure even in the distant future to disappear. The believer can but hope and aspire. Even if he is certain of the complete benevolence of his god, he has no assurance that this god will be victorious, or even (according to Mill) continue to exist. Such assurance, of course, may be unattainable, but without it the needs of religion are certainly far from being satisfied.[1]

[The following additional notes, bracketed as though for further consideration or development orally, were found at the end of the lectures.]

(1) There have been occasional appearances of late in theology to avoid the difficulty of conceiving God as at once absolute and personal by admitting in him some deficiency of power—without, I think, a full realisation of the consequences of this admission.

(2) One would be sorry to speak disrespectfully of any god, but it is not easy to think quite seriously of one who, for all we can tell, may perish to-morrow

[1] Mill was, of course, familiar with the evolution hypothesis, yet those readers during the last forty years who were most likely to be influenced by him have probably felt that his speculations on religion bear the impress of a pre-Darwinian time.

or indeed may, like a fixed star, have vanished already, although he is so far off that we have not yet received news of his decease.

(3) This religion has made little way among persons religiously disposed but alienated from the received religious ideas. Perhaps the defects just noticed are one cause of this, but perhaps there are others. Mill escapes the difficulty of the idea of mind creating matter out of nothing, but does not help us to understand how a mere mind could even arrange a matter with which it has no intrinsic connection. His theory again gives no satisfaction to the instinct of reason to find unity in the whole. Besides, he rests his argument for the existence of a god chiefly on the appearances of contrivance in nature, appearances which it has been the tendency of science to endeavour to explain in other ways.

CHAPTER VI

ABSTRACT AND CONCRETE IDEALISM

LEAVING, then, the views we were discussing in the last lecture, and passing by Mr. Spencer's ideas of religion, can we sketch an evolutionary view which might satisfy the worshipper of the ideal ? It could not, we have seen, be materialistic. What we call matter would appear before conscious mind, but it could not be the mere opposite of mind. It would be, in the phrase already quoted, the 'promise and potency' of all that issues from it ; and it would be so really and itself, not merely to us as we look back to a time when there were no thinking beings on the earth. In other words, on this view, intelligence and will are immanent in matter. There are not two principles or substances : the universe is one substance, but it is double-sided and expresses itself in two main forms. Nature is its earlier, simpler, and more partial expression. The immanent intelligence and will show themselves in it and that is the reason why nature is a realm of law, and is in part intelligible and beautiful to us ; but the mind in nature acts unconsciously or, so to say, like a giant labouring in a dream. Conscious mind, which emerges on the basis of nature and, so far as we

know, exists only on that basis, is a more adequate expression of the one substance; and man's effort to attain the ideal is the effort of that substance, of the whole, to express itself completely, an effort which, we may hope, will one day reach fulfilment on the earth—or possibly it has already done, is doing, or will do, elsewhere. Thus that which appeals to us as absolutely valuable would be also the innermost nature, tendency and end of the whole, and in our devotion to the ideal we should be worshipping no dream of ours but this very nature and end of the whole. Our devotion itself would free us from the worst of evils, that is our own hearts. The presence of this and other kinds of imperfection we should have to regard as an inevitable consequence of the fact that the whole is something not eternally complete but essentially self-evolving, in which one stage issues from another by a process involving conflict and destruction, as well as attainment and advance. We can see that evil, both natural and moral, is sometimes converted into the means of good: and we know that we have the obligation and a certain power to co-operate, both in this way and by directly diminishing evil, in the process of world redemption.

This view shares the advantage of its predecessor in escaping the problem of reconciling the existence of evil with that of omnipotent and creative perfection, and it has not, like its predecessor, to suppose the action of mere mind on matter even in the way of ordering or arranging. For it recognises no mere

mind and no mere matter, though the one substance and everything in it is double-sided. It forgoes the advantage of appealing to feelings of gratitude, loyalty, or devotion to a personal being—and this would weigh heavily against it with many minds: but our worshipper of the moral ideal probably does not expect this advantage. On the other hand, it seems to represent much better than its predecessor the implication of nature and mind, and again of evil and good, while it cannot be accused of ignoring the difference between them. And it is also decidedly more in harmony with the general drift of modern thought, and gives more satisfaction to that tendency of the mind to find a unity in the world from which knowledge springs. It seems, therefore, to be the most satisfactory view we have yet considered, and to contain a good deal that would survive even if the view is not found sufficient as it stands.

If, however, we ask whether it can fully meet the demands from which religion arises we can hardly answer, 'Yes'. The object of its worship has not indeed a precarious existence, like the finite god, but still there seems to be no guarantee that the complete victory over evil, which is taken to be in some sense the end and object of the self-evolving development, will ever be attained. The one substance certainly can have nothing outside itself to offer resistance, but there is plainly something in it to be overcome, or evil in its various forms would not be here. And however we may hope and aspire, how can we be

assured, therefore, that the forward movement may not exhaust itself and an imperfect stationary state ensue, or even that the direction of the movement may not be reversed, that man may not slowly 'reel back into the beast' and the beast, in turn, degenerate and die out, and the planet follow it, and at last nothing remain but a frozen ball? That, we know, has seemed likely to science, and with our present religion, at any rate, we could not view the prospect without dismay even if we knew (as we cannot) that when the defeated ideal vanished from earth it was advancing, or even realised, on other planets or stars.[1]

And this brings us to a question which refers to all these religions of mere progress and which I have hitherto postponed. However great the value of the idea of progress and the belief in it may be, is this idea by itself a satisfactory one? I hope later to take up this question more fully, but here I will touch on it very briefly.

(1) Progress has its value apparently in its end—perfection, the ideal realised. The value of everything else lies in its contribution to this. And this has been taken all along to involve the disappearance of all imperfection and evil. Well, is that conceivable, while man is man and the earth the earth? Does it not mean a change in his natural conditions of which there appears no prospect, and that he

[1] And here we recognise again the old trouble, i.e. want of power in the object of worship.

himself would be quite changed—for instance, that he would not be born and would not die? I will not pursue this question now and will only ask you to consider it.

(2) Let us suppose this doubt removed: let us suppose such perfection is possible, and that we had assurance that progress would ultimately lead to it; would that assurance satisfy the needs of religion? Would it do so even if we could also be certain that the conflict and pain in nature too would disappear —for we could not surely be content without that? Unquestionably this assurance would help and inspire us greatly, but would it give us full satisfaction? It seems clear, if you face the question, that it would not. For, first, evil is here now and we want freedom from it now. No good that some day is to be can give us that: no future perfection can remove present imperfection. And, secondly, there is the past as well as the present. What will the perfection of the future—what would even our own present perfection, if we had it—avail the millions who have suffered and sinned in the past and have vanished from the earth? We seem to be regarding all the human beings who have existed, and will exist during the hundreds of thousands of years which precede the arrival of perfection, as mere means to the possession of that perfection by the happy men who then exist and will afterwards exist. The lives of all our predecessors, our own lives, the lives of millions and millions of our successors (for

perfection is manifestly still far off), were and are and will be in themselves valueless—nothing but a preparation for lives to be lived by other people. Surely nobody can believe that ? Surely when you look it in the face, it is an idea both inhuman and absurd?

If so, what follows ? It follows that the notion of good, or the end-in-itself, as something merely future cannot be true, that while we hope and work for a better than the present we must yet believe that the present is, or may be, good and valuable in itself and not merely as a preparation. And that is what we all, as a matter of fact, do believe. We do not regard childhood as a mere means to youth or youth as a mere means to manhood and so on, or this year or month or minute as valueless in itself and valuable only as leading to the next, which again is valueless in itself. That is absurd. On the contrary : when we are forced to regard even an hour or a minute as a mere means, we regard it as something exceptionally bad. Our real belief is that every stage in life, though it is a striving beyond itself, is, or may be, at the same time good in itself—that it attains the end of life. We rightly regard it as a defect in our life that we cannot make every hour and minute of it thus intrinsically good, but are obliged to treat some as merely means to something further. Now if this is so with the life of the individual, how much more must it be so with that of the race ? For I, who thus have to treat this hour or minute chiefly as a means

to a further end, am yet the person who is to reach that end: but the generations whose lives are to be regarded as mere means to perfection are not the generations that will enjoy perfection. They will never have touched one atom of the good of life. That is surely not what we can really believe.

It does not follow in the least from these reflections that the idea of progress is to be rejected or slighted. But it follows that by itself it will not satisfy the needs from which morality and religion spring. It cannot stand alone, though it may have the greatest value as one element in a larger view.

What then would satisfy the needs in question? What is it that religion wants? The answer seems to be clear, however audacious it may sound. It wants the ideal actually realised: something that *is*, and not merely 'should be' or 'will be'; perfection now, and in the past as well as in the future, an eternal perfection. And it requires that we should be able to reach and unite ourselves with this perfect reality, and so should be able now to share its freedom from our imperfection, and by our dependence on it should now escape from our dependence on the imperfect world. These may be thought monstrous demands, but it is impossible to consider the language of fully developed religion and to doubt that these are its demands. Moreover, they seem really to correspond with our own habitual attitude even outside religion. For we have just seen that we do suppose that in some sense we can attain the end

of life in any fraction of time, and do not merely look forward to its attainment.

Now what do these demands imply? They imply that the imperfection and evil which limit us and appear in the world do not limit or appear in that perfect reality. If they did, it could not be perfect, nor could we escape from them by union with it. Hence neither they nor the world nor ourselves can be for that perfect reality what they appear to us to be. And therefore they cannot really and truly be just what they appear to us to be, and what in the religions so far considered they are taken to be. In other words, if the needs of religion are to be satisfied, we have got to go beyond and even to flout our ordinary view of the world, and also what we call our positive knowledge of it. I am putting this fact as nakedly as possible, for it is useless to blink it, and it is patent in the greatest religions. They openly or tacitly deny that the world or ourselves are what they seem, and in that sense they deny their reality. And any view that would fully satisfy the needs of religion must do so. It must, that is to say, do in theory or belief what religion does in practice, renounce the world and the self, and renounce them because they are unreal.

Our supposed searcher for a creed, the centre of which shall be his human ideal, may at first be staggered by these results. For he has taken for granted all along that he need not question obvious facts or his positive knowledge, whereas now it

appears that as they stand he is not to take them for final. But after all (if he has followed us) he has really admitted for some time that he must go beyond them; and now he may begin to reflect that to go beyond them must, in some sense, mean to modify and perhaps even to deny them, and that he ought never to have taken them for granted. We may conclude this part of our subject by considering, very briefly and partially, what kind of view, starting from this new position, he might adopt.

He might turn to the faith of the average good Christian:—I do not say to Christianity (for we must be brief and uncontroversial, and what Christianity is is matter of much dispute), but it may be possible to describe briefly and securely that part of the belief of an average religious Christian which is relevant here. God for him is, or includes and goes beyond, the human ideal realised; is, and is more than, the perfection of man; is the end of man attained. He is also the sole source both of nature and of man, and is all-powerful over them. Nothing has existed, exists, or will exist, unpermitted by Him; and whatever for us is merely imperfect or evil, is by Him overruled and serves as the instrument of His will. Why it is permitted to be, our Christian probably does not profess to know, but he is sure of this. Now this means, though he may not put the matter so, that for God, and therefore in truth, the world and he himself are not what for his sight they are and must be. But since through faith (not a mere

theoretical belief, remember) he is here and now united or—as he may put it—reconciled with God, all things are for him in faith what they are not for sight ; *all* things, not only those he sees to be good, work together for his good ; the power of evil over him is, and not only will be, done away ; and by his dependence on God he escapes or—as he would say —is saved from dependence on his imperfect self and the imperfect world.

This belief, our searcher will hardly deny, satisfies the needs of religion ; but, considering his antecedents, it is not likely to content him. At any rate it is inconvenient at this point to assume that it will. Its terminology, perhaps, is repellent to him : it has come to conceal rather than express the ideas within it. He finds these ideas, he is likely to say, connected, if not essentially, yet historically and in the minds of the great majority of its adherents, with cosmological, historical, and other ideas which his intellect is unable to accept ; and perhaps also the notion of the best human life which most of its adherents cherish seems to him defective. Besides, he has already meddled with philosophy, wants a view which will satisfy the philosophic impulse and does not find it in the system of dogmas which purports to explicate the matter of simple faith. The same impulse again would forbid him to rest content with views like those of Mazzini, or, again, of writers like Emerson or Carlyle. They may be true but are not philosophies ; nor will this impulse permit him

to rest in any of the theosophic romances which hover in the air around him like volcano-dust borne on the wind from India. But perhaps the genuine East, philosophic Brahmanism for example, may give him what he seeks.

Here again all the imperfection that he saw within and around him has ceased to be the solid fact it appeared. It, with his vain desires and fears, and pains and pleasures, is but illusion. There is one being and one only, and in that one reality; and therefore really and truly nothing of all this exists. There is no finitude; no time or space or multiplicity or change; neither the world that hemmed him in or enticed him, nor the self that tormented him. The one being is free from it all, and abides for ever in changeless perfection. And he can reach it; for it is not far from him but in him; and his real self (not the illusion of which he is conscious and which men call himself) is it. The way to it is to renounce and at last to die to the illusion; to mortify the senses and the vain dreams they generate; to desire neither to possess nor to change anything in that phantom called the world; to fix the mind exclusively in meditation and longing on the one reality. If he can follow this way to its end, nothing will be left in him but God, he will be freed from his bondage for ever. The illusion that bears his name will be said by the foolish world to persist for a time, dragging out a life of utter abstinence, if not of pain, and at last to die; but he, the true self,

will know nothing of all that ; he is already joined to the eternal, and will never return to the evil dream of life.

No more genuine religion than this has existed or can exist. The denial of the finite, the longing for the infinite, the pæan of its attainment that passes understanding, the conviction that all we see is such stuff as dreams are made on, and that nothing truly is except that which never came to be and never changes or can cease to be, can hardly be more powerfully, even touchingly, expressed than they are in its literature. And our searcher, if he has within him anything that answers to these longings and convictions, must feel this. But considering again his antecedents, that he is a Western and of an active race, and has built much on hopes of man's future, he is not likely to rest here. He may be ready to renounce the world and the flesh ; but, it seems, he must renounce also innocent pleasures and active kindness, and his political interests, and all effort to make things better : in fact, knowledge and beauty and goodness and the ideal itself, at least as he has understood them. For none of these is or can, as such, belong to the one reality ; and whatever is not *it* is mere illusion ; and among mere illusions how can one really be any truer or better than another ? Nothing remains but the one eternal being. It is said to be his real self. Certainly to find that self would satisfy him. But what is it ? No predicate, it appears, can be assigned to it, for that would

make it finite. If he must call it something, it is pure being or pure thought—it matters not which—for he can say no more of either. It is free from evil, no doubt, but free from everything else. This, he feels perhaps, will not fill his heart, nor does it satisfy his head. For he does not see how, if all finite existence is a vain show, it manages to show itself, or how, if there really is only one changeless being, there can ever seem (and there certainly does seem) to be anything else. The question may be unanswerable, may even be senseless, but it gives him no rest.

None the less perhaps this view of things, this theory of the abstract infinite, fascinates him. For on one side it does give him what religion asks for: an eternal being untouched by finite imperfections, in union with whom he can escape his own bondage to them. Now that implies, it has appeared, that the imperfections of the finite cannot in reality be what they seem. And that implies, in other words, that the imperfect finite cannot be in reality what it seems. Is there any great difference between saying that, and saying that the finite is an illusion? There is a difference, for the word illusion (rightly or wrongly) suggests that the finite does not exist at all: and that is absurd. Anything whatever that in any sense is experienced or shows itself, however deceptively it may show itself, must in some sense exist. You do not abolish it by calling it an illusion. An illusion is not what it professes to be, but neither is it nothing; and you cannot get rid of the finite by

flying to an infinite which leaves it existing in this curious ambiguous fashion. But if we start from the basis that somehow there is to be the infinite, and yet that the finite is not to be evaporated into nothingness, we should then perhaps have retained the positive element of the religion of the abstract infinite and have removed what rendered its acceptance impossible.

If we try to indicate in the briefest way how this might be, we ought not to use terms which would tie us down to one particular view, but should confine ourselves here, as much as may be, to the general direction in which a solution might lie. And so we see that what is wanted is a view which, instead of severing the infinite eternal reality from the finite, imperfect and temporal, would make the relation between them (if that word may be vaguely used) positive as well as negative. For the main defects of the theory of the abstract infinite all seem to arise from its representing this relation as merely negative. The first of these defects was that the one reality, though called self, and again, by some, spirit, remains in effect a mere blank, of which in strictness nothing can be said except that it is not the finite. What then do we want? We cannot say that this one reality *is* the finite. Clearly it cannot be any one finite, neither can it be the aggregate or sum of finites (a notion absurdly attributed to something called Pantheism), for things do not lose their finite character in the least by being merely added to-

gether. It must then be the opposite or negation of the finite, and so far the theory was right. But on the other hand, it cannot be merely that; for, if it were, the finite, which certainly in some sense exists, would still remain unchanged, and therefore the infinite would not be infinite, it would be limited by this opposite outside it. What is required, then, is that the infinite should negate the finite in such a way as to include it; and since it cannot include it as finite, or in its finite character, it must include it in a form compatible with the nature of the infinite. In that case this infinite would not be a blank in which all the distinctions of finite existence had run together and vanished, but would be the perfection of the finite which as such it denies. We might even say that it would be the finite, seen as it truly is—though not, of course, the mere tiny fragment of it which our earth contains.

The second and third defects of the view we have just abandoned were that it made all finite existence simply unreal, and so made all this existence equally illusory. What we want, then, is a view according to which the finite would be the partial appearance or manifestation of the infinite. All finite existence would be so. Everything would be negatively and positively related to the infinite; negatively because falling short of it, positively because manifesting it. But again these partial manifestations must not be equally partial. They must form a graduated scale from the lowest to the highest. The lowest will

mean that which is related most negatively and least positively to the infinite, that which manifests least of it, that which taken by itself is emptiest and most limited. And the highest will, of course, be that of which the opposite can be truly said:—so that, for instance, the difference between a plant and a man does not from the point of view of the infinite vanish into nothing, and if we pictured the infinite itself as the wisest and best human soul, we should indeed be in error, but not so preposterously as if we pictured it as matter and force, or even as Jupiter.

On a theory like this, philosophy and religion may both be called attempts to approach the point of view of the infinite or to see things *sub specie æternitatis*, and both accordingly will go beyond and (so far) deny the point of view of ordinary life and again of that knowledge of the finite which is called positive. That, as we have seen, is implied in religion and required by it. Religion will differ from philosophy not only because, on the theoretic side, in its attempt to view things as they truly are, its ideas, its mode of sight, are different, but more especially because it is not merely theoretic, but tries to feel and will from the point of view of the infinite. Thus the believer is sure that for the infinite the imperfect world and he himself are not merely what they seem to him; and therefore he feels and acts on this belief, he practically renounces and denies both the world and himself. Believing that in reality he is not separated from God as he

seems to be, he wills in accordance with this belief, and in this act of will he is united with God. This is that denial or renunciation of the finite by which it ceases to be the opposite of the infinite and becomes (what in reality or eternally it is) an expression of the infinite: the death of the self is not its abolition as an illusion but its rebirth as the man's true self in God, a self none the less active in his earthly life. In like manner his renunciation of the world as merely finite, as the opposite of God, is the new birth of that world as the manifestation of God, which he accepts as such and rejoices in and loves as beautiful and good. And this may be expressed equally well from the other side as an action of the infinite. Religion thus may be called man's release from evil, his present release, not something merely future. Not that through it he escapes the sufferings and sorrows of a finite being, but he has determined to reckon as his true self only that self which is at one with God, and for him as thus one with God nothing, whether sorrow or joy, can come which is not God's will and therefore good. And to this he must hold, in face even of the evil of which he is conscious in himself, and of which the world is full. Somehow it is not to God, is not in reality, the impenetrable wall of resistance it appears to his sight to be: even it must somehow serve the divine purpose. And therefore—however his heart may ache with the sense of it—in the centre of his being he is at peace even concerning it. This is at once the essence and the para-

dox of religion. He is sure that the soul can be united to God, because for God it is so united; that the world can be overcome, because for God it is overcome; that evil can be subdued, because for God there is none to subdue.

These expressions sound paradoxical if not contradictory: they seem to unite two different points of view, and what I want to bring out is the fact that it is necessary for religion to take these different points of view. The present release from evil is the immense advantage which religion as we are now regarding it (in any form it may take) has over a mere religion of progress, and religion cannot be fully satisfied without it. Nor can religion have it without belief in one eternal perfection wholly free from evil, and without itself taking on one side

'even here, upon this bank and shoal of time,'

this eternal point of view.

But this release is not a matter of sight. No man can *see* that whatever befalls him and those he loves is the best thing possible, or that the evil he contends against is, for God, already defeated. That is for *faith*, and even if in philosophy as a general truth it is a matter of knowledge, it certainly cannot be so in detail. And if for sight the evil the religious man contends against were already defeated, why should he fight against it? With that question religion has assumed another point of view, the temporal, the point of view of the finite. All action does so, and

must do so. And, with this, evil becomes again, not indeed an ultimate reality, but a fact and force to be contended with. And thereupon there reappears the idea of the future, and with it the idea and hope of progress towards an end which is not yet, and this (in one shape or another) takes its place again in religion, though now as one element among others. Religion is thus double-sided. It is a way of escape out of the temporal and finite into union with eternal perfection, and short of that there is no present release from evil, and that which so escapes into the eternal is thereby eternal. But (if I may put it thus) the self that so escapes is not the whole empirical self. That, half infinite and half finite, remains half in eternity but half in time, the battle-field of contending forces, and correlative to it is the temporal finite process in which action takes place, and imperfection and evil remain facts. And this point of view is no less a necessity for religion—indeed without it there would not be religion. God is not religious, but man. Religion implies imperfection.

