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GROUNDWORK OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

As a necessary prelude to the study of religion, preliminary to the exposition of a complex subject, the aim of the writer has been to lay a groundwork, a basic plan, to sort out the accumulation of material dealing with religion that has gathered in the current century.

First put together for the use of students in Manchester University, the substance of the book has been greatly enlarged and somewhat modified. For support to the text it has been thought better to appeal to the smaller number of recognised authorities than to refer to a larger number of original sources, but it is believed enough references are given to enable the student to pursue his studies further.

GROUNDWORK OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

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PREFACE

THE present volume is intended to be a work of clarification. So much material dealing with religion has accumulated during the current century that some attempt to sort it out seems a necessary prelude to the study of the subject. This attempt has been made from three different points of view, so that the same facts sometimes appear repeatedly in different contexts. This may be an advantage rather than a drawback to the exposition of a complex object of study like religion. The writer's aim has been, however, to lay groundwork, not to rear a structure, and it may be that there are errors of detail in a work which has occupied much of the leisure—such as it is—of the years of war. But one may hope that the basic plan is right. It was first made for the use of students in Manchester University, but has been greatly enlarged and somewhat modified since, and now seeks a wider public. It has been thought better to appeal to a small number of recognized authorities for support to the text than to refer to many original sources, but probably enough references have been given to enable the student to pursue further enquiries. It remains but to add that the completion of the book roughly coincides with the departure of the one to whose help and encouragement for nearly thirty years my life owes its chief inspiration, and to whose memory, alas, it is dedicated.

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(*c*) Phenomenology of Religion, which is descriptive, though it may be critical and comparative. Yet relativity enters into this study, which involves a philosophical question : dialectic or canons of thought. Philosophical method requires collection of facts, criticism and comprehensiveness of treatment, and especially evaluation.

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PART I

THE NATURE OF RELIGION

CHAPTER I

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

PHILOSOPHY in its ancient sense meant wisdom, and as such tended to comprise or even supersede religion. Hence it has often been remarked that Greek philosophy took the place, for the cultured, of the earlier but no longer credible popular religion. In the modern usage, however, philosophy implies primarily reflection upon simpler, cruder experience, which it presupposes, and hence philosophy of religion assumes prior religious experience of a more naïve unreflective kind. It is not true therefore that such reflection can be exercised by any philosophic mind, for to those who are largely insensitive to religion it will be unintelligible. There is consequently some excuse for the plea that only those who believe—or at least have believed—in religion are competent to philosophize about it. Thus Lord Morley suggests that Voltaire's incapacity to understand religion sprang from his slight sense of holiness; and a friend surprised Thomas Huxley into candid self-examination by remarking that to religion the latter was colour-blind. Just as poetry is said to be emotion reflected in tranquillity, so philosophy of religion is reflection upon previous religious conviction.

This last statement does not prejudge the question of the validity of religious conviction, but expresses the condition of understanding it. Interestingly enough,

a similar relation holds between philosophy itself and everyday life. It is well said that it is not enough to hold a theoretical philosophy: one must live in it. And it is only such lived-out philosophy that can be said to be seriously held. Hence the relations between religion and philosophy are not simple and easily stated. They overlap; but whilst religion stresses the element of conviction and belief, philosophy emphasizes that of reflection. Furthermore, whilst religion primarily deals with that aspect of reality which we call the divine, and only secondarily with other aspects, philosophy deals with reality in its entirety. Religion is thus intensive, whilst philosophy is extensive. Philosophy of religion thus partakes of two characters; it is the study of the divine in its relations with the whole of reality. And since, as we have seen, the connections between sincere philosophy and religion are so intricate, philosophy of religion is apt to lead to philosophical religion, such as that of Coleridge or Maurice. Troubles begin, however, when reflection severs itself from prior religious belief; doubt or criticism divides the religious consciousness, and then the consideration of religion may take various directions. Of these we may notice three: the historical, the psychological, and the phenomenological.

(*a*) Relations to History

The sense of history is apt to be weak in the ages of belief. Thus Hinduism is commonly said to be lacking in historical perspective, and in Mohammedanism the atmosphere of finality is familiar. Again, in Mediæval Europe we are told that the philosophers and theologians regarded themselves as commentators, filling out and completing truths long before delivered to the Church.[1]