It is easy to illustrate this double point of view. The reconciliation or atonement with God, which the Christian desires and obtains, he desires and obtains now. His sins are done away. He is at peace. He has eternal life. He is told to be perfect. And the idea that all this lies merely in the future and that meanwhile he is to bear the burden of unforgiven sin he would reject with horror and, if theologically minded, would point to passage upon

passage in the New Testament which contradicts it. But, on the other hand, he is here in the field of time and change where neither he nor anything else can be perfect, and it is equally essential to him to look forward to a future both for himself and his brothers more blessed than the present. God, again, being infinite and perfect, can be limited by nothing—he must believe that. Yet he looks forward to a time when God will be all in all; that is, limited by nothing. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof: and yet the whole creation groans and travails. The kingdom of heaven is within or among us; and yet we pray 'Thy Kingdom come'. He is to work out his salvation because it is God who works it out in him. Is there not just the same paradox in all this as in his going out to overcome the world because it is overcome, and to conquer evil because it is already conquered? Everywhere there appear these dual points of view, a looking at things now from the side of the eternal reality and now from that of the changing appearance or manifestation. And how should this be otherwise for a being like man who on the one side has infinity and eternity within him and therefore can conceive the eternal and infinite, and on the other is a finite creature struggling in the element of change?

CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS IDEAS AND TRUTH (I)

LET us now look back for a moment at the course we have traversed. In our third chapter, leaving religion in the usual sense behind us, we started afresh with the idea suggested by one of the criticisms on that religion—the idea that the essence of the matter lies not in the so-called supernatural character of the object to which worship is directed, but in worship itself. The kind of view last reached seems to include most of the positive elements contained in those we examined before, and to be free from their defects. The object of worship—the infinite—is now, as in the religion of ideal humanity, no alien power but the goal of desire and aspiration, the completion of all that, at our best, we value highest and feel constrained to serve. Beauty, truth, goodness, if not identical with it, are its highest manifestations. But it is no longer something which merely ought to be, or even is to be, but real and indeed the only absolute reality; and it is also the one and only power. Again, it is not merely human, but is manifested in nature as well as in man, links them together, is the source of both and the goal of

both. It is therefore free from the defects of the finite god, and at the same time it gives us all which that evolutionary view of the universe as one double-sided substance could give. Nor does there seem to be anything positive in that view which might not be included in the idea we have reached, while it supplies the defects inherent in any religion of mere progress. The difference is that the developing substance has now become an actual infinite which manifests itself in a development, and which, if it is the perfection of all that appears in this development and therefore of conscious mind, cannot be unconscious or below the level of that mind, though it may rise above it in such a manner as not to be accurately describable in exactly the same terms. Thus our movement forward seems also to have led us back to something like religion in the accepted sense, for we saw that the good towards which that seemed to move was the idea of one spiritual and perfect being. And we have seen too that religion in the wider sense, no less than religion in the accepted sense, although not quite in the same way, requires us to go beyond and modify our ordinary notions of the world, and even what is called our positive knowledge. Indeed, the idea of the infinite at which we have arrived requires us to suppose that nothing is in ultimate truth what it appears in those notions and that knowledge to be.

In our advance we have, here and there, considered theoretical difficulties—questions of truth ;

and we pointed to such difficulties in almost all the forms of religion we discussed. But our main inquiry was rather, 'Will a given form satisfy the needs from which religion arises?' And our main object was to make out what those needs are and what ideas would satisfy them. We started from that idea, the religious side, not from the purely intellectual question, 'To what ideas are we driven by the desire to understand the world, to make our experience intelligible?' And so now we may expect our supposed searcher for a creed to raise the question: 'But are these notions we have reached *true*, or only something which, it seems, our religious impulses would like to be true but which the intellect cannot accept?'

Before attempting to say the little that is possible on this question, at least in the present course, or to develop further the view we have reached, it will be advisable to look more generally at the relation of truth and the needs of the intellect to religious ideas—to religious ideas in general, and not only to the particular ideas last reached. For though we for our special purpose may have been led to them in looking for something that would meet religious needs, they would more naturally be called philosophical ideas; whereas the great mass of religious ideas are not of this character, and have not come into being by the kind of process we have been passing through so rapidly. But we cannot dismiss them when we are trying to understand religion,

though we may think principally of those which belong to its higher forms.

Religious ideas and beliefs, we saw long ago, form only one element in religion and have religious value only in combination with feeling and will. And the desire for truth, for the satisfaction of the intellect, we saw also, is by no means the main impulse which leads to religion. Yet it is natural, habitual, and at any rate in some degree necessary to religion in general to take its ideas to be true, and to feel that it itself is affected by any doubt thrown on their truth. 'What I believe', it instinctively says, 'is not merely indispensable to me, it is the truth.'

Now on the question of truth, whatever the ideas or beliefs concerned may be, the intellect or reason sooner or later claims jurisdiction. It may for a long time be so entangled with other activities that it is unconscious, or only half-conscious, of its claim, yet even then implicitly it asserts it, gradually changing in some measure whatever offends itself; and in the end, when it comes to full consciousness of itself, it asserts its claim as absolute.

A man may value something else much more highly than theoretical truth or the satisfaction of his intellect, but what his intellect rejects he cannot take for true. He may hold that revelation tells him of something above reason, but whether he has any reason to hold this, reason claims to decide. He may resign his own reason to the authority of

Scripture or the Church, but he first gives himself reasons for doing so. When the claim of the intellect is resisted, it itself is employed to resist the claim and in that employment is trusted. Even when the possibility of attaining truth, and so of satisfying reason, is denied, it is reason itself that makes the denial, and here at any rate asserts its supremacy. It is easy to call the claim of the intellect monstrous or arrogant, but it cannot help itself, it is simply following its nature, and where truth is concerned it is obliged by this nature to make an unconditional demand, just as conscience or the moral law must do so where right and wrong are concerned. And its claim is thus unconditional, it may turn out, because reason, like conscience, is an expression of the unconditional itself.

The intellect must decide what is true, because 'true' means, in the end, 'what satisfies, or would satisfy, the intellect.' It is only another name for that. To say it is true that the earth goes round the sun is to say that this idea is the only interpretation of certain matters of experience which does not produce intellectual discordance. To say that a historical statement is true is to say that the intellect, dealing with the available evidence, can find its own nature and its own self-consistency in this statement, but not in its opposite. To say that a philosophical idea or a theological dogma is a truth means strictly in the same way that it answers to the nature of the intellect, and the intellect can find itself in it. No

doubt I may only partially understand it, but then that means really that it is only partially a truth to me. It does not collide with my intellect, but it is in part opaque to it—words, not meanings. I may then receive it, as we say, on authority, but it is I who receive it, not, properly speaking, the intellect in me: the intellect cannot receive on authority, it can do nothing but understand. Some of us, for example, so receive the higher mathematical truths; we believe them to be true; but, strictly speaking, they are not to us truths, for we do not understand them, cannot rethink them. We call them true because we have reason to believe that to intellects stronger and more developed than ours in that direction they *are* truths, are something intelligible and understood. If, again, something is offered for my acceptance which, instead of being only partially intelligible to me, contradicts my intellect, it cannot, strictly speaking, be truth to me at all. I may abstain from judging it false, and may even act upon it; but, if I am to judge of its truth, I must judge it to be untrue. Perhaps I may see reason to suspect that it is the faulty expression of some truth I cannot grasp, but, taken as it stands, I must still judge it to be untrue. And this is not a matter of modesty or arrogance. It is a matter of necessity, just as much as is my obligation practically to reject anything which the good will in me finds to be in contradiction with itself. If the intellect were to assume that it can make no mistake, that would certainly be ex-

ceedingly arrogant and foolish, but that is another matter.

When the intellect asserts its claim to judge of truth, some amount of conflict is likely, we may even say certain, to arise between it and any existing body of religious ideas. The source of this conflict we need not consider at present ; but when it becomes acute, various attempts are made to compose it. The most radical of these are in effect proposals to annihilate one of the combatants. We have already met with two of them. There was the attempt to disconnect religious beliefs altogether from truth by regarding them as mere products of imagination which, though baseless, appeal to us. There was the opposite attempt to found religion simply on the scientific knowledge of part of the finite world. Both we found to be futile because powerless to satisfy the needs of religion, even if they were theoretically justifiable. But there are two other ways of escape which we had better consider before looking at the nature of religious ideas.

First, there is the appeal to feeling pure and simple. 'Religion,' it is said, 'is really a matter of feeling : it is a mistake for it to attempt to be more, since in going on to make statements it inevitably gets into difficulties. We should rest in this feeling, resisting any temptation either to define it or to claim that it reveals any truth to us.' Or again it is said, 'There is nothing more certain in the world than the certainty of religious feeling or direct ex-

perience; it is far more certain than any result reached by the intellect in searching for truth. It needs no confirmation or justification from the intellect: nay, it guarantees, whatever the mere intellect may say, the truth of whatever ideas or beliefs are found in it or are implied in its existence. Religion is not made by the mere intellect, and it yields truths which the mere intellect could never reach and is incompetent to judge.'

(1) This is a proposal to dispense altogether with an intellectual element in religion. It does not merely mean that we should abstain from expressing religious feelings in statements for others; it means that we should not allow any ideas whatever to mingle with these feelings. We must not, for example, let ourselves regard the feeling as one caused by, or directed to, or connected with an object of worship, nor must we even form an idea of the way in which the religious feeling differs from other feelings. For the moment an idea is employed, the intellect will raise the question of truth.

Now there can be no doubt whatever that religion *is* a matter of feeling. If anyone said that he was religious and yet was wholly destitute of religious emotions, we should be sure that he was deceiving himself: and we may even say in one sense that feeling is the centre of religion. It is in feeling that we are most aware how much religion is to us, most conscious that it is ours, our personal possession. For whatever I feel is emphatically mine, it is in

me, while that which I perceive, imagine or think, seems for the moment to stand away from me. Thus for the religious man what he feels in religion has a peculiar certainty—the certainty, if I may so express it, of a bodily pleasure or pain; and although he may be fully convinced of the truth of some idea, yet it is only when this idea becomes (so far as that is possible) his own feeling, when he not only believes, for instance, that God is love, but feels this love in his own soul, that the truth—as he would say—is in the very centre of his being. Hence, though the part played by feeling in religion varies greatly and a man may be in a very real way religious, though for some reason (frequently a bodily one) he is unable to feel intensely, yet such a condition distresses him, and normally feeling forms in religion a kind of personal centre, out of which thoughts and acts of will issue, and into which they return to enrich it.

But what the view before us requires is something different from this: it is that religion should consist simply and solely in feeling. And that surely cannot be. For, in the first place, even if from time to time such a state occurs, even if, that is, occasionally we feel religiously though no religious idea is in our minds (a question I need not discuss), yet these feelings are in us and are religious only because we have had religious ideas in our minds. Let us suppose that a man suffers from a sense of sin, but that this feeling is unaccompanied by any idea of what

sin is or what it is a sin against, still his vague sense of sin is not like a vague sense of physical discomfort; it is there because he has had ideas about himself and something from which he is alienated. And it is the same with any other vague religious feeling, whether painful or joyful. There is in fact no such thing as an immediate religious feeling, if that means a feeling not due to mediation through perceptions or ideas; what is now directly felt has none the less come indirectly into existence. And it is clear that this must be so. Religion, we may truly hold, I think, to be *a priori* in the mind. It could never be inserted simply from outside any more than reason could; but that cannot mean that it is born ready-made in a baby. It must grow up somehow with the general development of the mind, even if it is not intentionally fostered, and so it must be connected with ideas.

And, in the second place, if we try to imagine religious feelings neither now nor ever connected with perceptions or ideas—mere feelings—we shall find, I believe, that we cannot do it. How, in the absence of any sort of perception or idea, could they have, to the man who feels them, anything of the distinctive character indicated by the word 'religious'? Could they have it even if, unknown to him, they were in fact caused by an operation of God on his feeling self? I cannot see how. If I try to imagine it, I find I am really imagining him as having, or having had, some religious idea as well

as mere feelings. Hence Hegel seems to be right in holding that to base religion simply on feeling is to base it on something below the specifically human level. He has been much blamed for this, because he is supposed to be denying that there *are* religious feelings, or that feeling is in a sense the primary form in which religion appears. He did no such thing. What he meant was that if you take a feeling in which there is no implicit thought—no distinction in some way of a universal element and a particular, which becomes ultimately the distinction of the object and the subject in religion—you are taking something from which the specific human character is absent, something merely animal. And religion could not arise from that or be present in it.

In any case it seems clear that it is useless to try to escape conflict with the intellect by confining religion to the sphere of emotion, wholly unqualified by ideas. It may be worth while to note—(*a*) If you *could* find such religious emotions, they would either have to be wholly confined to the individual, or expressed merely in gestures, cries or music. Whether you could avoid intimating in these ways some intellectual content is questionable; but even so it would be hardly possible to unite a community, however small, by means of them. (*b*) Such a religion of mere emotion would involve great danger, and this is a remark which applies even to the tendency to lay stress on the emotional element in a religion which does contain ideas.

Let us consider the case, very interesting on its own account, where religious feelings are stirred by contact with nature or again by music—merely instrumental music, not music accompanied by religious language. Many people, who are religious, but who for intellectual reasons cannot find in any set of ideas an expression of their feelings, do find it in nature or again in music. It is to them an unspeakable blessing—for feeling totally unexpressed either torments us or dies away—and they get it without having to commit themselves to any doubtful statement. Now no one who has this experience in any degree will question its reality or its value. But, though no definite ideas may accompany the feelings here, they are due to a whole world of perceptions and ordered perceptions. And, again, the persons concerned have had definitely religious ideas ; and it is very hard to believe that these have so utterly disappeared as to leave behind nothing of an intellectual kind, no ideas, for instance, of being separated from some ideal life that is longed for and of being somehow reunited with it. And, lastly, if you ask such persons what it is they feel in the presence of nature, or in hearing music, at the time when they feel religiously, you can detect the presence of ideas. What they feel, they will say at once, is inexpressible. And, in fact, no intense feeling is wholly expressible : but, if they must say something, they speak of perfect peace, or absolute harmony, or boundless power, or infinite pain or longing or

struggle, or divine and infinite bliss or satisfaction of union—all of it immeasurably greater than their little selves and yet their very life. Now it is far from necessary that all this should come explicitly before the mind, but then it is somehow in the mind and it is what is felt, the content of the feeling, and what makes it religious. Hence people not affected religiously by nature or music do not understand this in others. Hence, again, if a person who does feel this unfortunately recognises that what he feels is at odds with his intellectual creed, he is in trouble at once and perhaps can no longer yield himself freely to his feelings. In that case this way of escape begins to close itself to him. But fortunately not many are so clear-sighted or have so imperious a need for intellectual consistency: and therefore nature and music do remain to some an avenue to the infinite, when all merely intellectual avenues are closed.

Such contact with the infinite is of immense value. Its obvious defects are that it is confined to a very few, for it depends on comparatively rare natural endowments; and that, again, the feelings concerned cannot be communicated so readily as ideas expressible in language, and so the social impulse in religion is imperfectly satisfied. But I need not develop this and will pass to a last point.

The view we are considering of confining religion to mere feeling is impracticable. It would be practicable on the other hand to urge that much greater

weight should be given to feeling than to the other elements in the religious life; and, so far as this means that less weight should be given to the elaboration of beliefs, and does not mean either that all belief should disappear or that feeling should preponderate over the element of will, we may be ready to agree. But that this last should occur would be disastrous, and it must be remembered that religious emotion like any other emotion has its dangers.

There is such a thing as intemperance in regard to religious emotion, a gloating over it, a luxury of remorse, and a gluttony in the sense of salvation. To dwell on any emotion which does not lead straight to action tends to morbidity, and much intense religious feeling is morbid. Few things are more disgusting than religious sentimentality, and few more dreadful than religious mania and melancholy. Emotion, as we saw, is the form in which religion is most personally felt: what I feel is emphatically mine. That is its strength, and also its danger. For what is merely felt is merely mine, and to live for the sake of mere religious feeling is in the end one way of living for oneself. We may say of it what Bunyan says of the fall of poor Ignorance: 'Then I saw that there was a way to Hell even from the gates of Heaven.'

(2) Let us pass to a second and now a more popular attempt to escape conflict. It is the appeal to religious experience. There is nothing more certain, it is said, than this experience. It is far more certain

than any results the mere intellect can reach. It proves itself, and with itself the truth of whatever ideas are involved in it.

There is here, so far as I can see, a confusion of thought and therefore a mixture of truth and error. It is true that religious experience is in a sense an ultimate fact and proves itself: but that does not show that the truth of religious ideas can be decided by anything except the intellect.

Religious experience is in one sense an ultimate fact which the intellect has simply to accept. It is an unquestionable truth that this experience exists. How it ought ultimately to be described, or what, on the best view we can form of the world, it truly is, is a further question—the goal of inquiry but not the starting-point. The starting-point is the phenomenon, the psychological fact; and that, recalling our first lecture, we may roughly describe. It is the experience, on the one side, of my feared or felt separation from something conceived as beyond me, much greater than I am, superior to me in mode of existence and powerful over me; and, on the other side, the experience of the removal of that separation by my submission to, or union with, this something, a removal which gives me freedom and happiness. Or, more briefly, it is the experience of freedom from evil attained by willed union with a being which is free from evil. The existence of this experience is not a matter of reasonable doubt. It is just as certain that people go through it as that they see and

hear, hate or love one another, find things beautiful, try to understand things. The intellect, then, dealing with this fact, must start from it and must recognise its character truly. And more, its theory of the fact, its attempt to account for it, must in a sense be tested by reference to the fact. It must show that it has accounted for this experience, and not for something else. If, for example, it arrives at the conclusion that the experience is, or contains, a psychological illusion, then it must give the psychology of the illusion, and not mere phrases about it. It must not simply say that the not-myself, which in religious experience I oppose to myself, is really only myself. If it does, I shall answer 'You are simply ignoring the fact you have to explain. It is as plain as noonday that, psychologically at any rate, the not-myself and the myself, which you say are the same, are not so. They oppose one another, they unite and when united are still not simply one. If they are both myself, then that myself which is both is certainly not the same myself which is one of them. Give me an account of this fact, and do not put me off with words about its being all myself, as if you and I knew without any inquiry what this "myself" is. Call the whole by any name you like, but show me that you have faced the fact that somehow it divides itself and that the most intense suffering and joy arise from this division.'

Thus we see that the fact of religious experience is not only the starting-point of any theory about it,

but must in one sense be the test of any such theory, just as poetic experience is the starting-point and test of any theory of poetry. But then with this we have by no means reached the conclusion that religious experience gives truths which vouch for themselves and are not amenable to the jurisdiction of the intellect. The fact is one thing, the interpretation of it, the decision what the fact really is, is something further. And that is the question of truth—the question by what set of ideas we can understand the fact in a way that is self-consistent and harmonises with the rest of our ideas. That set of ideas may turn out to be the very same set by which the subject of the experience interprets it to himself. But these latter ideas have no claim whatever to be taken as true forthwith, and, if in the result they turn out to be true, they will be true not at all because the worshipper held them, but because they satisfy the intellect which applies its test to them—in other words, because they prove to hold together, and also to be consistent with the best interpretation we are able to give to the rest of experience.

And the theory can never take the place of the experience. I point this out because one meets with the strange notion that theory—science or philosophy, for instance—might perhaps take the place of religion, or that the intellect in giving an account of religion is aiming at superseding it. But this is the merest confusion. The intellect may indirectly further religious experience by showing that it is

rational; and it may indirectly weaken or perhaps make it impossible through the conviction that it is irrational; and it may change it by indirectly altering its intellectual element. But the intellectual element in religion—once more—is not religion but a mere element in it; and to talk of anything whatever taking the place of religion is as meaningless as to talk of intellect taking the place of feeling or will. A thing cannot take the place of another thing unless they are of the same kind.

Moreover, it avails nothing, we should distinctly realise, for the worshipper to appeal to the certainty his ideas have for him. This certainty is characteristic of almost all religious experience, and just for that reason it would prove, if it could prove anything, the equal truth of all religious ideas, or the equal reality of all the gods that ever were worshipped. That would be absurd. All that this certainty can do is to draw our attention again to the fact of religion and make us realise that we must not slur its essential feature, the distinction of the worshipper from something presented as not himself and yet certain to him. In the same way it is useless to urge that any ideas must be true which people with some experience found necessary to that experience. It is said, for instance, that one idea of the Divinity of Christ, or again of the Trinity, was essentially involved in the experience of Christians of a particular date, and that this experience, being unquestionable fact, guarantees the truth of the ideas involved in it.

But this argument again would prove the truth of well-nigh all the religious ideas that ever were ; and, indeed, the truth of the ideas of religious insanity. It rests on a mere confusion of thought. No doubt, whatever ideas really are involved in the existence of that Christian experience, or indeed of any experience under the sun, religious or other, must be true ; but the whole question is what these ideas are, and that can only be settled by trying what ideas will hold of the experience—that is, will account for it without clashing with the best account we can give of the rest of experience. Every man has a spatial experience, but if you want to know what space is, you do not ask the first man you meet and take his answer for gospel.

Again, it is said, 'No idea reached by the intellect can be so certain as my own existence, and in religion I am just as certain of God's existence as of my own.' Perhaps so, I will not question it : but consider in what sense I am certain of my own existence. In some sense assuredly I am. I could not deny it without thereby affirming it. A non-existence could not deny : to deny is to be, and it is the being of what denies. But what I am, what is to be understood by this word 'I' and this word 'am'—that is far from being certain or self-evident. On the contrary, if I could answer that question, I could answer every other ; and if I want to find the answer, it will be very foolish in me to accept the first obvious notions that come into my head or any other head.

In like manner it is certain that there is religious experience and that it means something, probably something important. But what it means, what the 'I' is that feels separated from and united with the object, and what the object, and what the separation and the union—all this can be ascertained, if at all, not by asking the subject of the experience how he interprets it, but by trying to find what interpretation will satisfy the intellect.[1]

It appears, then, that we cannot escape the possible conflict of religious ideas with the intellect by an appeal to feeling or to religious experience, though it is true that the intellect has got to account for that experience and not to explain it away. And so we have to face the fact that in the case of many of these ideas a conflict does arise; and, rightly or wrongly, they are held to contradict other knowledge or to contain inconsistencies.

What can be said on this subject in the present lecture and the next must be very fragmentary and cannot pretend to be more than suggestions; but they are more connected than possibly they may sound at first, and the connection may be more apparent if I state at once some of the conclusions to which they point. So stated they are, of course, no more than personal opinions and had better be put in that form.

[1] There is a certain sense in which the idea of God may be said to prove itself, but that can be considered later.

I think, then, firstly, that in many religious ideas there are elements the origin of which is not, properly speaking, religious but of another kind, e.g. aesthetic or philosophical ; and if these elements are modified or removed, the ideas do not really lose any religious value, though from association and custom they may seem to do so to persons who hold them. Secondly, as to the more purely religious ideas, I believe (i) that religion has its ultimate source in the presence or manifestation of the infinite in man, and that in this sense all religion may be called revelation ; but (ii) that man's consciousness of this manifestation, or his idea of the infinite and his relation to it, varies greatly in adequacy or truth, being never wholly untrue and rarely, if ever, wholly true ; and (iii) that its untruth arises largely from the fact that, being habitually conscious of the finite, he naturally tries to conceive the infinite through ideas properly only applicable to the finite. His religious ideas, accordingly, are apt both to contain self-contradictions and to collide with his knowledge of the finite as that advances. Thirdly, though this is so, they, or some of them, are in one sense more true than his knowledge of the finite, because at least they point to, or express imperfectly, truths which that knowledge does not even try to grasp. And, fourthly, I cannot see that for religion ultimate or absolute truth is a matter of prime importance. It is so for philosophy, but religion is an attempt at union with the infinite not mainly on the side of thought but mainly

on the side of will, and perfectly true ideas are neither essential for that, nor is it essential to religion even to believe that its ideas are perfectly true.

And now, I will ask you to dismiss from your mind this confession of faith, and let me begin the discussion of the subject from a remote point. And I would ask those who study philosophy to understand that, for the sake of getting forward, I shall make some concessions to the adherent of positive knowledge which I do not believe ought in strictness to be made.

Let us begin by observing two different senses in which we may speak of a statement being true or a thing being real. And first let us take a simple statement about a fact of perception: 'That tree there is green' or 'There is a green tree there'.

It is not necessary to ask what in the end we mean when we say that this statement is true or is untrue, or how we determine its truth or untruth. But we shall agree on this point: either there is a perceptible tree at the point indicated, or there is not; and, if there is, it is either green or not. And in the same way the tree is either real or not (there might, for example, be an hallucination), and so with the colour. There is, as to the truth of the statement and the reality of the object, a mere question of Yes or No, not a question of more or less. Here there is one sense of truth and reality.

But now let us take another sense. Let it be assumed that the tree you spoke of is a real tree;

and its colour is green, and your statement about it is true in the sense assigned. But this truth is miserably insignificant; it may satisfy you as a mere percipient, but if you are more than that, you will want the tree to be much more than that green thing there: and to a botanist it is so. It is not a mere green tree but a particular kind of tree, with a definite structure and laws of its life and growth, and a place in the vegetable system, and so on. His idea of the tree is therefore a much more true idea than yours, and his tree is much more like the real tree than yours—in fact, the mere tree you perceive is, as he might say to you, nothing like the real tree.

Now evidently here 'true' and 'real' do not mean quite what they did before. For before, your statement was either simply true or false, and the tree of your perception simply real or not. But now your idea is said to have a very little truth, and your tree to be a long way from the reality, while the botanist's idea is much more true than yours, and his tree much nearer the real tree, and therefore more real than yours. Truth and reality here, then, are matters of degree; there may be a more and a less of them. A statement thus may be quite true within its own limited sphere; and yet, in the other sense of true, it may contain hardly any truth, and as compared with an ideally full statement may even be called untrue. And again the mere green tree of perception is in one sense quite real, but in the other

so immeasurably distant from the whole reality that it would be absurd to call it real.[1]

Now why is the botanist's idea much more true (in this second sense) than yours, and his tree much more real than yours? Partly (and we will confine ourselves to that) because your tree is simply a particular thing that happens to catch your eye here and now, and of which *ex hypothesi* you know hardly anything; but his is the centre of a vast amount of knowledge about trees in general in all sorts of times and places, an example of a huge mass of existence on the face of the earth during hundreds of years, the focus or particularisation of all this reality. The tree is to him the sign of all that. It means all that, and this meaning belongs to the being of the tree—and in fact to the botanist, as botanist, it is the tree, for science cares nothing about the tree being this or that, here or there, at all. In the same way, what may be called the total scientific idea of the tree would be more true than the botanist's—so far as he was exclusively a botanist—and the tree of science would be more real than the botanist's tree, because it would be a focus, sign,

[1] Thus we have two distinct senses of truth. It is quite true that the tree as an object of perception is green. But this green tree, the mere object of perception, is very far from being the tree seen truly; or your perception of it is very far from being the truth. Or, otherwise, within the sphere of perception it is quite true that the tree is green; or again, the perceptible tree is green. But the sphere of perception itself is exceedingly narrow and inadequate, and the perceptible tree is an immense distance from being the whole or real tree.

or particularisation of *all* the reality, physical, chemical and what not, of which total science gives an account; in fact of all nature.

Would this scientific idea of a tree, then, be wholly true, or the whole truth, and would the tree of science be the real tree? Obviously not, for more than one reason. First because, even in its own sphere of nature, scientific knowledge is not and cannot be complete. But, secondly, and that is our point here, because even if it were complete, still nature, the object of natural science, is not the whole of being. There is much besides—for instance, science itself, the scientific mind; and, again, mind as moral, and mind as religious, and mind as aesthetic, and pain and pleasure, to go no further. And all this forms in some way part of the whole along with nature. Well, but no part of the whole can be what it is except in its place in the whole: in the end, to put it otherwise, the tree must be related to absolutely everything else that there is—or for that matter was and will be. The real tree, the only absolutely real tree, is the tree thus related, or the tree as a sign or particularisation of all reality; and the only perfectly true idea of the tree would be the idea of this—from which, by the way, it follows that there is only one perfectly true idea, that of this all-inclusive infinite.

But, if so, how untrue must even the total scientific idea be, since it takes no notice whatever of the relation of the tree to anything but nature; and

how ridiculously untrue must be your mere perceptive idea of the tree, which is confined to two or three impressions of shape and size and colour? Why, if the tree were experienced as what it really is, the perceptible tree and your perception of it—though they could not have totally vanished, for they are somehow in the whole—might well have suffered such an enormous change that you could not recognise them ; and the tree of science and the scientific idea of the tree, the best so-called positive knowledge of it, though they would be less transformed, would certainly wear a very different appearance. And yet remember that, within your ridiculously narrow sphere of perception, what you saw was true ; and so again, within the scientific sphere, what science maintains is true. So that an idea may in one sense be quite true and yet in another be absurdly inadequate and therefore untrue. And in this second sense it holds a place in a series of ideas, varying in truth or adequacy from the lowest degree to the highest.

Now let us try to move forward. The very marked inadequacy of perception and the inadequacy of science—less marked, but still there—lie in the fact that they take their object more or less in isolation from the whole. There is no reason why they should not, for it is not their business to arrive at ultimate truth or reality, nor would their particular aim be furthered by inquiries into that. Science therefore ignores the further relations of her

object to other aspects or parts of the whole—those that are ' mental ' or ' spiritual '. And she is doubtless right. Only, doing so, she certainly cannot know anything whatever as it really is, in the ultimate sense of reality, for that means as it is in the whole. Now that is what philosophy would like to know. It is an attempt to diminish the isolation in which things are viewed by what is called positive knowledge, and more, to see them as far as may be from the point of view of the whole. And again religion in its higher forms takes, in another way, the point of view of the whole. It is the effort of a part to put itself into a certain practical relation with the principle of the whole; and that effort implies some sort of idea or belief about the whole or this principle. And so, whatever defect there may be in this idea or belief, it is at least an attempt to see more truly and get nearer to reality than we can succeed in doing by our ordinary ideas, and even our scientific ideas. Its defects therefore would be of quite a different kind from those of the ideas we use every day or again in science.

This will also be true of poetry. And the example of poetry may perhaps help us on our way; for, though there are great differences, there is evidently a likeness at certain points between it and religion. Thus, in some religions, a tree is believed to be the dwelling or embodiment of a spirit, and that is also the way in which poetry sometimes regards a tree. Or let us take the example of the wind. We speak

of the wind's wailing. Shelley speaks of it as wailing for the world's wrong, the suffering of the world: it is the voice of the suffering world. Well, is that a true idea, and is this wind of poetry the real wind? A devotee of poetry might perhaps answer thus:—'At any rate the poetic idea is much more true, and the wind of poetry much more real, than the ordinary or even the scientific idea and wind. For poetry does not consider the object in isolation from everything except nature. It is higher in that sense, and it shows itself to be so here. The human wrong and suffering in the world is just as much a fact as the movement of the air, and it is a much more important fact. And the movement of the air, the wind of science, is most certainly somehow related in the whole to this fact, though science ignores this relation. The real wind is the wind in all its relations. It shows but a miserable fragment of its being to perception, a larger amount to science, but much more to poetry. And so it is everywhere. The men in poetry are not less real than what you call real men, but more real. There is more of humanity in Hamlet than there can possibly be in what you call a real man. Science may say that poetry is not true, but the fact is it is too true to be what science calls true.'

What shall we say to this answer, we who are more or less in the position of philosophy and want the whole truth? We shall sympathise with it, probably, but we must answer, it would seem, thus:—

'Granting in a sense all you say, you must still take care not to carry your poetic truth into the sphere of perception or the sphere of science, and not to assert that the wind they talk about wails for the world's wrong. Granted that they take their object in artificial isolation, still they do so take it, and your poetic assertions are simply not true of the object so taken. Every sphere has its conventions, if you like to call them so, and if you talk about objects within that sphere you must respect the conventions.

'And, secondly, your own sphere, though it may be higher and truer than theirs, is still not final. Your poetic wind is not the real wind, and that is shown by the fact that what poetry says does not satisfy the intellect. It is not finally true, it is an indication or symbol of some truth which it does not fully express. That is no defect from the point of view of poetry, but it is a defect from the point of view of philosophy. Poetry brings the wind and human suffering into relation, and it does well; but, in so doing, it forces into direct connection with one another two aspects of the whole which the intellect can see to be connected in no such manner, but indirectly through a long series of links. The intellect wants to see that mediated connection; for truth means that. Perhaps its want cannot be satisfied, but in any case the poetic way of putting the matter cannot satisfy it. On the contrary, if the intellect tried to accept it as it stands, it would

introduce confusion and contradiction into its interpretation of the world. And the beautiful pictures which poetry offers it, cannot make good this defect. It does not want pictures, which always half-conceal as well as half-reveal the thought in them: the intellect wants this thought.'

Let us state our result in more general terms. The poetic view of nature is obviously different from the views both of common-sense and of science: and according to them it is untrue. If we ask why it is untrue, the answer would be that the poet attributes to nature what belongs not to it but to the mind; such as emotions of sadness or joy due to experience of human life. The reply to this might be :—'If you are going to take that line, you cannot stop at the denial of truth to the poetic view. You must go on to deny, first, that nature has any sort or kind of beauty; and, then, that it has any secondary quality—colour, sound, odour, tangibility; for apart from sense-organs and sensibility these cannot be. And when you have deprived nature of all perceptible quality and have reduced it to a matter and motion which cannot be perceived but can only be thought, you will have to ask what, in abstraction from this thought, nature in itself can possibly mean, and whether you are not pursuing a phantom. Is not this whole method of reduction in fact an error? Is not the nature that is mere matter and motion further from the real nature, and the sensible nature something a good deal nearer to that,

and the nature of poetry much nearer to it still, and the real nature something which includes that and goes much beyond it—something which poetry is not able to represent, but still represents a thousand times more truly than common-sense or even science.'

This we might say; but we need not press this line of argument. The line taken before points the same way. Whatever is, is what it really is only in the whole and in its relation to everything else in the whole. And therefore the nature of common-sense and again of science is not this real nature, but a piece of it or an aspect of it, taken in abstraction from the rest, while the nature of poetry (though it may be otherwise defective) is on this side far more like the real nature.

But then on the other hand, we must say to poetry:—'Your view of nature is certainly far more true than these abstract views. They are, however, not only perfectly legitimate for certain purposes; but these purposes are essential, essential to man's life and, more, to any complete view of nature, for that would unite the common-sense view and the scientific view and yours, with further elements, in a higher harmony. And within any one of these views nature has a definite meaning. You must not therefore apply what is true of your nature to the nature of common-sense or of science: for it is not true of that, and they are perfectly right in repudiating it. Science will say to you: "Do you mean

to assert that the world's wrong makes the slightest difference to this movement of the air, makes it slower or quicker or change its direction?" And if you make the mistake of answering "Yes", science will answer—"That is untrue. I can account for the movement, and rate, and direction, quite apart from the world's wrong; and if I were to admit that they are modified by any causes but those I can verify I should be powerless to arrive at any conclusion—there would be no knowledge of nature at all, and we should be back in the helpless fancy-world of savages." So science would say, and philosophy would endorse its reply. It would urge poetry not to confuse the spheres and to convert the truth that there is a relation between the movement of the air and the world's wrong into the error that the latter causally affects the former. And you must also recognise that your nature, though nearer the real nature than theirs, is still short of it. It has doubtless all the qualities you attribute to it, but it has them, as you attribute them, only under certain conditions, viz. the action of a certain kind of imagination; and, in its ultimate reality, we can see it cannot have them quite in that way, for if we attempt so to conceive it, we find that contradictions arise. They are not so extreme as those that arise if we try to take the nature of common-sense or of science as ultimate, but still there they are: and what contradicts itself cannot be ultimate truth or reality. And in the

end they come from one source, the endeavour to picture or see in forms of imagination what refuses to express itself completely in such forms, and what therefore is indicated, figured, or symbolised by them but not adequately expressed.'

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGIOUS IDEAS AND TRUTH (II)

From this long introduction let us turn to religious ideas, first noting that so far we have been speaking almost wholly of ideas about nature, whereas of course both poetic and religious ideas are by no means confined to that subject.

I am far from suggesting that poetic and religious ideas stand on the same ground. That would be quite a false view. For there is a most radical distinction. Poetic ideas are produced by imagination for the sake of imagination; it does not want to satisfy anything beyond itself. It has neither set out in search of truth, nor to discover for the struggling will an object in its devotion in which it may find rest. And therefore, however serious its mood may be, in poetry or other art it still acts freely, and combines and invents without regard to any standard but its own nature. And, knowing this, it does not seriously claim for its products the same kind of reality that belongs to the objects of perception or science, or again to those of philosophy.

But religious ideas, even those in which imagination plays a considerable part, are not thus freely produced. They spring from an experience in

which there is little or no play of imagination, but which is primarily that of the heart and will. And this experience seeks to become conscious of itself, to form an idea of itself, not that the imagination may be delighted, but that the heart and will may preserve and deepen this experience. The ideas produced, therefore, are meant to be in the fullest sense true, and, if they are coloured by imagination, that is unintentional. Hence the instinctive attitude of religion towards its ideas is that of conviction; a suspicion that the imagination had been at work in them would cause alarm; and, in fact, the imagination works in them as a rule unconsciously and within strict limits.

I have stated this distinction too sharply, for in many religious ideas there is conscious and recognised use of metaphor and figure. But here the important point is to emphasise the distinction, and to ignore or forget it would be fatal. It is our old fundamental distinction between religion and any merely theoretic activity. But now, on the basis of it, it will be useful to observe certain resemblances, and certain further differences, between religious and poetic ideas:

(1) It is of the essence of religion, as of poetry, to go beyond the realities of perception and of science; and to go beyond them is to modify and, in a sense, to deny them. Religion, like poetry, declares that there are other realities. And this means not only what it says, but that the first realities, taken by

themselves and out of relation to these others, are taken untruly, i.e. very partially, and not as they really are. But religion goes much further on this path than poetry. In its higher forms it is not content until it explicitly connects everything with the whole, or the principle of the whole. For it everything finite is really (to use alternative phrases) a creation, a revelation, or an instrument of God. And that for religion is the only true way of looking at anything finite. In fact, if finite means independent or apart from God, there *is* nothing finite. Poetry on the whole goes nothing like so far: it is enough for it to see the lower nature, for instance, in the light of something higher; but the higher need not be, and generally is not, explicitly the highest, the infinite.

(2) Religion is like poetry in being little, if at all, interested in what we may call the machinery of things. Neither cares to know the pace at which a wind travels, or why there is this particular current, or what gases a flower assimilates or exhales. Things of this kind make little or no difference to that in the finite object which has poetic or religious interest. I do not say that it might not be so to this or that person, or that, if our minds were wider, it would not be so. But, in general, what matters to the religious mind is that the stormy wind fulfils God's word or purpose, or that the flower has in the end its being from him and exhibits his wisdom and goodness: the particular processes, the *modus operandi*, through

which this result is produced, are on the whole ignored. And here again religion goes further than poetry; for poetry is intensely interested in some details to which religion is indifferent; for instance, the working and the intricacies of the human passions, which are of moment to religion only from a special point of view.

(3) Finally, although the imagination acts freely in poetry and consciously invents, while in religion for the most part it does not, because it is not employed for its own sake but in the service of something else, yet in both it shows itself in the character of the ideas produced. However spiritual the content of these ideas may be, the form given to that content is, in poetry always, in religion not always but often and in some degree, sensuous and pictorial. There is here a great difference, for this characteristic is absolutely essential to poetry, and if it were removed poetry would vanish. And even when the poet feels that he is trying to express what passes all expression, the words in which he must convey this feeling still appeal to imagination, just as much as the words in which he describes a flower or a stream. We may then say roughly that the earliest and the latest poetical ideas, though differing in content, are equally sensuous in form. This is not so with religion. Here, after certain stages have been passed, men rise to the perception that the object of worship is infinite, and so they become partly conscious that it cannot be pictured, and that the language of

imagination, when applied to it, is figurative. And so the most obviously poetic religions are neither the lowest, which are too sensuous, nor yet the highest; but those in the midway stage, where the god is semi-spiritualised—a glorified half-natural individual, like the gods of the Greeks and the Teutons. Nevertheless, in spite of the effort of the highest religions to rise completely above the finite, in many of their ideas the shape and colour of finite forms retain their hold. And this, though it renders their ideas acceptable to the general mind, produces difficulty when the intellect employs itself on them with the one purpose of ascertaining their truth: the intellect is then apt to find, on the one hand, that religion, like poetry, makes assertions about objects in the sphere of perception or science which clash with our knowledge, or the conditions of knowledge within these spheres; while, on the other hand, it may find defects in the idea of that which rises beyond them, because this idea attempts to express something spiritual in a shape imperfectly spiritual. In the first case the religious idea conflicts with science, natural or historical; in the second with philosophy. In neither case can the intellect admit that the idea is wholly or ultimately true; though the nature of the defect will differ in the two cases, and its degree again will vary greatly in various instances. In short, the fundamental difficulty with popular religious ideas is that they are all attempts to say something about the whole, in a language

which is strictly applicable only to parts in the whole. This is also, in the end, the difficulty with theology and philosophy. Common-sense and science escape it because they simply make statements about parts, smaller or greater, in isolation from the rest of the whole. These are accurate as far as they go, but by dint of going such a very little way; and an exceedingly partial truth is assuredly not *the* truth.

This difficulty with religious ideas arises inevitably from one general cause, quite apart from particular and additional causes. The great bulk of human experience is concerned with finite and more or less sensuous things; and such things come to be unconsciously regarded as the type of reality to which we try to assimilate everything else. That is the invariable position at first taken up by common-sense. The very language we use is, as Tennyson says, 'matter-moulded', adapted to express these things, and their relations and actions. Almost all our words have originally a sensuous meaning, and when employed to designate higher reality are unconscious metaphors. We ourselves are on one side such finite sensuous beings, and our whole nature is not satisfied unless that side of us is satisfied. We remain children: we want to see or at least to picture everything. When, then, a spiritual experience takes place in us, and urges its way into consciousness, it inevitably tries to express itself in the forms habitual to that consciousness. And equally inevitably it fails, or rather partly fails: it indicates

but does not express itself. The stirring of religion in us, let us assume, is the dawning in the soul of that infinite which is within it, and beyond it. This, let us say—and it is only a general truth that matters for our present purpose—cannot have the limitations of a thing, or of our finite selves. Nothing can be outside it; it cannot be here or there in space, then or now in time; cannot act as body on body; or as we, half-spiritual, half-natural beings, act on bodies or communicate with each other. It cannot think and will as we do, by fits and starts, and always incompletely and against opposition; can have no desires for what is not, regrets for what is gone, struggle against what should not be: no fears nor hopes, nor beginning nor end. And yet it is to become conscious, to be represented, in a soul accustomed, as we saw, to construe all its experience on the model of stones and streams and animals, or of its own intermittent and imperfect operations. Naturally all it can do at first is to embody the dim spiritual striving within it in a stone or stream or animal, or the sky or something picturable, if only as a ghost. And though after thousands of years the hopeless inadequacy of such attempts has long been perceived, and the spiritual nature of the infinite is in a large measure recognised, the old tendency remains. We are partly natural: nature, the sensuous in us, failing to find itself or its familiar experience in this infinite being, persists in figuring it as finite, with a local habitation at a distance from

the earth, and in a particular situation relative to the earth (above it), so that there are descents from it and ascents to it. And it comes to us, and we may go to it; or we imagine it vaguely in a space before there was space, and a time before there was time, making these and a matter outside itself, operating on this matter as we semi-spiritual creatures do; establishing a settled course for it, and then asserting its power, as we should like to do, by changing this course; forming purposes and executing them, just as we do; looking back and looking forward; revealing itself to us, not merely in spirit and as spirit, but in ways that startle or impress our imagination. For it is *that*—the imagination—that in all this is seeking satisfaction, and it is the child of sense as well as of spirit. It cries out for a god whom it can picture and who is related to us as a man to a man; and the heart seems to take its side, for it is used to its language. And yet, all the time, not only does the intellect boggle at its creations, but the spirit itself in us is unsatisfied by them; for it experiences a far more intimate union of itself and God than can possibly be between the God and man of the imagination; and all its most eloquent language implies this union and contradicts imagination. The experience itself is this union, and the imagination or semi-sensuous understanding, trying to represent it, half represents it and half belies it.

These difficulties, then, would seem from this general cause to be inevitable—so much so that, if

one could imagine (it would be an *imaginative* idea) perfect truth somehow being shown suddenly to men, it could not be received in its own likeness, but, in being received, would be changed by the minds that assimilated it, and would appear as itself, if at all, only after a long process of confusion and correction. But in fact we have not recognised the full extent of the difficulty, and have something further to take into account.

(1) First, there is the inborn passion of the imagination for the unusual, strange, and marvellous—a passion which has filled the world with legend, mythology, fairy-tale and romance. Neither it, nor its immense influence in the great bulk of the world's religions, needs illustration. Unless restraint is laid on it, it always tends to surround spiritual greatness with an atmosphere of astounding physical occurrences, to translate inward achievements into abnormal outward events or actions. Or, in later days, passing by as commonplace the miracles of self-control, endurance, faith, and love, which are performed day by day in country cottages and the streets of cities, it hunts for the witness of God in occult regions where the light is so dim that it can see what it chooses, and the voices so faint that they seem to speak unutterable things. The work of the imagination, in its own proper world of free creation, needs no acknowledgment; but it is a genie whose services to religion, invaluable as they have been, are never bought for nothing.

(2) Then, secondly, we were speaking just now of the mind, with its religious experience, somewhat as if it existed *in vacuo*. But in fact, of course, the mind has its place in history and is the mind of a particular time. Not only has it the tendency of its common nature to interpret its religious experience in the form of its customary consciousness, but it must somehow fit this interpretation into the body of its beliefs about the world—about nature and human history. These beliefs perhaps in its particular time have not, for the most part, a religious source, but have been constructed by the intellect, in accordance with the canons of its usual finite experience. Nor is this all. Its own religious experience, in most cases, comes to it through the medium of ideas which have their origin in a distant past. Those ideas were themselves coloured by the general picture of the world current at that period. And it was a period when men's notions of nature and of historical fact were quite different from those of the later time. They were constructed perhaps before there was anything that we should name either science or history. What we call the intellect, with its purely theoretic purpose, had not disengaged itself from other activities: everything—custom, law, the traditions of the past, notions of the heavens, the sun and stars and earth, and of man's body and soul—was all permeated by religious imagination. And the picture thus formed, within which the distinctively religious ideas had their setting, is now

confronted with a picture painted mainly by the disengaged intellect. How can the two help conflicting, and producing more or less conflict also between those religious ideas and the intellect? This was what happened when science and philosophy in Greece, coming to their strength, looked the traditional religion in the face. And it is what has been happening, much more slowly, since the Renaissance, with the great difference that, in the first case, the traditional ideas were found not merely theoretically, but morally and therefore religiously, unsatisfactory; while in the second this has been so, if at all, only in some slight degree; and with this further difference that, in the second case, the discrepancies between the old and the new world-pictures have been gradually diminished by modifications, effected in the former through a period of some centuries.

It is not my intention to discuss the detail of this conflict or discordance: but there are some general considerations regarding it which may be offered without any attempt at a particular application.[1]

[1] (These considerations, it must first be observed, can have no relevance, in our view, to the belief that there is a revelation, in sacred writings or otherwise, of such a kind that no change whatever is permissible in religious ideas of any description. This belief, however, is, I suppose, not held by anyone with entire consistency, and, if it is not so held, no external criticism appears possible as to the limits of such change; but in the end an individual or a church determines them for itself—a phrase which need not preclude the belief that, in so determining them, it follows the guidance of something beyond itself.)

Let us first recall our results as to the nature of religion.

Ideas are necessary to the fulfilment of its purpose, but they are not to religion ends in themselves, but the vehicles of worship and so of union with the object of worship. It is not the heart's desire in religion to understand man or the world or God. If, *per impossibile*, they were all perfectly understood, that by itself would give no satisfaction to religion; they would be still the mere vehicle for its own proper purpose. Thus the aims of religion on the one side and of science and philosophy on the other are diverse. And so are the aims of religion and the aesthetic imagination. The mere satisfaction of that is not in itself the least religious, and, conversely, the most brilliant mythology or the most beautiful works of art are, for religion, no more than a vehicle for its own proper purpose.

(1) Now in the first place it is clear that in any given body of religious ideas there is a good deal which has not a strictly religious origin. It has not arisen out of distinctively religious experience, but from other interests of the mind, and, again, from the fact that this experience necessarily finds its setting in a general picture of the world, not framed exclusively or mainly from religious motives. The independent work of aesthetic imagination, for example, and again of the nascent scientific impulse, is distinctly traceable in the theologies and cosmologies of most religions. Whatever religious

experience may have lain at the root of some Indian and Greek myths, it is impossible to doubt that the superstructure reared upon it was built largely by the imagination working, however unconsciously, on its own account and to please itself; nor can this influence be wholly excluded in the case of the highest religions. Again, while it would be grossly untrue to assert that the purely intellectual desire for understanding and logical coherence was the main motive in philosophical Brahmanism or in the construction of Christian dogma, its presence is surely undeniable, and the limits of its influence would be difficult indeed to determine. But, if this is true as to the origin of certain elements in the body of ideas, it seems to follow that religion can have at most an indirect interest in such elements. Their bearing on the religious life always was remote, and it may well be much more remote after the lapse of centuries since they came into being.

And if we turn to the body of ideas we are confirmed in this view. We may consider first the difficulty with science, natural and historical, and especially the former. At what a distance from the burning centre of religious experience lie the astronomical, geological, anthropological ideas—with many even of the historical ideas—which are attached to it. Of what consequence to religion, one is inclined to ask, can the detail of any natural process be, or the question of the constitution of matter, or the origin of species, or the way in which

the earth became what it is, or the parentage of man, or the length of time he has existed or will exist? The interest of religion can be, it would seem, in no such questions of mere method, but solely in the belief that nature and man are wholly dependent on the object of worship, and have no sort of independent existence or power.

For this belief has a practical bearing. On it hangs the faith that man can be freed from the evil of the world and humanity—can be saved—by union with something beyond that evil. But this belief is not on the same level, or in the same sphere, with beliefs about those matters of method. It is, as you may prefer to say, prior to all of them, or further than all of them, and unaffected by any of them. It is a belief with which science has no concern whatever; but they are the very matters with which science *is* concerned. And it is not this belief which produces any conflict with science, but the complication of this belief with some particular answer to the question of method, the questions of science. Through this complication religion may be led to make assertions within the sphere of science—natural or historical—which clash with the conditions or the results of science. It confuses the spheres as poetry does; only, unlike poetry, it is tempted, for reasons already discussed, to claim for its assertions scientific truth.

It would seem, then, that the interest of religion

in these matters is really confined to the general idea of the entire dependence of nature and man on God—a general idea, which of course may be expressed in other language—and that it need not concern itself at all with these questions of method. I do not say that this position is ideal. The mind is one, and religion wants to find religious meaning in all the contents of the mind. Hence, it would seem, it would be better still if religion could frankly accept the results of science, and try to see a religious meaning in them, and apply its own general belief to them. And this to a considerable extent it does, to its own great benefit. But there are obstacles in its way, apart from any reluctance to abandon an old world-picture. One is the extreme slightness of the acquaintance of the average educated man with the new world-picture; the fact, in other words, that, for the most part, he is not educated in natural science or in the history of mankind, and only catches glimpses of his rightful kingdom. The other is that the sciences are of course progressive, and, for that reason, there is insecurity on the fringes of their realm; while it is the tendency of religion to suppose that all its ideas must be perfectly true, and that it can never be at home in anything short of certainties. That supposition may be found on reflection more than questionable; but, if it is maintained, the safety of religion from conflict with science, on those matters which fall within the field of science, would seem to lie in excluding them, as

far as may be, from the field of religious belief, as matters indifferent to it.

(2) If we turn now, secondly, to those ideas regarding which difficulties arise with philosophy, it may seem that this line of reflection cannot be pursued, because these ideas do not refer to a limited sphere like that of physical or historical fact. Nevertheless, up to a certain point, we may still follow the same line, and it will be most useful not to ask at what point we must stop, but to put the matter broadly and perhaps in an exaggerated way.

If religion is worship, if its interest is not directly in theoretical truth, but is practical—the union of the whole soul or personality with the object of worship—the abstruse questions of theology, it would seem, and those metaphysical problems into which men are driven by the search for truth, have no direct religious interest. Religion is concerned with them, if at all, only in so far as certain answers to them may indirectly affect religious experience. This experience is that of men, it takes place in men, and nothing can have religious value or efficacy which does not so take place. The salvation of a soul, if we use Christian language, must be *in* that soul, and nothing can possibly bring it about which is simply outside. The soul is not a thing; it is activity. It cannot be saved as money is saved, but only by and in this activity, however much this activity may extend beyond itself. As the old

mystic said—' If Christ was born in Bethlehem a thousand times over without being born in me, I should still remain lost.' And, enlarging this, surely we must say, ' What God is in me or—if you object to the phrase—what he is in relation to me, is all that can possibly matter to me religiously.' Religion, if I may put it baldly, is the business of man ; it is the business of God only in his relation to man, or in so far as he is in man. What have I to do then, simply as religious, with inquiries as to God in himself, or his inner distinctions, or how precisely nature stands to him, or what exactly his intelligence or will can be, or in what sense he is to be called personal? These are problems that may interest my intellect immensely, but how do they affect my religious experience, my experience of God? If I could answer them all completely, would that be any better than it is, or in any way changed? If absolute knowledge on these matters were substituted for my present state would it be a more religious state? God is manifest to me in religion as infinite wisdom and love—it is so that I worship him, whatever more I may believe him to be. Would he become any the more adorable to me if I could discover what beyond this manifestation he may be, or, again, how precisely his manifestation as self-sacrificing love is related to other possible aspects of his nature? Are not these purely intellectual inquiries? If so, do I gain anything from them for religion? And do I not lose, and expose myself to

needless difficulty, if I hang my religion on answers to them?[1]

Here again, if we turn to the facts of the religious life, we find a confirmation of this point of view. For that life in the great majority of cases seems to take hardly any notice of these abstruse matters. The doctrines concerning them are doubtless in some sense passively accepted, i.e. they are not rejected, but they lie so far from religious experience that they are practically ignored. The creed by which nine out of ten ordinary Christians really live bears very little resemblance to the Athanasian Creed. The idea that comes before them in the act of worship, or when they think of God in the troubles and difficulties of life, is not the least like the ideas set forth in the first part of that Creed.

I may add that what I have been suggesting applies equally to the philosopher. Conclusions as to the nature of the ultimate reality are required, for his religious purpose, only within certain limits. He must be satisfied that this reality is of such a kind as to manifest itself in the form in which he

[1] It is of consequence for my worship of self-sacrificing love as divine that I should be able to think of this love—in whatever form I think of it—as the manifestation or revelation of God; but it is not religiously of consequence whether it is perfectly accurate metaphysically simply to identify this love with God. So far as I am religious—if I may put it thus—I do not care what more God may be, so long as I am sure that he reveals himself in what calls for this worship. In any case I should not directly worship this 'more'—and religion is worship.

worships it or thinks of it religiously; or, in other words, he must be satisfied that the object of worship is a manifestation of the reality and not a fiction. If, for example, he comes to the conclusion that the reality is matter, the basis of his religion would be removed; for he could not worship matter, neither could matter possibly manifest itself as that which he can and does worship. And he must be satisfied that the object of worship is not only *a* manifestation of the reality, but an incomparably more full and adequate manifestation than are things indifferent to his religious feelings or hostile to them. If, for example, he came to the conclusion that the reality was manifested equally fully and truly in evil and in good, in unreason and reason, hatred and love, the basis of religion would again be removed. Possibly we may go further, and say he must be satisfied that what he worships is the most adequate manifestation of this reality possible for the purpose of religion. But beyond this point, so far as I see, the precise nature of this reality, though a matter of great intellectual interest, is not a religious question.

Still, it may be said, indirectly at least, such questions affect religion, and they must be discussed, if not by everybody, yet by theologians and philosophers; for men cannot and will not let them alone, and if true answers are not given to them false ones will be. And this must be fully admitted. Only, fully admitting it, one may still insist:—

(1) that in the first place these are questions about theological or metaphysical ideas, and not directly about religious ideas. I mean that in religion proper, in devotion, the ideas used are not, and cannot be, those that figure in a system of dogmatics or, let me say, in the first part of the Athanasian Creed. When a man worships, what comes before his mind is, if you like, a result of these more complicated ideas, but it is itself something far more simple and less intellectualised.

Nor is there any difference here between theology and philosophy. The same thing is true of anyone who uses philosophical ideas as the vehicle of religion. As philosophical ideas proper, they exist only in long, highly mediated processes of thought; but what is used religiously is, so to say, not these, but a deposit of these, or these run together into a simpler and less articulated idea, generally not untouched by imaginative colouring and therefore not the truest idea of which the philosopher is capable. Thus, I say, even in these exceptional cases—for the majority cannot be theologians or philosophers—theological or metaphysical ideas are the background or justification of those of religion, not themselves religious ideas.

(2) It is only within certain limits that they are thus even indirectly important to religion. I will illustrate what I mean not from theology but from philosophy. It matters greatly for religious purposes whether materialism, or some sort of idealism

or spiritualism, is true, or whether the final truth is pessimism or some sort of optimism ; but the differences between Plato and Aristotle, between Spinoza and Leibnitz, between Hegel and Lotze as to the nature of the Absolute, though they are metaphysically considerable, are of scarcely any consequence for religious purposes.[1]

Suppose, for instance, to take an extreme case, the philosopher found himself driven intellectually to the conclusion that the ultimately real is plural, this would not affect him religiously, if he were also driven to the conclusion that it is the intrinsic nature of this reality to manifest itself most fully to the religious consciousness as a spiritual unity. That this spiritual unity, that is, was not in the least an invention of his, but in the fullest sense a revelation of this reality, and the fullest possible within the sphere of religion ; so that to worship this reality as plural would be not to worship it truly, but to fall back into a lower stage of religion. I admit that this is an extreme case, but none the less it appears to me the rational position of such a philosopher would be to say : 'In religion I am not concerned at all with the reality as it is in itself, but solely with it as it manifests itself to me in religion.'

I have been endeavouring to point out that the

[1] And this is certainly the usual and natural practice of the religious mind. It commonly asserts that all religious ideas except its own are false, but it would commonly assert most strenuously that its own ideas are true.

fields in which religion is most apt to collide with science or philosophy are those which concern natural events and processes, and abstruse theological and metaphysical questions; and that both of these lie on the outskirts of the religious domain, at a great distance from the centre of experience. I pass now to a third point, and may begin by reference to the case just supposed. Let us assume that a philosopher finds metaphysical difficulties in the way of the idea that God is accurately or exhaustively definable as love. Then it will be said that his religion would be injured or fatally affected by this conclusion, because, however you may disguise the fact, he could not take his religious idea to be perfectly true, and that is a necessity of religion.

Now we have seen that religion cannot take its ideas as poetry does, and it is generally assumed that it must take them to be perfectly true. But I venture to deny this assumption. It is natural to religion so to take them; it frequently does so take them; and most religious men, if questioned, would perhaps at once assert that they do and must take them so. But they do chiefly because they have in their heads the mistaken notion that, if an idea is not perfectly true, it is false. And, in point of fact, most men do not take all their religious ideas to be perfectly true; on the contrary they use some of them, knowing that they are not so; and if the question were properly put to them they would not maintain that any of them are absolutely true.

Only they would say that the question was idle, and that the deficiency in truth was of no consequence to them, though it might possibly concern a philosopher or theologian. Now I want to suggest that they would be right, that some difficulties would be avoided if this position were more consciously taken up by educated people, and if they recognised that the majority of religious ideas, as of other ideas, are, in various degrees, inadequate expressions of the meaning they strive to convey; and that this in itself is no reason whatever against their religious use. It would not follow, of course, that there are not ideas so inadequate or involving, if taken as final, such contradictions with knowledge of another kind, that it would be much better to abandon them.

These statements can be better enforced by illustration than by argument. Religious people, I have said, use some of their ideas knowing quite well that they are not perfectly true. When they pray 'Our Father which art in heaven' they do not imagine that God is related to them, either physically or spiritually, exactly as an earthly father is related to his child or, one would hope, is more truly described as a father than as a mother; or that God lives in one place called heaven which is locally separated from another called earth. Such notions were in early religion literally held; nothing is more common than the notion that the gods inhabit mountain tops or other high places—and indeed that has a poetic truth. But such ideas are for us figurative,

imaginative, or pictorial ways of representing a meaning which is spiritual, and which therefore they do not express, but indicate or symbolise. But that, we should say, is no reason why they should not be employed in prayer, if the meaning they symbolise is true; for it is *that* with which the man puts himself in relation when he employs the symbolic expression. And what applies here applies to a great number of ideas. Men use them in worship though they are perfectly aware, if they think about the matter, that they do not adequately express their meaning; and they would resent as irrelevant and stupid any attack on these ideas which assumed that they are taken otherwise. If anyone said, for example, 'Christ cannot be sitting at the right hand of God and at the same time be dwelling in your hearts,' the answer would be that this criticism has no application to what is meant by these expressions, and that there is no contradiction in that.

Now let us take the statement that, if the matter were properly put to him, the religious man would not maintain that any of his ideas are absolutely true: and let me illustrate again. If he were asked 'What then is the meaning of these more or less figurative expressions, that meaning which you say is not figurative but spiritual and true?', he might not be able to give an answer which wholly satisfied him. Perhaps he would have recourse to theological works, and find there an interpretation which seemed to him satisfactory. That, he would say, is

the true version of the meaning of those ideas he used in prayer. But suppose it was said to him, 'Do you really think that you or the theologian or any other man can see the whole complete truth in this matter, that you can ever mean by the words "God" and "yourself" all that they mean to God himself?' He would not simply deny this, he would reject the notion as downright irreligious. But perfect truth about anything surely means the whole truth. So that the man does not really use any of his religious ideas with the conviction that they are perfectly true; he knows that there is always a meaning beyond them, not completely expressed in them. And, though there is a great difference between various ideas, the idea 'heaven', for example, being evidently symbolic, while the theological idea of God is not so in the same sense, yet this difference, though important, is not final. For any idea which has a meaning partly beyond it, may be called, in a broad sense, a symbol of that meaning.

If this is so, it follows that it is not a necessity of religion to be convinced that the ideas it uses are true, in the full sense; but, on the contrary, it is the habitual practice of religion to use those which in that sense it knows not to be so, but which it believes to convey or indicate so much of the truth as is required for the purpose of religion—which is not the purpose of complete intellectual understanding. Nor is this, of course, a new notion. It is, I pre-

sume, what is implied, for instance, in the familiar doctrine that our ideas of the attributes of God are obtained in part by way of negation; that taking, say, the idea of wisdom or goodness or love, as we know them in man, we do not merely extend the idea in attributing its content to God, but also deny some part of it: that is, we do not suppose God's wisdom or goodness to be perfectly identical in kind with man's. Indeed if we tried to do so we should certainly find ourselves involved in contradictions. Perhaps it may be worth while to illustrate by reference to the idea of omniscience. I suppose most people, in thinking of this for religious purposes, do in effect imagine God knowing everything as a man would. But this image cannot be finally true. It would be easy to exhibit its self-contradictions, but it is simpler to bring home its absurdity. Take anything you like—this desk—and consider, in the whole of its being, such a minute fragment as its distance from every other object in this room. Consider that the desk is divisible in thought *ad infinitum*, and so is everything else material in the room; and that the distance from every point you like to take in it to every point you like to take in everything and everybody is a fact—a truth. Consider further what proportion this room bears to the earth, and all the other things in it; and that there are similar truths about distances as to all these and everything else in the whole stellar universe. And consider, again, what a ridiculously small proportion

of the truth about anything is comprised in truths about its distances from other things ; and then ask whether you suppose God's omniscience means that he is eternally thinking—for God is complete actuality—all the possible truths in the universe, in the sense in which we mathematically think. Is not that a preposterous supposition? Is it not obvious that God's omniscience must be a totally different kind of knowing from such knowing ; and that the 'all' which he knows cannot be the 'all' of things as we, in this supposition, are regarding them. In other words, the real meaning of omniscience is something which is not expressed, but only very imperfectly symbolised, when we imagine God knowing as we know, at any rate in our ordinary sense of that word 'know'.

What follows from this? It follows apparently that, if we want to understand, we cannot rest in such an imagination—we must go beyond it, whether we can arrive at a satisfactory understanding or not. It does not follow that for religious purposes the image is useless or may not be very useful. But again it does follow—it seems to me—that it is well to be quite aware of its great inadequacy, and not to suppose that we are defending religion by insisting that it is finally true.

I might extend this line of thought further. I might point out that to almost all of us, if not all, the bulk of our higher and undoubted practical ideas are really on the same footing with religious ideas.

We talk of mother-country, or duty, or justice, or liberty: we have not a doubt that these ideas mean realities, but we do not suppose that our country is literally our mother; and, if we were asked to give a final account which could satisfy the intellect of the meaning of the ideas of country, duty, justice or liberty, we might find ourselves in embarrassment. We know that we have a meaning, and a most vital one, but the fact is we do not, strictly speaking, *know* what we mean, and therefore the ideas of country, justice, liberty are more or less symbolic, as most religious ideas are. In philosophy we try to find out what exactly their meaning is, and we have theories as to their meaning just as false to our experience as some theories about religion are to our religious experience.

CHAPTER IX

TRUTH AND REALITY

IN the last lecture we were considering the assumption that it is necessary for religion to take the ideas it uses as perfectly true, and I pointed out that this is very questionable. I was not here referring to questions regarding matters of fact, historical events for instance. In this case it is of course true that, so far as this mere matter of fact is concerned, whether the supposed event happened or not, there is a simple alternative of 'yes' or 'no', and so the idea of its having happened is either true or not true. But, supposing it is settled that it did or did not happen, then the question will be about its meaning, what it signifies, its further bearing: for the mere outward event, without this meaning, nobody would care about. In what sense, then, or to what extent, is it a necessity of religion to believe that its idea of this meaning is perfectly true? And there is the same question as to other ideas which are not about events at all, such as the idea of heaven or of God, progress, humanity.

This was the question dealt with, and against that assumption I pointed out (1) that some ideas are knowingly used in higher religions as figurative or

symbolical. What is taken to be a true matter of conviction is not their obvious or literal meaning, but one behind or beyond that. (2) That with regard to this further meaning and, again, to the meaning of ideas not supposed to be figurative at all—e.g. of God—while the religious mind does believe it possesses truth, it would at once admit, if questioned, that it does not possess the whole truth: for example, that it does not know what God is as God himself knows it. The same thing may be expressed by saying that in the end there must be mystery for us; or by the metaphor of seeing through a glass darkly; or by the stronger metaphor of refraction, 'they are but broken lights of Thee.'

All this shows, I was saying, that it is not necessary to religion to take its ideas to be perfectly true or adequate, and that it would be better to be clearly conscious of this. And I wish, before going further, to point out that the question as to these ideas is not one of an alternative true or not-true, but of more or less of truth or adequacy. Metaphor in these matters is always dangerous, but perhaps I may put it thus. It is not a question whether what is seen through the glass is reality or illusion—certainly absolute conviction on that point, in the case of such ideas, is a necessity of religion—it is a question how much the glass is darkened, or, again; whether it is more or less tinted, or even slightly uneven. And—you will see that the metaphor

breaks down here—what I suggested earlier was that for religious purposes that does not greatly matter, if what I see is adorable; and if, again, the darkening or tinting of the glass is not dependent on my good or evil will, but is a necessity of my finite nature. In short, the purpose of religion is the union of will with the object of worship; and, though that requires ideas about this object, it does not require conviction that these ideas are perfectly adequate: the desire for this perfect adequacy is a desire to understand, to satisfy the intellect.

Why is it that this line of thought, which seems so natural and innocent, is viewed with dislike or suspicion by so many religious minds?

(1) First, I answer, because they are unconsciously influenced by the notion that some ideas are perfectly true, and that, therefore, religious ideas ought to be so also. But what are these perfectly true ideas—granted for the moment their perfect truth? Ideas like that of the greenness of a tree, or the equality of twice two to four. The reason, that is to say, why such ideas have this kind of truth is their emptiness, their containing so little meaning, their being so extremely limited or finite. But as you pass to fuller ideas, ideas of larger realities, this kind of truth diminishes. The more meaning the idea has, the less can it be apprehended in perception, like the tree's greenness, or by the intellect as engaged in the very elementary operation of counting. We saw this in the case of the idea of a nation, or justice, or liberty;

they are far beyond the limits of this kind of truth, yet these are still ideas of finite realities. But religious ideas are either ideas of the infinite, or of finite things, events, persons, etc., in their relation to the infinite; and it is therefore in the highest degree absurd to ask that they should have the same kind of exactness as the idea of a tree's greenness. If they had, it would simply mean that the infinite was, like that greenness or that tree, a mere perceptible quality or object.

And then (it is really the same thing in another form) we saw that these literally true ideas are, in another and fuller sense, the least true of ideas; for the most true idea of the object would be that of these objects in their relation to everything else in the universe. In other words, a perfectly true idea of any one thing would include a perfectly true idea of everything else. That means, again, it would be the true idea of the whole or the infinite; and that would be the only true idea. An idea of God, then, though inadequate, though symbolic, is a million times nearer the truth than common-sense ideas of finite things. Indeed, we may boldly say that any religious idea is so—that the notion of a tree as a spirit or god, though exceedingly inadequate, is at least an attempt to grasp something which the notion of a tree as a mere green thing does not even attempt to grasp. In this notion of a tree as a spirit there is struggling into life, in a poor, meagre, distorted fashion, the idea of spirit itself,

and that, fully developed, would be the idea of the infinite.

(2) In the second place there are, of course, religious ideas which, unlike that of the omniscience of God, have to do on one side with matters of fact, finite, sensible fact. An idea of this kind may belong to the sphere of nature (and of such ideas something has been said already); or it may be historical. And it is felt that, so far as this mere matter of fact is concerned, the idea or belief is not more or less inadequate, it is simply true or not true. Now some of these ideas no one would question, but there are others the truth of which is, on intellectual grounds, doubted or denied. An example of what I mean is the story of the Temptation of Christ, and you will easily supply other examples. Here, it is said, there is doubtless a spiritual meaning, but there is also a statement of fact; and this last is not more or less true, it is true or not true. And, it is added, belief in the spiritual meaning is absolutely dependent on belief in the matter of fact.

It lies outside my province to discuss these ideas, and I will add but a very few words of a general kind. I do not think the question of fact is always so simple as is supposed, though I will not dwell on that, but admit fully that in the end there is a question of matter of fact as to which there is an alternative of true or not true; and that here, therefore, the line of thought I have been suggesting does not apply. But to those who say that the spiritual

meaning is necessarily connected with the question of fact I would venture to suggest this. The mere fact, apart from its meaning, would evidently be destitute of religious value. The meaning, apart from the fact, has a great religious value. Neither of these statements, I think, could well be denied. Is it not best then, even if you are certain of the fact, to dwell rather on the meaning? And are you so sure that belief in the latter is necessarily connected with belief in the former? Is it not the case in regard to many other ideas that in the past this necessary connection has seemed to be as clear as, in this case, it seems to you to-day? Yet you yourself perhaps, and certainly thousands of others whom you respect, now use those ideas as merely symbolic of their meaning, and find their whole value in this meaning. And I will add but one word. My intellectual experience in other matters is that when I have given up ideas A.B.C.D. in a given sphere, but have attempted to retain ideas E and F, though they are of just the same kind, I have always come to see in the end that I was mistaken, and that the truth lay in changing my point of view about all these ideas, and looking at them all from another point of view.

(3) In the third place, and lastly, objection is felt to the notion of regarding many religious ideas as more or less inadequate or symbolic, because it is thought to point to the conclusion that the meaning symbolised by these ideas is to be found in philosophy;

in which case philosophy would take the place of religion.

There is here, it seems to me, a mixture of truth with very serious error. Certainly philosophy is the supreme effort made by the intellect to get at truth, to see things in a form perfectly satisfactory to itself, and as little inadequate as possible. And hence it is probable that philosophy, for her purpose of understanding, will change the form of many religious ideas—possibly of all.

But it does not follow on the view thus taken that the philosopher will want to change their form for his religious purpose. That will depend on his individual consciousness. For that purpose he may use many of them as they stand, as other people do. And we must remember that it is not a case of the philosopher on one side and everybody else on the other; for these ideas are not really the same to any two grades of intelligence; they are one thing to a simple-minded peasant, and another to an educated man who has still no training in theology or philosophy, and yet another to the man who has such training.[1]

Next, it is ambiguous to say that the meaning or reality inadequately expressed by religious ideas is to be found in philosophy. I do not mean merely because there are some religious ideas—and perhaps those nearest the centre of religious experience—on

[1] Again, as I pointed out before, if a philosopher uses even strictly philosophical ideas religiously he does not use them in their strictly philosophical form.

which philosophy would perhaps find no occasion for change. What I refer to is this—even on the supposition that philosophy is able to attain to absolute truth, it would not follow that this is simply equivalent to absolute reality. That would follow only on the supposition that this reality is itself pure intellect. Otherwise the absolute truth, supposed to be attained by philosophy, would still be, so to say, only one aspect of this reality. And then we must say it is this whole reality, not only its aspect as absolute truth, that is the further meaning both of the religious and of the philosophical idea; and it would be misleading to say that the meaning symbolised in religious ideas is to be found in philosophy.

In the same way it may be correct to say that beauty is the sensuous appearance of the infinite, and also that philosophical truth is the appearance of the infinite to thought; but it does not at all follow, or at least it would be very ambiguous to say, that beauty is the sensuous appearance of philosophical truth. Art, religion, and philosophy are perhaps rather three ways in which the infinite reveals itself in finite mind; but three specifically different ways, parallel to one another, all necessary and not mutually replaceable, so that in each way something comes which cannot come in any other way. Naturally, from its own point of view, each appears the highest, and so, intellectually, philosophy is the highest, and is bound to claim jurisdiction on ques-

tions of truth ; but that does not show that it is the manner in which man comes most completely into union with the infinite.

Finally, however undeniable the supremacy of philosophy on the side of truth may be, there can be no question of its superseding or taking the place of religion. There is a meaning in speaking of philosophical ideas taking the place of religious ideas, but the notion of philosophy taking the place of religion is really nonsensical. The place of a thing can be taken only by another thing of the same kind, which performs the same office, and religion and philosophy are of different kinds and different offices. Philosophy is purely intellectual, religion is not so. Thinking may, as the philosopher said, be divine worship, but it is so in the full sense only because it is also willing ; and the willing does not appear in the thought-product, the truth, which is the whole concern of philosophy. But the whole concern of religion is by no means its intellectual element ; its concern is union with the divine will, and it is meaningless to speak of an intellectual activity taking the place of that. You might as well speak of theology taking the place of charity, or of the theory of art taking the place of beauty.

We have now to return to the result at which we had arrived by considering the imperfection, from the point of view of religious needs, of a mere worship of ideal humanity ; and, again, of the wor-

ship of a finite god; and, again, of the worship of an abstract infinite. This result was the idea of an infinite being, beyond nature and beyond ourselves, yet in both, and the completion or perfection of both, manifested partially in everything finite, but not equally in everything; not a mere ideal awaiting its fulfilment, but realised and, in the end, the only absolutely real. This idea, as I pointed out, would not be the opposite or the mere denial of the ideas previously discussed: it would contain what was positive in them—the ideal humanity, for example, which our supposed searcher for a creed had worshipped, would now be the manifestation of the infinite. The question was whether the idea of this being was true or had truth, or whether this being was real.

It cannot be my design to attempt a fully reasoned answer to this question. If I were competent to the task it would occupy not only the remainder of this course but the whole of the next. And I could do nothing but repeat more feebly and with less understanding, in ways that happen to appeal to me, what I have gathered from others in the intervals of years given chiefly to other work. I will try merely to give in these last lectures some sort of outline, with some slight indications of its bearing on questions about the nature of man and of religion.

Coming, then, to this question of the truth of that idea of the infinite, I have two words of preface to

add. I ask leave to use at first some terms which will afterwards have to be modified. I will not state them now, for that would only complicate matters, but will refer to them when we come to the modifications. And, secondly, I would ask you to bear in mind that by 'ideas' or 'conceptions' is to be understood their contents, or the matters thought or conceived in them; not merely or mainly certain events or activities of thinking. We are to ask if this idea of the infinite is true.

We saw that the question of the truth of an idea is determined by the intellect or reason, looking at things as a whole, with the one purpose of arriving at truth. For 'truth' means in the end simply what does satisfy reason, or ideas in which the mind can rest. When, then, is it unable to rest in an idea? In the first place, when the idea contradicts itself, or is inconsistent. In that case the mind pronounces at once that, though the idea may point to truth, it cannot be ultimately true, or is not true as it stands; and must be set aside or altered. And, in the second place, if one idea clashes with another, the mind cannot accept both these ideas as true: either, it says, one is true and the other is not so, or neither is true, however much truth one or both may point to. We need go no further than these two requirements at present. For it follows from them that 'truth' means ideas consistent with themselves and with one another, and therefore complete truth would mean an all-inclusive and harmonious whole or system of

ideas. Now truth, or true ideas, it is obvious, imply a mind; a truth means a mind thinking a certain true idea or ideas, or truly conceiving certain portions of experience; complete or absolute truth, therefore, will mean complete or absolute mind or reason, moving in its all-inclusive harmonious whole of ideas. Absolute truth, that is to say, and absolute mind will be one and the same thing. If we imagine mind as an inactive something, apart from true ideas, we are trying to think of a mere abstraction, a non-entity, a form with no content. If, conversely, we imagine the whole of truth as a sort of fixed globe apart from mind, we are equally trying to think of a non-entity, thought-contents without a thought-form or activity. These are really indivisible aspects of one whole.

If, then, we ask whether the idea of the infinite or of infinite mind is true, the answer would seem to be: 'Of course it is: for truth in the end means that, and nothing else can be wholly true. And such truth as *we* reach, or the mind of each of us, knowing truly, is this truth or mind incomplete, finite, limited, and striving to be its full or unlimited self.'

This answer will not satisfy those who are not satisfied already. 'Truth', they will perhaps say, 'does not mean merely this self-consistent whole of ideas or mind. It means the agreement of ideas or the mind with reality. And this self-consistent whole, though it might be absolute truth formally,

might be absolutely false materially, because quite inconsistent with reality.'

This sounds very sensible—only it contains an assumption. It assumes that there is something called reality outside and independent of that whole of ideas or mind; or something, called real, that is not determined by ideas, is not conceived or conceivable; whereas reflection shows that by reality we can only mean something that is so determined, something conceived or conceivable. If you say anything of reality, as that it is 'being' or 'one', this character of 'being' or 'one-ness' that belongs to it is identical with the content of the idea 'being' or 'one'. Whatever other character you assign to it is equally what you think in conceiving that character. If you say of 'reality' that you have no conception of it you contradict yourself, for, in saying that, you are conceiving it, conceiving it as being that of which you have no further conception. If you distinguish it from your conception of it or it as conceived by you, you are in fact distinguishing it, as fully conceived, from it as partially conceived, or a complete idea of it from an incomplete one. Hence, certainly, there is always a difference between reality and our ideas or reality as we conceive it. But this final reality cannot mean something totally unknown or of which there is no idea—for that is a self-contradiction; it means something totally and finally known. If then reality means this it is impossible for the harmonious whole of know-

ledge or truth to be inconsistent with it, for being totally known it must fall within that whole, and the whole of it must be that whole.

We shall arrive at the same result and indeed only be repeating ourselves if, instead of asking whether the idea of the infinite is true, we ask whether the infinite is ' real '. What do we mean by a ' reality '? We mean any item of experience of any kind, apprehended, conceived, interpreted, self-consistently and consistently with the rest of our interpreted experience. Anything that will not bear this test we pronounce to be not real, or not real as it at first appears. The greater part of our common experience has become so familiar that we do not need to apply this test to it. We conceive or interpret habitual appearances like houses, horses, men and the like, in a second ; we are not even aware that we do conceive them, we say we ' see ' they are houses and horses. But of course that is misleading. When we were babies, we did not see they were houses and horses ; it took us a long time to learn to interpret certain visual appearances in that way, and our present so-called seeing is the result of innumerable intricate intellectual processes. We see as a practised pianist reads notes ; there is a sensation of a little black dot, and in much less than a second he reads or interprets it into a note, and he does so interpret it.

Thus, to the mass of our daily experiences we have no need to apply a test, we read it off as he reads his notes, but the moment we are in doubt what an

appearance really is, we apply that test of consistency. If, for instance, we had any reason to suspect that we were subject to illusions, so that we asked 'Is that which looks to me a horse really a horse?' we should find out, perhaps, by trying whether it was sensible to touch, and whether it felt as a horse's skin does feel. If so, the thing conceived as a horse, we should conclude, really is a horse, for there is nothing contradictory in that interpretation. But if our hand found nothing where we saw the horse-image, or found a skin like an Aberdeen terrier's, we should say 'It cannot really be a horse'. Why? Because a reality does not contradict itself, but this appearance conceived as a horse does contradict itself. This is a simple instance, but if we consider any other of the same kind we shall find that reality means the same thing. Thus, if you ask how you determine what a distant appearance which you cannot quite make out really is, a man or a small tree, for example; or whether an event recorded in history really happened or not, you find that you are always looking for a conception which will be consistent with itself and with everything else that you know. So that reality means, so far, something thus conceived.

But now you will remember the result we arrived at before about the tree—and we must recall it here. Let us suppose we have approached the distant object and found it really a tree, yet still the tree really is much more than the tree as we are now

vaguely conceiving it. If we tried to take this conception of it as final, we should find it impossible: the idea would be inconsistent. To get at what the tree really is, we must find out how the botanist conceives it: and, in the end, we saw, the tree must really be the tree perfectly conceived in its place in a universe, every other part of which is perfectly conceived. Nothing short of that can be the real tree; for the tree is determined by its relations to absolutely everything else, and therefore if you conceive it without conceiving every one of these relations, and therefore everything else, you are omitting part of its reality. To know, then, what anything really is you must know the whole. And that means, in other words, that nothing is ultimately real except the whole, for if you try to say that anything short of it is ultimately real you are considering a part in abstraction from the rest, and then it will be inconsistent. It will be pretending to stand alone and be complete, although you know that it has relations to something beyond it.

Reality then seems to mean (1) any item or part of experience conceived consistently with itself and with the rest of experience. And this is what we usually mean by the word, for we draw a line, for practical purposes, at a certain point and refuse to consider the further relations, which in fact means the further being, of the thing. But, when we think, we see that this is illegitimate, and that reality ultimately must mean (2) the whole of experience con-

ceived completely harmoniously. But that means conceived by absolute mind.

Now we saw before that absolute truth means an infinite harmonious system of ideas or thought-contents, and that is exactly what we have now found absolute reality to mean—the whole or system of experience conceived harmoniously. Absolute truth and absolute reality are the same, and both are the same as absolute mind. Or these two, reality and mind, are the same whole, regarded from different aspects: objectively as reality—but that implies a mind experiencing or conceiving it in the contents of this mind; subjectively as mind—but that implies the contents, experience, ideas, of mind. Either, taken apart, is a self-contradictory abstraction. You may speak of it therefore indifferently as reality or as mind; or, if you want to remind yourself of both aspects, you may say, in the terrible phrase of the philosophers, that the absolute or infinite is absolute subject-object. Any partial reality is a form of subject-object, mind conscious of something, or something an object to mind: but the something is less than the whole object, and the mind still finite, short of the whole subject. The ultimate reality is the whole subject-object or absolute experience. Aristotle's phrase *νόησις νοήσεως*, the thought of thought, says the same thing: absolute thought (subject) thinking itself, or its own absolute content (object).

If now the question is repeated, ' But is this being

real, does it exist?' What can that mean? It i equivalent to the absurd question 'Is absolut reality real?' If the question is to be intelligible, i must mean 'But is this idea of the ultimate realit or infinite, after all, self-consistent?' And on thi question we must touch later, for you will remembe that I asked leave to use some language that migh have to be reconsidered. But I think the recurren inquiry 'Is this infinite real? Does it exist?' ha not a perfectly intelligible meaning, but proceed from that rooted prejudice that we have so ofter encountered. The type of reality we have in ou minds is that of perceptible things, which of cours are finite—and a low form of subject-object o reality. What we really mean when we ask whethe the infinite is real or exists is, 'Is it real or does i exist in the same way as these finite objects?' Anc the answer is that of course it does not. If it did how could it possibly be infinite? It would not b itself but a mere part of itself; and we are reall asking 'Is the infinite a part of itself?' This, it wil be confessed, is ridiculous: nor does it accord witl our religious ideas: for we are accustomed to sa that God must be invisible and the like, and canno have a body like a man. And yet we are so much in the habit of associating reality with perceptibl partial realities that we are always hungering afte this preposterous notion of a sensible infinite Though we say that God is invisible, the idea haunt us that he is so merely because our eyes are no

strong enough to see him (darkened glass); like the man of science who swept the heavens with his telescope, and triumphantly announced that he had found no God. If he had found one, he would have demonstrated that there is none. It was fixed in his head as a sacred truth that the real is the finite, and the finite is the real. But we may truly say, on the contrary, that if any finite existence could be absolutely real, there could be no God.

But there is a correlative truth to this. If any finite existence could be totally unreal, there could be no God. All finite beings of course exist, they have their partial reality; if for the present we may for convenience use the terms part and whole (which are not fully appropriate) we must say they are parts of the infinite experience, and if they were not, the infinite therefore would not be. As we saw, it cannot be something else than they; for in that case it would not be infinite: it would have something outside itself, and would be limited by this outside existence. It must therefore contain, or be the unity of, everything finite; and in every atom of our experience we must be in contact with it. Though it is invisible, in everything visible we see it. Even in our errors and illusions it must somehow be present, for they exist, and it is the unity of all existence. Hence philosophers have said in answer to the question 'Can we know the infinite?' we can know nothing else. This answer, and what we have just been saying, may of course mislead. It does so,

if it suggests that the infinite contains the finite as such or as it appears; that it is the aggregate of finite things and persons; that our errors and illusions are in it what they are to us in our error and illusion. We must return to this point, but for the present we may dwell on the result that the infinite must contain, or be the unity of, everything finite.

It may be otherwise expressed by saying that everything finite is a partial appearance or manifestation of the infinite, or the infinite partially appearing or manifested. Any finite existence is thus double-sided. On the one hand, it is not the infinite, but is partial; and this is obvious in the fact that it is not other finite things, that, e.g., any one of us is not any other, but each is only a fragment of the whole. This is the negative side. On the other hand, any finite existence manifests the infinite or, to put it otherwise, has the infinite in it; and this again is obvious in the fact that in trying to know anything as it really is, you are led beyond it and must try to know everything else. The first or negative aspect is expressed by the term 'appearance'; the second, or positive aspect, by the term 'manifestation', which again means partial reality. I prefer the latter because it does imply partiality, and yet it indicates the positive aspect, and does not suggest to anyone the misleading idea that the finite is simply unreal.[1]

[1] The term 'appearance' is apt to mislead, because it suggests that the finite is illusory, or even somehow totally unreal—a

Now a further step. All finite existences are partial manifestations of the infinite, but they differ greatly. Some are less full and some more full expressions of it. They differ, in other words, in the degree of their approach to the infinite, according to which we may call them higher or lower in the scale. And we may express this in various ways. The place of a finite existence in the scale depends on the question how partial it is; how much of the infinite appears in it; how much of the whole is ignored when you consider it by itself; how much it would have to be filled out, and therefore changed, in order to express the infinite fully; how near it comes to being a self-dependent harmonious whole; how much it contradicts itself, for contradict itself in some degree it must, (*a*) because, if it was perfectly self-consistent, it would be the infinite; or, again, (*b*) because the whole is in it and yet appears in it but partially. If you test, say, a grain of sand and a horse in this way, you find that they differ greatly. You ignore much more of the whole in conceiving a grain of sand than in conceiving a horse: for in conceiving a horse you take into account not only the sphere of existence to which the grain of sand belongs, but spheres above that, the vegetable and animal kingdoms. Hence, again, the grain of sand

meaningless idea—whereas it ought to suggest only that in the finite the infinite does appear or show itself, but does so only partially; and that if you take this partial appearance as absolute or total, or as the infinite itself, you are under an illusion.

would have to be supplemented and changed even more than the horse before it could express the whole fully. That means, again, that it is less of a self-dependent whole than the horse. The latter is at least a unity of diverse members and functions; it assimilates other substances and converts them into its own nature; it changes and yet remains the same. It is a kind of living system. If you compare, again, a horse and a man in these respects you find the man much the higher, as well as in the more obvious respect that he is mind.

Let us return to a point already touched on, and observe by way of illustration how the difference of higher and lower shows itself in regard to the perceptibility of anything. The infinite can present itself as such, or in its fulness, in no single form—cannot be perceived, therefore, as such—this is the one side: on the other hand it is perceived partially or fragmentarily in absolutely every form. Finite existence then (if we consider this test alone: others may interfere and modify the result) will be higher according as, on the one hand, it is less able to be perceived as such, and, on the other hand, presents itself partially over a wider field. This means, roughly, the higher it is, the less you can see, hear, touch it, the more you must think it: and yet, in its parts, the more will it show itself to sense. For instance, a grain of sand presents more of its being to sight than a horse does, and a horse than a man: for you cannot see a horse's feelings and inward

actions, and with a man there is a vast inner world that you cannot see. Or, to put it otherwise, you can take in a great deal more of a grain of sand by looking at it and touching it than you can of a man. On the other hand a man is perceptible indirectly a million times more than a grain of sand by his actions and products. By the same test a state, or again a church, is a higher existence than a man; as a whole it has no single outward form as a man has, and if you want to see it thus you must do so through a makeshift representative, a Pope or other visible head: yet its perceptible operations and manifestations are many million times greater than a man's. It is thus everywhere (*exceptis excipiendis*). It is a sign of lowness, distance from the infinite, want of reality, to be immediately perceptible: the higher anything is the more spiritually has it to be apprehended, yet the greater amount of existence it covers.

Take another test. The infinite is everything, and yet is absolutely one: it is the unity of all differences, a unity so pervasive that every difference or part, truly apprehended, would reveal the whole. And so the higher any finite existence, the liker it is to the infinite in these respects. It covers a wider field of appearances, has (we have just seen) more differences in it, but it also unites them in a more intense unity. What we call the inorganic is a low form of finite being because it has so little unity. Its parts lie outside one another, and, though you divide it, each

part will retain much of its original nature. Break up a lump of clay and each fragment has still the character it had in the lump—a rough statement. But if you do this with an organism, say a plant, you destroy it: its parts are not mere parts but members; the principle of the whole, the unity, is in each. If you cut it in pieces, therefore, the pieces die, or they change into another kind of existence, which is not united in a whole of that pervasive kind. When you come to animal organisms, this unity is still the same[1]—and the higher the animal the less will it bear division; and also the unity now appears in a totally new shape, the whole feels: there is the beginning of soul, or self, or spiritual unity. And this develops in man enormously, so that his soul or self or mind is far the most intense unity we have: its parts are not outside each other any more, they are elements which flow into and through one another. And, observe, it is not only the unity of what we call the soul in distinction from the body, but of the whole, which has these two aspects. The man wills and his body moves in response. He can only act in and through his body, and if the soul is sick, so in some degree or way is the body, and vice versa.

[1] The unity of a plant is of course less intense than that of an animal—witness the possibility of propagation by cuttings or of dividing a root to produce a second plant. The author's language is thus inaccurate, but he clearly intends to illustrate his point by the scale of increasing intensity in three broad types of unity—viz. inorganic, vegetable and animal.

This leads to another point. The higher is not only higher than the lower, but it includes it. The animal kingdom contains physical elements, and chemical and vegetable, as well as animal. The man contains all that the animal does, and again more. Man, in the old phrase, is a microcosm: whatever there is outside him there is also in him: he concentrates in himself all that exists separately in nature, so that to understand him would be to understand physics and chemistry and botany and zoology, as well as what is distinctive of man. And so the infinite, which is beyond him, includes him and more. It is the all-inclusive unity.

Only we must observe again in passing, that the lower is included in the higher, not in its original form, but in a new combination, a unity which infuses its own nature on everything that enters into it; and, as we saw, the higher the unity, the more intense and pervasive it is. There is not in strictness anything merely physical or chemical or animal in the man. He is not these elements plus something else, but this unity of them in a new form, though for practical purposes it is sometimes convenient to ignore this, and to treat what we call the body as if it were not the body of a soul, nor even vital nor even chemical. And so the infinite will be a unity which unites absolutely everything, all the finite, but in its own element, and not as these finite existences appear apart from it. That it is the aggregate of these is the vulgar notion of Pantheism.

Let us try to sum up what has been said of these distinctions of value in the finite in the formula that the higher is the more spiritual, as it must be if the infinite is infinite mind or spirit. Only we must be on our guard against the associations of that word. We are apt to understand by it, when we first hear it, the mere opposite of the natural, and so it seems to suggest something thin and spectral. But, we have seen, the higher is not the mere opposite of the lower, but contains it and unites it in its own higher element. And so it is with what we call our soul or spirit. This we distinguish from the body, but it is not something apart from the body. It is the living concentration of all the natural elements and forces that meet in the body, and, as we have seen, that means all the elements of nature: and the body, again, is in ceaseless interaction and interchange with these as they exist and work outside it. The spirit, then, is the unity of all these elements and forces. It is their negative unity, certainly, for they are not in it what they would be for themselves; and again it can abstract itself in thought and will from them all, and even from its natural aptitudes—and in that sense is free from them. Still it *is* their concentration; and that is obvious in the fact that this spirit, this 'I', which does thus abstract itself, has a definite character which but for them it would not have: each of us has a distinct natural endowment, and the self or spirit is a mere abstraction or form if you leave this out of account. And again

this self or spirit expresses itself in and through these natural elements and forces. It is free not only from them but in them; and its full freedom would be that it should find them perfectly subdued to its own element, and so expressive of it and not of their separate natures. It is not a ghost, and it is higher not merely because it is immaterial, but because it is the most intense and far-reaching unity of the natural or material. If we bear this in mind, we avoid the danger of thinking of the spiritual as something thin and empty.

We should perhaps see things in general more truly if we looked at them occasionally from this point of view, if we ignored for the time being our current distinctions of nature and spirit, or matter and mind, and looked at everything in the same way. We should understand 'natural' to mean relatively narrow, poor, separate, disconnected; 'spiritual' to mean full, variegated, united. Everything would then be more or less natural, more or less spiritual. Everything consists of differences or—if you like—parts, it is thus natural: everything is a unity of differences or parts, and therefore spiritual. Everything is perceptible (actually or possibly) on one side, imperceptible, only thinkable, on the other. A thing is more spiritual the greater the amount of its differences, of what it concentrates into unity, and the more intense and pervasive the unity in which it concentrates them. A man is more spiritual than a horse, and a horse than a grain of sand, for this

reason. And man is natural-spiritual, instead of being completely spiritual like the infinite, because the variety he concentrates is still limited, and the unity not entirely pervasive; natural (if for the moment I may put it so) not because he has a body, but because his body is not the universe and his soul is not God: he falls short on both sides. And so the absolutely spiritual will not be some new sort of spirit, discontinuous from these imperfect grades of the spiritual, but the spiritual, as we find it in all these grades and most in man, carried further, carried to its perfection, the unity containing them all as *its* experience—a whole in which there is nothing natural in the sense of disconnected, separate, exclusive of other being, expressive only of itself. It might, in a sense, be called absolute love, because this egoism of the parts has vanished, and each freely communicates its being to every other, gives itself up to every other, is itself in being what seemed not-itself. So in the sphere of the finite—the manifestation or partial appearance—anything will be higher, the nearer it approaches to this perfectly spiritual life.

And this our experience confirms. We cannot get rid of our finitude. There is always for us a not-self in which we find ourselves but partially; but our best moments are those in which we most get rid of the sense of opposition and separation, feel ourselves one with other selves and with everything else, so that it all seems beautiful and good. All our highest

experience in feeling, perceiving, knowing, acting, is in the end a form of love, a doing away of separation. From the mere flash of joy at a beautiful sight, or the simplest act of kindness, up to that love of the many members of one body that St. Paul described, it is an experience of dissolving barriers and a fore-feeling of the divine life.

CHAPTER X

MAN AS FINITE INFINITE

TOWARDS the close of the last lecture reference was made to the idea that all finite existence is a partial manifestation of the infinite, and that various forms differ in value according to the degree in which they manifest it, and this difference was illustrated in several ways which all pointed in the same direction.

Coming then to the question whether this idea is true, or this infinite real, we found that we must answer ' Yes ', because truth and reality prove in the end to be merely other names for this idea or this infinite. An idea fails of truth, an appearance fails of reality, just in proportion as it is discordant with itself and with other ideas or appearances ; which means in the end just in proportion as it is not an all-inclusive harmonious whole. If it were so, we should say it was perfectly true or real : that is, the final truth or reality is this whole. It makes no difference whether you start from the positive idea of it and, finding it perfectly self-consistent, pronounce it to be true, or whether you start from any given bit of finite experience and, finding it partial and inconsistent, pronounce it to be not wholly real and so are driven on to the idea of an all-inclusive and har-

monious whole of experience. Whether you start —as people say—from an idea in your mind, or—as they say—from a fact given to it, in either case you use the same criterion of truth and reality; and if by reflection you force that into consciousness, it turns out to be this idea of the infinite. And if you try to set up an alternative to it you find this alternative is already included in it, or else is self-contradictory or meaningless.

Going on to consider the various forms of manifestation in the finite, and how they differ in value or truth, according as they manifest the infinite more or less partially, we glanced at certain ways in which this difference shows itself: for example, the higher existence is, as a whole, less perceptible than the lower, but, on the other hand, shows itself fragmentarily to perception over a much wider field. It contains a greater mass of variety, but in a more intense and pervasive unity; it includes what is below it, but, in including it, impresses its own nature on it and changes it into an expression of that. What we call the more spiritual is in these ways the higher, as well as in the more usual sense; and it also appeared that the perfectly spiritual would include all possible experience in a unity so pervasive that it would express itself completely throughout this experience, so that no atom of it would conflict with any other or be merely its own separate self. That would be infinite spirit.

Let us now pursue this line of thought a little

further. It seems to follow from this idea of the infinite, as we saw in contrasting it with the idea in philosophic Brahmanism, that (1) on the one hand, the distinctions of the finite cannot be simply lost or eliminated in the infinite; (2) and on the other hand, they cannot there, or in their ultimate reality, be as they appear in separation or as partial manifestations; or, in other words, that in some sense and in various degrees they must surrender their 'individuality'. But I want here merely to ask what light is thrown on these conclusions by observation of the differences between higher and lower in the sphere of the finite.

(1) The higher or more spiritual, we saw, is not the more empty or uniform, but the more full and varied; and it is so because it includes the lower. Man is physical, chemical, animal, and he does not lose these properties in subordinating them all to his own unity. His mind, again, the mind or spirit in him, does not, as it advances, contain less distinction, but more; it keeps what it had but adds to it and refashions it. A great intellect or a great character is not less variegated than a small one; the greatest intellect possesses the most variety, the greatest character would be also the richest and would contain the largest number of elements. Certainly it would also be the most intense unity: its elements would all bear its peculiar impress and serve its purposes, they would not be a mob of anarchic individuals, but its elements and powers.

But this does not imply that the distinctive quality of each would vanish. If that were lost, the unity would not be their perfection but their annihilation, and it, on its side, would be the unity of nothing, would have no content, would be a ghost. And so it is everywhere. The less spiritual, smaller or lower, becomes an element in, and a distinction of, the greater or higher; but, in doing so, what it parts with is not its distinctive nature, but something of its isolation, exclusiveness, finitude. A perception, or the perceptible quality of a thing, is not lost in a conception of the thing or in the thing as conceived. It is retained, but rearranged and modified: else the conception would be empty, a bad conception. The tree of botany remains green, though its greenness has not the comparative isolation and the disproportionate prominence it possesses in common perception. A note does not cease to be when it is a note in a melody, nor does it cease to be itself: if it did, we should have a different tune, and if all the notes in the melody lost themselves, there would be no tune at all. I do not lose myself, or put away my distinctive qualities, in being the member of a family or a nation. And when a sound is more than a sound, when it is a word with a meaning, it is still a sound; it is so even when it means (as in the word 'God') the absolute whole of meaning.

If this, then, is the nature of progress or the growth of spirituality in finite existence, its goal must be the completion of this process, not its

reversal. Spirit or mind in us, in ceasing to be finite, cannot shed its content—the world of its experience—but must complete and fully harmonise it. Thus, it would seem, the infinite cannot be a blank uniformity in which all distinctions have vanished: there can be nothing in the whole universe, the quality of which has vanished there.

(2) On the other hand, nothing in the infinite, or as it *really* is, can be precisely what it is for itself, or as finite, or as it *appears*. In all those instances there is a loss (if we choose to call a loss what is really a gain) on the part of the separate being. It does surrender its isolation or exclusiveness, for these are what make it partial, and contradictory of others, and so of itself. The merely perceptible elements in a thing are not in the conception what they were in perception. The note in the melody has lost its independence; it is not heard as its mere self; it has become a function in a wider whole. If I am to love and serve my friends, or family, or country, I must come out of my dear little ego and disturb it, and sometimes hurt it. And, if we call this the loss of individuality, doubtless with every step forward in spirituality or towards the infinite, individuality is lost, and in the infinite none will be left, for there can be nothing there that is merely its own. But then this idea of individuality as that which is merely its own, though familiar, is very deceptive. We are haunted by a fear that what is common is not ourself, that if we want to get at that,

we must strip away, like the coats of an onion, the various spheres to which we belong, or the various relations in which we stand—country, city, family, friendship, art, literature, religion, games, and so on —as appendages, that if we do this we shall reach at last a solid core called 'ourself', or 'individuality', or 'personality', which is none of these, but belongs solely to itself. But even if we could find this core it would be worthless, and we should indignantly repudiate the notion that it was ourself. This whole method of reduction is surely a blind alley in philosophy, and in practice it is the essence of vanity and egoism. Evil, in fact, is the attempt at this complete isolation of the part from the whole. And if this notion of individuality were not so mischievous, how ludicrous it would be! What could be more absurd than an atom standing on its private right, and protesting that to enter into relations with other atoms would be an unendurable loss, and that to form part of a world was as good as annihilation; or a note declining, on the ground of its own dignity, to enter into a melody of Beethoven's; or a drop of blood in my body declaring that to be in my body was an infringement of its individuality, and clamouring to be set free and allowed to be its own self? Should we not answer it, 'You poor little idiot, your real self is the body you belong to, and you have no self and no life out of it; if I did set you free, instead of being yourself, you would die; or, rather, you would not be able to assert your individuality even

so much as that, but would begin at once to be part of another but lower form of being, for the universe will permit nothing to be for the most infinitesimal fraction of time a being simply for itself: that would mean absolute evil and eternal death.'

It is true, then, that in the infinite the finite loses its independent and separate being; but it loses what it never really had, and to lose this is to gain its true being, which is always life in community and here in the absolute community.

Hence a soul, an atom which feels and knows, can hold out no more appalling prospect to itself than to exist for ever and ever in absolute isolation; and goodness, which is peace, is in all its forms the dying of this illusory atomic centre into the life of others with which it forms a whole; and the stirring of religion is the feeling that my only true self in the end is God, to be a pulse-beat of his infinite life, to feel and know that I am that and nothing but that, and that this horrible core of selfishness in my heart, that parts me from him, is not there in his eyes at all, but melts like ice before the sun when I give myself utterly up to him, and begins to form itself again only to remind me that he is life, and that I cannot live in his life but shall freeze to death if I do not continually open my heart to him. Is that to lose my life, my individuality, or to find it? It *is* to lose it, if individuality means that which is itself and only itself. But it is to find it, if the true being of the finite is to be—not nothing—but a distinction of the

infinite, a note in the music of the spheres, or a word whose meaning is God.[1]

(3) Thus, it seems, nothing finite can be lost in the infinite and, on the other hand, nothing finite can be there as finite or in its character as appearance, but everything must be changed. Or, to put it otherwise, if we could see it there, or as it really is, it would not look as it does now. But—the third point—in this respect there must be an immense difference between finite existences. The lower, emptier, less spiritual anything is, the more must it be changed from its separate self.[2] On the other hand, the higher or more spiritual a finite existence, the smaller the gap between the thing as it looks and the thing as it really is—obviously so, because the higher it is, the more it manifests the infinite. And considering what this is, what comes nearest to it must be mind or spirit in finite beings at its fullest and best ; and this will mean—if we speak roughly, and if we look back to that religion of ideal humanity—beauty, goodness and truth, so far as we can attain them—or mind, producing and enjoying beauty,

[1] This paragraph was bracketed in MS.

[2] For example, to put it figuratively, if a musician went to heaven, he would not expect to hear a single note, but might not be surprised to hear the Sanctus of Bach's Mass or the melody in the last movement of the Choral Symphony. And yet a single note is a far higher form of existence than Space or Time or mere matter or any such extremely abstract and therefore self-contradictory expression of the whole. They must need, therefore, a far more radical change, though their distinctive quality cannot wholly vanish.

realising goodness (religion is the highest form of that), knowing its whole contents truly, so far as that may be. This is the spirit in us, or what we call 'our' mind, striving to surmount its last barriers, or free itself from the last shred of its separation; and this same spirit, that goal attained, would be the infinite.

I feel that I ought to apologise for having touched so briefly and vaguely on this theme, and equally for the few words I have to add. It may be asked 'Have we any knowledge of the infinite as this unifying of all experience, in which the distinctions of the finite are present, not as conflicting, but simply as *its* distinctions?' If what was said at the beginning of the last lecture about truth and reality holds good, we certainly have such a knowledge. It is very abstract, no doubt, but still it must be true, if there is no alternative which is not either included in it or meaningless. Nor are we without indications of the manner in which the limitation and contradiction which we find in finite existence may pass into harmony; for everything we have seen of the differences between lower and higher, and the way in which the former is continued but changed in the latter, is such an indication.[1]

[1] And we might illustrate the same thing from religion, e.g. from our experience of the turning of evil into good for those who surrender their own will to the divine will. On the other hand, it seems, we do not reach the goal of this progress, nor are we able to see how all contradictions are resolved, though driven to conclude that they must be so.

I need not dwell upon this. The further question is whether our experience is of such a kind that a mere extension of it could ever reach this goal. It may be held—for reasons into which I will not go—that this is not so, and it would follow that the infinite mind or spirit itself (though not separate from ours) must be more than such an extension. And this would imply that when we apply to it ideas derived from our own experience, we should always have to do so with a proviso: we should speak of thought or will, knowledge or goodness, of consciousness or self-consciousness, personality or love, as it, or as belonging to it in a way of its own, beyond our way; and should have to assign as far as possible the mode of difference in the two cases, or the defect of our way. And so—this is the modification of which I spoke at the beginning of the last lecture—what was said then of conceptions or conceived realities would have to be taken with this proviso. We saw an example of this difficulty in speaking of the idea of omniscience. But I shall not scruple to use the language hitherto used. This is an instance, I may add, of the questions which are not of consequence to religion. It is of consequence to religion whether the infinite is something below consciousness or self-consciousness—that is, unconscious or impersonal. But whether it is not something above self-consciousness, whether it is perfectly accurate to speak of it as self-conscious, or whether that term still implies some

touch of limitation, is not of importance for religion.

If from the point we have now reached we turn our attention to man, we can see that there is an essential contradiction in his nature, and that it is in religion that this contradiction reaches its highest point, and is also most fully overcome. It lies at bottom in the fact that man is at once infinite and finite, and in religion these two aspects of his nature openly confront one another, and yet seek to be reconciled. But religion in this is only the final expression, or summing up, of man's whole life.

All his most intense and vital experience is experience of this contradiction. It differs, and falls, one may say broadly, into two kinds, according as he is most keenly aware of the contradiction itself or of the forms in which it is in some degree solved, according therefore as his experience is painful or joyous. But in each kind the other is implied: the sting of pain and failure is a sort of surprise and resentment on the part of something in us which expects boundless satisfaction and development; and in the rapture of joy there is, on the other hand, a sort of astonishment that a being so confined as ourselves can free himself so far from his limitations. These experiences, familiar in daily life in their lower degrees, are portrayed in their higher in all the greatest expressions of the mind in art and literature and religion. And, outside religion proper, the

greatest of all perhaps, or at least those which seem to reveal to us the fullest truth, are the experiences which portray the contradiction at its height and yet point beyond it; such as Athenian or Shakespearian tragedy, or the Divine Comedy, or the mightiest creations of Michael Angelo and Beethoven, in all of which man appears, we may say, as at once in Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven.

Let us now try to state in abstract terms the source and nature of this contradiction in man. All finite being, we have seen, is contradictory, because the infinite is in it, or it expresses the infinite, and yet expresses it imperfectly. Its real meaning, what it wants to be, its true self, is this infinite or the whole; but it actually is an exceedingly limited part.

Now man (and whatever other finite spirit there may be) is in the same way contradictory: but just because he comes so much nearer to the infinite than other finite things, the contradiction in him forces itself into his notice, while its presence in other finites does not strike the unreflective mind. The infinite is in him, as it is in every other finite, but it is also in him in a new and different manner. On one side (to speak broadly) he is a part of nature, one being among innumerable others: subject to the laws of matter, servile to all the skyey influences, the battlefield of millions of microbes, a thing that arises and perishes. But on the other side he is not a thing at all. The infinite, which itself is mind, appears in him *as* mind, and not merely as an object

to mind. He is not, so to say, a mere item in the whole: he is a repetition of the principle or centre of the whole, or, rather, he *is* this principle, appearing in its own form, though not fully. And yet it appears thus as constituting somehow one being with that minute fragment of nature—for man is *one* being, not a juxtaposition of two. Can anything be more contradictory?

The consequence is that man's experience is full of divisions, and he himself seems even to divide into two selves. Being infinite he makes the most unbounded demands, like Faust: he aspires to know, possess, enjoy everything. But since he is only a minute portion of the whole these demands are utterly unrealisable, and he has to learn that it is not he, the composite being, that is infinite, but something in him, which *is* he, and yet not merely he, and to which he must sacrifice himself. This wider or true self (which is really the infinite in him) confronts him as conscience or the moral law, or, again, as the moral wholes of family, society, the nation, and the like, to which he belongs. He identifies himself, as particular, with them, feels them and their welfare as at once himself and his welfare, and something wider than these; finds his happiness and good in them, though to do so he has to subordinate his particular self to them and, more or less, sacrifice and deny it.[1] This is his morality. But he goes beyond

[1] And he *can* do the opposite, he can assert the particular self against them, he can even bestow on it the infinity that belongs

it. It is still finite and imperfect. It neither reveals the whole infinite nor can it completely fill the unlimited form in himself. Beyond it, containing it but transcending it, there dawns on him the infinite itself: it reveals itself to him, or he becomes conscious of it—this is the same fact seen from opposite sides. And—as in morality—he is aware of himself in particular as distinguished from it, dependent on it, bound to sacrifice himself to it, and yet longing for it, aware of it as his own deepest and truest self, from which he is parted and which he must rejoin. It is the infinite content which alone can fill the infinite form in him. All this is the consequence of the contradiction in man.

The further consequence is, we must admit, that no words can well be more ambiguous than the words 'man', 'human', 'humanity'. You can make the most conflicting statements about man and yet be right. What is true of him in one aspect is false of him in another. He is deity inchoate, and again he is the very opposite of God; 'he', in these two clauses, has really two different senses, and yet in both it stands for 'man'. So, again, it is true enough in one sense that God is merely the universal essence of man, and even that man makes God in his

of right to them, and make it the centre. That is evil. It is in a sense natural, because that particular self owes its existence to his being one among other ones, a part of nature: yet a *merely* natural being is incapable of it; it requires a being potentially infinite: it is the divine in man that makes evil possible to him as well as good.

own image: but the reason is that this man is already the image of God, and it is only of man in this sense that the statements have any truth. Again, God and man may be spoken of as simply exclusive of one another. Man is so conscious of himself and God when in religion he is aware of himself as merely particular and sinful; and in that case we must say man is totally destitute of goodness and power: he owes everything to God. But of man, in another sense, it would be almost meaningless to say this, for he not only has something implicitly divine in him but is united in will with God.

We said before how ambiguous the word 'man' is, when we were considering the statement that the ideal is produced by man and consists in the perfection of man; and confusion is constantly arising from the fact that we start with the first notion of man that we find in our heads, and use it without examination as if it were quite a simple truth, and he a simple being, and as if the only difficulty were to find out what God is. Yet, if I may say so, there would be no difficulty there if we could find out what we ourselves are. That is what we fancy we know best, and yet, if anything could be called intrinsically unknowable, it is man. What is complete might, at least by itself, be known completely: but it is the essence of man to be incomplete. We ourselves are something passing beyond ourselves: all our experience has broken edges, and edges that are for ever shifting, like the edge of an advancing tide.

Man is not, he becomes: he is neither limited being nor unlimited, but the passage of limited being into unlimited; a search for his own perfection, which lies beyond him and is not himself but God.

If we look at man first on the intellectual and then on the moral side, we shall find that the same doubleness presents itself in both regions. And the centre of the matter is always that contradiction—he is, on the one hand, a mere part of the whole, or an object. On the other, he is not a part at all, but the principle of the whole or the form of the whole, or the potential subject of all finite objects—though this is not yet apparent in its fulness. And the plain fact that may bring this home to us is this: we are the visible things that stand or sit here, and are inconceivably insignificant fractions even of the visible world: but we, as conscious, overlap not only that world but absolutely everything; within 'me' as conscious, as subject, appears not only this visible me, but you and the stars and God himself. It all appears imperfectly, but the imperfection is not that the circle in which it appears is finite, for it is absolutely infinite and has no outside at all. It is conterminous with the infinite. The 'me' that is conscious is not me, the visible part, any more than the 'you' that is conscious is you, the visible part, but it is identical in us and in all mind, it is the principle of the whole. This fact is the origin of the theory of solipsism, that I am the universal or infinite, a misinterpretation of the fact, but valuable as forcing

one to realise it. And this fact, again, is the reason why it is useless to argue ' I am finite and therefore cannot conceive the infinite '. The I, that argues thus, *is* conceiving the infinite, in however meagre a way : it, itself, is dividing the whole into two parts called finite and infinite, both of which appear in its field of consciousness. It cannot therefore be merely finite. There is no getting rid of the fact that its field, however unsatisfactorily filled, is in outline the whole field, conterminous with that of absolute mind.

Let us look at this matter first on the intellectual side. There are some who will be familiar with the phrases ' universal self ' and ' particular self '. The universal self, or subject, is that principle just spoken of. There is no need to trouble ourselves now with the question whether this phraseology is ultimately satisfactory, but we must try to get at the fact that it attempts to express. Perhaps any effort to do this may be of some use, if only because the difficulties one finds may be the same that others find. But let me say by way of preface that the thing to be avoided is the temptation, due to our wanting to picture what can only be thought, to suppose that this universal self or subject is one thing, somewhere away from particular subjects, and these, again, are other things, apart from it. We shall never see the fact that way. But it is impossible to avoid language which seems to imply this.

Thus, I am myself in particular, or am a parti-

cular self, obviously, because I am not other selves nor other things, and much less the whole of these. I am a small part.

I say this and hold it is *true*.

Now what is the I that says this? It is clearly not exactly the same as my particular self, the small part of the whole. For that is merely one of its objects. It stands above all these objects and thinks of them, and of the particular self as one among them It is subject, and subject to which the whole is object—which does not imply that it knows all the detail of the whole. It is myself as the form or activity of thinking or knowing, a form capable of holding a variety of particular contents. As such it is universal. It is so as against every particular content that it thinks or knows. And, when it thinks truly, it thinks a content harmonious with it and with itself. It is so in a further sense. In thinking truly I think, not what I in particular happen to suppose, but what has nothing to do with my particular opinion, or yours, or anybody else's, but what is the same for all of us so far as we are thinking truly, what is true always and everywhere, what is totally unaffected by our particular places in time or space. I, in thinking it, ignore everything that belongs to my mind as different from yours, you do the same—that is part of what we mean by the thought being true. I, simply as thinking it, am exactly the same as you, simply as thinking it. As thinking it, then, we are not our particular selves but universal. Or,

what thinks in our particular selves is a universal self.

That this is so can be brought home to us by comparing thought (which is essentially universal) with feeling. I have, let us say, a headache. The self that feels this headache is mine in particular: you may feel headache too; but your feelings are not mine, nor mine yours: and our feelings are certainly not unaffected by our particular places in time and space: on the contrary, we have them just because we are creatures occupying these places. Suppose, however, that with a view to avoid headache, we try to learn about its cause, to understand it, to think it—at once our universal self comes into play again, and we should do our best to prevent our particular feeling-selves from influencing it. We want the truth about headache, and that, if we could reach it, would be exactly the same for us all, and exactly the same whatever headache we might feel.

There is then a universal self or at any rate[1] subject that thinks in us. It is a thinking form, if you like, and any possible content of thinking will be in it. Imagine it, then, completely filled, thinking absolutely all possible content, and it will be absolute subject-object, or the infinite as thought.[2]

Now let us look at another side of the matter. I, as this universal true-thinking subject, am clearly

[1] 'Self or at any rate'. These words were written within brackets in the MS.

[2] We have seen difficulty as to this, but do not let it divert us from our present point.

not simply identical with I, as this particular subject that feels and has erroneous opinions. And yet, as our illustration shows, the two are in some sense the same. I cannot doubt that I, who feel headache, and I who think it, am, as we say, one and the same person; and (generally) that I, to whom the whole universe potentially is object, am one with the particular self which is a mere part of that object. The universal self, identical in you and me, uses your brain to think with, and mine; and they are particular, not the same. *It* thinks, but the exhilaration or fatigue of thinking belongs, at any rate primarily, to you not me, to me not you. Again, the content of the thought is the same or universal, but the thought, considered as an event, is particular in each of us. The universal thinking subject, that is, is not a separate mind, another subject than you and I and all finite particular minds, it *is* all particular minds, in so far as thinking truly and therefore identically. In other words (on the intellectual side which alone we are considering) when the particular self, in thinking, ignores, gives up, denies, its mere particularity—its mere feelings, errors, private opinion, all that is not true—in doing so it becomes or *is* the universal self. Or (it is the same thing looked at from the other end) the universal self is the infinite in me, negating what is merely particular or finite in me, what is merely me, and so making me, not a particular over against it, but a particularisation or expression of itself.

This is an example of what we saw before when, finding the idea of the abstract infinite insufficient, we tried to amend it. The infinite, we saw, cannot be infinite if it merely negates or excludes the finite, it must include it ; but it cannot include it *as* finite, it can only do so by denying it as finite, removing its finitude, and making it an expression of itself. Conversely, the finite can only unite itself with the infinite by denying itself as finite, and in that self-denial it is one with the infinite, it is a distinction of the infinite. The phrase 'particular self', then, it will follow, has two meanings—(1) It is myself as merely particular, as full of fancies, private opinions, errors—the particular and finite as against the universal and infinite which thinks truth. That has to be given up. (2) It is myself as thinking truly, because I have given up that mere particularity : and this is not particular as against the universal self, but is a particularisation, particular function, of that.

Conversely, the universal self is not another self, existing side by side with all these particular selves, it is these particular selves in so far as their own particularity is given up, or is the unity of which they are the functions or the functions in unity. And so here, in this abstract element of thinking, we find what we saw to be the essence of religion. That is an example of what the great men are always telling us. The truth, the secret of things, God, is not something far off and clouded in impenetrable

mystery ; it is within us, and the very centre of our being, and we have only to look there to find it. To prove God is not only impossible, it is a senseless endeavour, because God is already implied in the very centre of the thought which sets out to prove him. All you can do is to make this implication clear.[1]

We can now see, still considering man only on the intellectual side, what a contradiction he is. He is a particular organism in which the universal self thinks, or he is this universal subject thinking in a particular organism. This in its fulness would be

[1] [Before we pass from intellectual to moral experience let us look at our result about man. He is a particular being or part of the whole which yet has in it the principle of the whole, and but for this he never would conceive the whole or arrive at the idea of the infinite. If you regard him as this composite being, you must not on the one hand say that *he* produces this idea or the idea of God, for it is not he as particular that does so, but *it* that reveals itself in him : but, on the other hand, you must not oppose him to God, and God to him, as though they were two things which had nothing in common, for God is *in* him so that he is not merely human, and for the same reason God is really human-divine not simply divine. But again the identity is realised only by the self-negation of man in so far as he is merely human; man cannot (even on this intellectual side) reach God by trying to extend his particular self affirmatively, but only by giving it up and so allowing it to be the channel or particularisation of the divine thought. Lastly, this thought or the universal self in man is never the infinite, or God, in its full perfection ; it is that formally but as a form only partially filled up. And there remains the question, touched on before, whether its complete filling up does not imply a passing beyond the merely intellectual, beyond thought as *we* know it, into a kind of apprehension which includes thought but brings it back into something more intuitive.] *The above note was in brackets in the MS.*

absolute subject-object, the thinking form active in the total content, mind knowing the whole truly, or the whole of being perfectly aware of itself. In man it is limited or finite, because of its connection with the particular organism, but still is *formally* infinite or is present as the infinite form. Hence man is conscious not only of this and that object but of the whole, and nothing could fall outside this whole which is present in his consciousness. Hence also he connects the little that he does know in the shape of a whole, a system, into which everything at present unknown to him will be fitted, and this, expanded and reorganised, would be the absolute object (content) correlative to the absolute subject (form). But then the expansion would be immeasurable. For the form is filled up very partially, i.e. the man's knowledge is very small; and, for that reason, too, the knowledge he has is imperfectly systematised. The reason is his particularity, or the extreme partiality of the organ through which the universal thinks. It is a body in space and time, one of innumerable others. All the stuff which the infinite form in connection with the body has to organise into knowledge comes piece by piece, and in a confused mass of feelings, and what comes is but a tiny fragment of the whole. It *is* organised, for the thought in man is the universal subject or mind, and so the structure of this mind works all experience into its own form, and the matter that comes to it has implicitly the same structure; the same categories,

or modes of connecting the items of experience, are in thought and in the stuff it works on. But the result is most imperfect, even when the individual man unites with the matter that comes directly through his body all that he can gather of human experience in other times and places. And, again, the thought in him is intermittent: he sleeps and forgets, dies: *it* in its fulness would do neither. And so he is the glory, jest, and riddle of the world. His knowledge is miserably limited; but because the unlimited is in him, he knows it is limited, and is aware of a boundless possibility of knowledge. He is conscious of all he knows, and conscious, in a sense, of all that he does not know. His experience is experience of incompleteness, of something evermore about to be, as Wordsworth said, and the little that seems known is, as Tennyson says,

> an arch wherethro'
> Gleams that untravelled world whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever when I move.

Or he is water parted from the sea, a pool in an alien land, that yet feels in it the throbbing of the ocean from which it is severed.

We have been looking at man only on the intellectual side, as thinking and pursuing truth. We shall find just the same contradiction if we look at the side of will, and with the change of a few words we may indeed repeat almost the same sentences.

Here, again, there is myself in particular, which is

not other selves. Here, again, is myself as the active form of will, universal because it is able to will, or take for its object, either that particular self or anything else. And this will, again, is universal in a further sense when it wills the good, or is good will: for just as the true is something independent of my particular fancies or opinions and of yours, so the good is independent of my particular desires and of yours, it is something in which we meet or are identical and the obligation to pursue which is exactly the same to both of us. In willing the good I ignore or deny myself in particular, and you do the same; that is, in willing it we are universal will.[1]

And yet, just as, when I think universally, it is nevertheless I in particular who thinks, so in willing universally it is I in particular who wills: and so with you. The universal will is not some will apart from us up in the sky. My brain and muscles will and carry it out, and they are not yours. I and you, each of us, is realised in its realisation. The universal will, then, *is* particular will, or willing universally, or good will. In other words, when the particular self, in willing, ignores, abjures, denies its mere particularity, it becomes or is the universal will. Or (it is the same thing looked at from the other side) the universal will is the infinite will in me negating what is particular or finite in me, merely

[1] This appeared when we were pointing out that the ideal of human perfection is not produced by, and does not consist in, the empirical individual, but by and in the universal will in him.

me, and so making me a particularisation of itself. Thus the particular will has two meanings: (1) My will as merely particular, pursuing my impulses, desires and purposes apart from or even against the universal or good. That has to be given up. (2) My will as identified with the universal, its organ, particularisation, manifestation: and the universal will is the unity of all such particular wills.

If now we ask what this universal will completely realised or active in its infinite content would be, the answer is: it would be itself willing and achieving perfectly the good of absolutely all particular wills in the universe, in so far as these were its organs or members. And that may be called an abstract description of God, perfectly realised in a world of spirits reconciled with himself; or, again (if you start from the side of the particular will), it is an abstract description of the Kingdom of God. And the ideal humanity we considered in earlier lectures is the same idea as this last, imperfectly conceived, because regarded as only in the future; and also because 'humanity', besides being ambiguous otherwise, takes no account of any finite spirit except that known to us on our earth. Whereas, surely, to anyone who freely receives all this wonderful new knowledge vouchsafed to us and allows it to mingle with the religion in his heart, the heavens will declare the glory of God a thousand times more than they could in the days of the Psalmist. All the dead worship of the stars may live

again in a diviner fashion, and he will not be dismayed, even if it could be proved to him, that it lies in the divine plan that the life of his particular planet should not endure for ever, and that worlds arise and pass like single notes in a choral symphony that never began and can never end.

To come back to the contradiction in man. This infinite will itself is in him as a form or principle that wants nothing short of this infinite content; and could be satisfied by nothing less. And that too anyone may verify, however extravagant it may sound: so long as there remained one particular will in the whole universe that was excluded from the Kingdom of God, something would still remain to wish for—and not merely to wish for but to will, as part of the universal good that ought to be willed. This is the one side. On the other hand this infinite form is connected with a single inconceivably minute fragment of the whole, and has to work out its will through the impulses that arise in this speck. Its first demand is for warmth and milk, and its last is for the Kingdom of God. And it is one and the same will that wants each. Can there be a more astounding miracle than that, or a creation more contradictory than man, who being a pin-point desires, and is not his true self unless he desires, to be God?

CHAPTER XI

GOOD AND EVIL

In this last lecture, rather than attempt to show in outline the application of the ideas we have reached to a number of different questions connected with religion, I have thought it best to develop them by reference to a single one—the problem of good and evil, and especially the latter. Naturally it is only certain aspects of the subject that can be dealt with in an hour, and it would be absurd to attempt even a sketch of the whole problem.

It has a bad reputation, and is often spoken of as though it were in some special sense or degree mysterious and insoluble. But, on the view we have been taking, it seems to be insoluble only as every problem is so in the end. Problems about parts of the whole may be called soluble, but they are so only because we take these parts in artificial abstraction. We say, in effect 'We will consider A and B only up to a certain point, or in certain relations. They have other relations, but we will ignore these, because for our particular limited purpose it is not necessary to consider them.' So doing, we can arrive at results about A and B which will hold good within the sphere we have isolated from the rest of

the whole. And this we may call the solution of problems as to A and B. But so soon as we remove this abstraction and try to consider A and B as they really are, we are considering the whole: and then we find that, while we can arrive at a general abstract outline of the truth, we cannot fill up anything like all its detail, nor, perhaps, can we form a concrete idea of the experience in which it would be filled up. In that sense every question may be called in the end insoluble, and everything in the end a mystery.

And so it is with evil. We are driven to the conclusion that in the infinite there cannot be evil as there is in finite experience. What we call evil must in the infinite be so changed by the loss of its isolation and by its fusion with other elements that, although it cannot wholly vanish, it cannot retain the character in virtue of which we call it evil; since, if it did, it would produce a discordance incompatible with the nature of the infinite. And we are not without indications in our own experience of the manner in which this change (so to call it) or this transcendance of evil may be effected: for we find within certain limits that what we call evil sometimes turns out not to be so, or again proves the means of good, or can be made the means of good. But the complete solution of the problem we are unable to imagine. Thus, we cannot construe to ourselves the way in which our own evil will, our resistance to good, can positively contribute any-

thing to the infinite experience. And yet it must, if that is the unity of all possible experience. We can only say it must be so, or, to use religious language, that there can be nothing, however evil, which is not an instrument of the divine will.

But if we consider the matter merely on the intellectual side and apart from its bearing on our feelings, it does not appear to differ from other problems. There is, in other words, no difference in kind between evil and anything else that falls short of perfection. Everything finite is limited, discordant and self-contradictory, and we cannot fully answer, in the case of anything finite, the question how it can be experienced as harmonious and free from contradiction. We cannot do so in the case of what we call goodness in ourselves : it still falls short of the infinite, is still imperfect, and cannot in the infinite be exactly what it appears. There is doubtless an immense difference in this matter between evil and good : for we can see that the one is very much further from the infinite than the other, that evil is something far more partial and self-contradictory than good, a mere element in a whole, and not even approaching to a whole as good does. But, on the intellectual side, the problems do not differ in kind, nor do they differ if we compare evil with any other finite existence, such as space or time. So that, as a problem, the question Why is there evil? is the same in kind as the question Why is there finite existence at all? For all finite existence is, like evil, im-

perfection. We may find that this result—that the intellectual problem in the case of evil is not peculiar—reappears in reference to some further problems.

If we begin now by noticing the bearing of the question of evil on religion, we may see at once how direct it is. On the one hand, religion—in a sense—may be said to spring from evil. If, that is, we were subject neither to calamity from without nor to evil in ourselves, we should not need religion, at any rate not what we now in our imperfect life mean by that word. Religion arises because we are imperfect, because we suffer evil and are evil; it is an attempted escape from the evil which men find they cannot escape otherwise. Remove this evil then, and you remove religion.

And religion, at any rate at its best, *is* this escape. It is idle to deny it, to stand outside and point out to the religious man that he is poor, diseased, oppressed, heavy at heart because his beloved are dead, troubled by the consciousness of his own faults and sins. He will answer 'All that is very true, but to me, who have given myself to God and trust him wholly, all this is not evil; on the contrary, it all works together for good, and it becomes evil only in so far as I fail to maintain my union with God, and become again a being separated from him.' You may reply that this is an illusion, but to the man it is an experience just as certain as a broken leg. To that you may reply that the reality of the broken leg can be proved by examination; but the answer is that the

reality of the man's experience can also be proved by examining his life. It is not doubtful that there are persons who do habitually take all the chances and sorrows of life as the will of God, and therefore not as evils, and who also live in the conviction that the evil in themselves is for good, and so in reality is done away; and therefore they are at peace. And in so far as they fail in this and so are not set free from evil, it is only because they fail (as they themselves would assert) in religion. Thus religion, so far as it exists, is release from evil.

If so, we have this result. On the one side, but for evil, there would be no religion. On the other, religion is escape from evil: or, in religion evil disappears. And from this there seems to follow a paradoxical conclusion. In religion evil disappears. Now the disappearance of evil is surely the attainment of all that man can wish, his final aim or good. But if there were no evil there would not be religion. Therefore if there were not evil man could not attain his final aim or good: and evil seems in some way to be involved in the existence of good, to be not only a necessary accompaniment but a condition of good. And though we may seem to have reached this conclusion too easily and with suspicious rapidity, it may none the less be right, though it would not follow that this or that amount of evil, or, again, this or that particular form of evil, was thus a condition of good.

We cannot consider this idea at present. We have

first to enlarge the statement that religion, at least in its highest forms, is release from evil. It is not only this, but, it seems, it is the only release from it. Let us see if this is not so. No one will maintain that in what may be called our ordinary experience evil can be escaped: there it is too palpable a fact. It is just as palpable in morality. That is a war with evil, and a partly successful war, but it is endless: the evil is never overcome and the ideal never becomes completely real. In the experience of beauty we rise in this respect higher. Here, it seems, evil does disappear. Certainly while we are absorbed in this experience there is no more evil for us. This is clearly so in the great mass of cases, and even if, as in tragedy, evil is part of the subject, it appears as forced to contribute to a positive result or total effect beyond itself; and this, though it pains and saddens us, still uplifts and satisfies us; we do not wish the pain away. We are satisfied: there is no denying the fact. We return with life infused with a new understanding, and then too are able to some extent to see evil as it appeared in the tragedy. But only to some extent; the release from evil in beauty is partial, there remains much in which we cannot see beauty, or are obliged to see an ugliness which is more than a discord resolved. And yet beauty is a matter of sight, a matter of perception, imagination, feeling, not of faith or thought. And therefore to escape completely from evil in this way would mean, not a hope or even a faith, that all is beautiful, but

the direct experience of everything as beautiful. That is obviously unattainable even by the greatest of artists.

What, then, of thought? Can we escape from evil that way? It would be answered at once by some, 'On the contrary, this is the way to the knowledge that what seemed good to us is really evil, that evil is the very nature of things, that the universe is one ghastly mistake.' Let us suppose that view, the pessimist's view, to be false and refutable. Let us suppose it established that in ultimate reality there can be no evil, that it belongs only to finite experience, that what is evil here is in the infinite experienced in such a way that there it is not evil. That certainly would be, in one sense, to escape from evil, and it would be so in spite of our inability to reproduce that experience in ourselves. We should in a sense rise above ourselves and, in principle at least, see things from the centre. Still this intellectual escape—for such it is—would not be perfect freedom. For though the philosopher might find this freedom in regard to those evils which lay beyond his control—the evils that happen—the matter would be otherwise with the evil he could control, could fight against and diminish. That would cry out to him 'Abolish me', and no certainty that this evil is powerless against God, or is in the infinite no evil, could silence that cry. What would he have to do then? He would have to act on the truth that he knows—not only to know evil away, but so far as

possible to will it away, deny it with his whole self not only with his intellect. So far as he could do that, he would escape from evil. But then this means that he would be religious, not merely a philosopher. In identifying his will with the infinite, for which there is no evil, he would be making evil what it really is—not evil, but the means of good.

And this is precisely what happens in the more usual forms of religion, where the ideas employed are somewhat different. Thus it appears that religion is the only escape or salvation from evil; and it is so because of the fact so often insisted on, that it is an action of the whole self.[1] The faith for which evil is conquered is no mere belief, it is the will which by identifying itself with the divine will conquers evil and turns it into good.

Let us pause a moment to consider what this suggests. Religion is release from evil, but it is so only because the faith that there *is* no evil is also the will to abolish evil. This is the will identified with the divine will (no faith without grace), and for God there is no evil as mere evil. It seems then that this human-divine act by which evil is willed away must be a stage in the process by which finite experience is resolved into infinite.

We have been speaking of religion at its best, or

[1] Religion is not merely theoretical, an action of intellect, like philosophy, but is essentially, like morality, an action of the whole self.

at least of a very high form of it, but now, returning to the general proposition that religion is release or salvation from evil, we must remember that there are grades of religion, and that accordingly what is salvation to one may be something far short of it to another, and that there may be attempts at escape from evil which cannot be successful. If we consider this, we shall get more light on our problem.

What man wants, his good, is to be free, not to find himself checked, to escape from his limitations. It is these limitations that he calls evil. He escapes them in religion by union with something which is itself free from them. And, we may say, the position of his religion in the scale depends on what he takes to be this self of his which ought to escape its limitations, and what the things are which he especially finds to be limitations, and therefore how he conceives the power which is to save him from them. Evidently these four, himself, his evils, his salvation and his God, will vary accordingly. And it is essential to remember this, and not to talk as if man and evil and salvation and God meant one thing in all cases; since it is clear that there may be so much difference that one man's God may be another's Devil, and that what one man would count salvation from evil another may count valueless.

For example, if a man is to himself mainly a natural being, good or evil are to him principally natural well- or ill-being; and his salvation is to escape thunder and cold and want of food; and he

aims at the union—through gifts and ceremonies—with a God who is mainly a power of nature. On the other hand, if the limitation that most distresses a man is the evil in his own heart and activities, and, again, this same evil in others, that means that his notion of himself is not the same as that of the first man, nor his notion of salvation, nor of his God, who is now principally to him the power that hates this inward or moral evil, and can free him from it. And accordingly this man will be ready to say: 'Those physical evils are of little account or even of none: they do not concern me—the 'me' that matters to me—what I want is freedom from the war in my mind; if I can only get that, the physical evils may stay if they like, and if they can help me to that salvation, why, they are not merely indifferent, they are positively good.' The religion of the first man we should call a low one, that of the second a high one, and between them would be many gradations.

Again if a man meant by 'himself' simply and solely himself apart from everybody else, and wanted to get his private salvation, in the way of warmth and food and property and the like, apart from others and even at the cost of evil to them, we should be disposed to say that he had no religion at all; and if he were quite consistent (which he could not be) this would be true. If he included in his notion of himself his family or clan, or, better still, his nation, we should say his religion was proportionately higher; and we should find too that his

notion of what was evil, and what good, had proportionately risen, and with it his notion of God. And, if he were really a religious man, he would now reckon his evil and good to be that of his tribe or nation ; and, if the good of his nation involved his private evil, he would say, ' It does not matter, nay, if my evil serves my people it is not evil to me but good.' Even if it were his own death, he would say so. And in one way a man cannot go beyond that. Nevertheless as long as a man's self stopped at his country, and his God was only a national God, we should say his religion was still imperfect. It would probably involve on the one side hostility to other nations, and on the other an imperfect estimate of what is truly evil. Though there might be an intense desire to find freedom from moral evil in himself and his nation, still the good would be identified in part with the outward prosperity and predominance of his nation ; and he would perhaps feel that he had a right to claim this from his God in return for his worship. We see this stage, for example, in Jewish history, nor is it wholly unknown perhaps in Great Britain.

Above this stage would come that where a man recognised himself in all men, and his God had become a universal God, and good would mean primarily to him, however he might formulate it, that the wills of himself and all men should be identified with God's will ; and evil would mean primarily the failure of this union. Also this would

be the one and only *unconditional* good and evil, and any other good, physical, intellectual, or what not, in himself or his family or his nation, would be good only on condition of its serving or being included in that good; otherwise it might even be evil. Any other evil, if it did serve that good, would not be evil but good. That is surely what we must mean by religion now. And in this religion, we must repeat, in his identification of himself with the will of God, or the infinite as will, man attains his sovereign good or absolute end, and is freed from evil and finitude. For evil means not to have what you wish, and here man has what he wishes, for he wishes union with God, and nothing else whatever, except as involved in that; and he has got it. He is freed from his finitude because he refuses to acknowledge as himself anything but the self which is united to the infinite and is a function of its will. Finally we must observe this is the only release from evil he can secure, just because it is inward, freedom of will. So long as he counts natural well-being or any kind of prosperity as unconditionally good, and ill-being or any kind of adversity as unconditionally evil, he never can be secure of good, or against evil, through religion.

I know, of course, that almost everything hitherto said sounds more or less paradoxical. It is a paradox to common-sense to assert that man may attain his good and be released from evil when he is subject to all the common ills of humanity, and this even

though he may be poor, friendless, and diseased, and perhaps would welcome the coming of death : or to assert that he may attain the realisation of himself when the greater part of his being is obviously not realised. But then it is not common-sense that makes religion, and religion *is* a paradox to common-sense, which generally tries to make friends with it by smoothing away all its angles, and mollifying its sternness, and reducing its startling affirmations and denials into comfortable platitudes. But the deeper consideration of things—which, carried out, is philosophy—generally confirms what religion says, though it may change the language and in some measure modify the ideas. And in doing so it generally also discovers that common-sense goes upon assumptions that will not hold. We shall find that this is so here, and, in finding it, we may also be able to see that the paradox of religion is after all what common-sense on consideration would be able to accept.

Let us now consider this result further in the light of objections that will be made to it. And, first, it may be asked 'Is it not absurd to say that man attains his absolute end when he is obviously subject to the common chances of humanity, and may be poor, diseased, friendless and oppressed; when therefore a great part of his being is very far from being realised?' To this I answer that the force of this objection rests entirely upon certain assump-

tions, and that these are false. It rests on the assumption that the attainment of man's end means that all parts of his being are realised. Otherwise it is no objection to the religious man's position to say that a great part of his being is not realised. But this assumption, however natural, is quite false. It *is* natural no doubt.

We find in human nature a great many potentialities and impulses, and it may seem at first clear that the ideal would be that they should all be completely developed. And yet reflection and experience show at once that this is not only impossible but would be the very reverse of the ideal. And the reason is not merely that man lives in time and that therefore one part of him must retire when another is active—though this fact alone is enough to show that the notion is ridiculous. The reason is that his various potentialities or impulses would necessarily clash, and produce a confusion fatal to all but one or two; the reverse of happy for himself as a whole, unless they were systematised and ordered by relations of co-ordination and subordination, so that his nature became a state, not a mob. But this means, and must mean, negation, the denial of the separate rights of these functions or impulses, the giving up of good for greater good, the good of the whole as a system. Harmony—all system, in fact—implies negation; all know this well, it is the tritest of commonplaces, and yet we are always slipping back into the absurd notion.

It is no sound objection, therefore, to this statement—that in religion man attains his supreme good—to point out that in religion the whole of his nature may not be satisfied, or even cannot be, or that religion involves negation: for unless it did it could not be his supreme good. If the objection is to hold at all it must change its form, and say only that there is too much negation, or that certain negations are needless.

Let us try to see more fully the way in which good and evil are involved in one another, or how good involves negation. Let us take the individual man who, we saw, is particular because he is not others and is exceedingly partial, and see how he realises himself and attains his good. He does so (I do not mean that this is a historical account of the process) by joining himself to others who are also partial, but who, being different in their partiality from him, fill up his gaps while he supplies theirs. As we saw, for example, he is partial—not human nature, but a very defective example of it—because he is a man and not a woman nor yet a child: and he extends his personality in these respects through the family. Thus he gets a good he did not possess in his mere individuality. And so it is throughout. You can regard from this point of view his membership, for example, in a number of other spheres or communities, each of which has a special character and purpose, carried out by members united in this character or purpose but differing in their contributions. There is the

rather undefined circle of friends and acquaintances; there is the social system of labour, of vocations or professions, which enables him to clothe himself in return for his services in healing another man's diseases. He belongs to a city; more or less to the republic of letters, of art, of science, in each of which he is able to get from others the good which his own powers would have been unable to achieve. And there is his nation or state, which may be considered from one point of view as the sphere which contains all those others. We may stop there for the moment. He is thus for himself, let us say, the centre of all these spheres, realises himself in each in a special way, through each extends his personality towards the infinity he wants. This is no metaphor. Though he remains in one sense himself and nobody else, these spheres are yet in varying degrees himself. The welfare of his family or country is his: he does not merely feel with its success or failure, its joy or pain, its good acts or its bad ones; he feels all this as his own. If you try, as we saw, to get to some 'he' which is apart from all these spheres you come to something contemptible, if to anything, or you come to an egoist—and no man is a mere egoist.

This, then, is the way in which the man realises himself or gets his good. But in every one of these spheres he gets it by negation, and could not get it otherwise. His good is also his duty. At every step his particular self becomes more universal by abjuring its particularity. He gives up for the sake

of family life a great deal that would be pleasant to him, and is always giving it up. To make himself efficient in his vocation he works much more than by nature he likes, and narrows himself, neglects or suppresses the capabilities that might have been developed in other vocations. He pays his rates and taxes and serves on juries, and does a good deal more if he is a good citizen, and if his country called on him to risk his life he would admit she had a right to his life. And all this negation or evil is not a needless excrescence on his good, something without which his good in these spheres could be, it is an intrinsic part of it, of which it would be quite irrational to complain if this good is to be at all. The only question is how much there need be. No doubt the less the better, but some there must be. To ask that there should be none is to ask that there should be no good.

There is another thing to be observed. The smaller sphere is contained in the greater, and from the point of view of the greater has no absolute rights against it. From the point of view of the family the individual is only a member of *it*, not an end in himself. And so is the family to the state, from its point of view. If the family tried to treat itself as final, and seek nothing but its own good, the state would at once negate that pretension by means of the law ; and, in fact, through its taxes and the like, and in most countries through its call on men to serve in the army, it does, more or less, interfere

with family welfare. Some degree of such negation is always present, and everyone would admit that, if it were necessary, the claims of the smaller sphere must simply go under. That lies in the nature of the good they get by being members of the wider whole. But, again, the less of this negation the better.

Why is this so? Because the smaller is a member of the greater, or, conversely, the greater consists of a number of the smaller. The more, therefore, the greater has, with a view to its own good, to negate the smaller, the more it is negating itself. It is not a new thing—a sort of despot—apart from the spheres within it: it *is* they united in its own manner. The family thus is stronger and better the less it has to call on its members to deny themselves for its sake, though it must so call on them or be a bad family; and so the state with the families, or, again, with all the vocations it contains. So far as it has to suppress their life it is suppressing its own life. Some such suppression is necessary, there would not otherwise be the state; and that suppression, though it is negation, or apparently evil, is not really evil at all. But where it passes the point up to which it is a contribution to the good of the whole it begins to be wholly evil. All needless self-sacrifice, all diminution of positive being which is not a contribution to greater being, is evil.

The same thing may be put from the point of view of the individual. If he is to be at all what he ought to be, or find at all his higher good, he must more or

less deny himself or negate himself as natural. On the other hand, the less this is necessary the better. Why? Because the higher or spiritual in him in denying the lower is denying itself, the stuff it has to work with, the energy it has to use. The spiritual man is not a man without a body, but a man whose body is completely serviceable to the spirit in him, the stronger the better, the weaker the worse, so long as it is so serviceable and does not try to be an end in itself.

These considerations will hold if we pass to the sphere of religion. We have been looking at the spheres of morality: beyond them, not apart from them but enclosing them, is that of religion; as its object, the infinite, is beyond but includes all finite being. Religion we have seen is morality perfected, the good gained in religion is the culmination of the good gained in morality. It is complete self-realisation, and its expression is not merely inward or outward worship but the moral life lived as a divine life.

Here, then, we shall have two correlative truths:—
(1) No lower good than that of the whole, and of the individual as identifying himself with the whole, can now be regarded as an end in itself. Any such good is ultimately of value only as a part or differentiation of the ultimate good; and when this ultimate good can be reached only by the sacrifice of it, that sacrifice is not only duty, it is ultimate good or the attainment of the supreme end. And it is so none the less

because of the sacrifice, just as when a man can only serve his country by dying for it, his death is not only his duty but his good—his own good and not only his country's.

Further, it is the case that some negation of lower goods is intrinsically bound up with the attainment of the highest good, and is no separable accident of it; and that in every life union with the supreme will demands acquiescence in the loss of much that both is, and ought to be, dear. The postulate of religion is that I am to accept all such loss, however much it hurts me, as ultimately no evil, but good; because it lies in the supreme will which is also the supreme good.

(2) On the other hand, every subordinate good that may have to be denied or surrendered is none the less, truly or religiously regarded, a part or differentiation of the supreme good, and as such has absolute value (unless its subordination is requisite): but any diminution of it which is not required for the supreme good can be nothing but evil. The divine will is, or manifests itself, as the universal will in man, and its content is the whole of that which this will finds to be good—the joy of the body, family happiness, a man's work and his play, his enjoyment of beauty—so far as these enter into the highest good. It is not a religious attitude to treat all this as undivine, or the needless negation of it as good, it is irreligious to do so: and it is all none the less a form of the supreme good because it may have to be

surrendered, and because its surrender is then a part of the supreme good. This means, in other words, that, as the state denies itself in denying the family, so all denial of any part by the whole is the self-negation of the whole; and this seems to be the nature of the whole: it is everywhere perpetual realisation through self-negation. If one may put it so, in every atom of the finite, each stone and fly, the infinite asserts itself, and in the death of any midge it sacrifices itself, and this is the reason why everything that is does assert itself and desperately clings to life, and, if it is merely natural, contends for it with everything else. The whole lives in this life. But the limitation, negation and passing away of everything finite is equally the assertion of the whole. *It* would not be, if there were no finite being, but all finite being means negation, and but for this negation neither it nor the whole would be. And this appears in man, in whom the principle of the whole is present, as free self-realisation through self-denial, the straining towards the highest by surrender of the lower, so far as that is required for the attainment of the highest.

Perhaps we may say that we are able to see in a general way that evil, in the sense of limitation and negation, is essential, and that to inquire why it is, is simply to inquire why there is any being at all. We can even see that, if a soul is to be good, it must have the possibility of being evil, that moral goodness means the conquest of evil, or of the temptation

to it, and that to imagine moral goodness ready-made is to imagine a round square. But to understand in detail how evil is essential, and what it would look like from the centre, is beyond us; nor can we tell at all why so much of pain, and again of moral evil, should exist in finite experience.

I will touch only on two questions in conclusion. Religion requires us to accept as the will of God whatever evil comes upon us. Why, then, do we feel sure that we ought to diminish evil so far as we can, natural as well as moral, and that this is a religious duty? If God overrules it all, why should we interfere? The answer, it seems, must be that our interfering, so far as it is wise and good, is itself part of this process of overruling, it is a stage in the way by which the contradiction of the finite passes into harmony in the infinite. We are not something independent and apart from God. He does not—to use religious language—reconcile the world with himself by some process wholly outside of finite spirits, but in them. The completion of this process is beyond us; but we experience and take part in a stage of it. We help to will evil away. Only, this 'we' is only 'we' so far as our will is God's. The faith by which the world is overcome and evil becomes the instrument of good is itself the action of God in overruling evil. Religion is release from evil because there is nothing in religion which is not divine as well as human.

Can we say anything of the completion of this

process? If negation is an essential element in the whole, how does it appear in and to the whole? Does the infinite suffer, or is suffering wholly confined to finite experience?

The infinite contains absolutely all finite experience and therefore all suffering ; but does it contain any of it as suffering, or is all suffering then so neutralised that nothing of it remains, but only the positive good involved in it? Of some suffering we can assuredly say this, as of what is suffered by a sense of discord with God. There can be no discord in the infinite, for that means the idea of a 'should be' that is not, in other words, finitude. In short, we cannot attribute to the infinite, as such, any consciousness or feeling that all is not well, nor any will for a good unattained. And so we seem to have to say with Aristotle that the divine life is one pure everlasting pleasure.

But then in our own poor experience we know of states in which, though there is suffering, there is no sense that all is not well ; we feel that there is a glory in tragedy as well as pain, and we hear, and have no reason to doubt, of a joy in suffering for others, which utterly swallows up the pain, though that is felt, and of men in flame whose faces were radiant with ecstasy. It would be absurd to imagine just such states in the infinite, but perhaps not more absurd than to imagine anything like one of perfectly unmingled pleasure, as we experience pleasure. And those cases where pain is present, yet absorbed

in joy, at least suggest the idea that the suffering of the finite, especially in its noblest forms, may in the divine life not be so wholly neutralised as to disappear, but, however changed, may survive as an essential condition of the glory which enshrines it there as here.

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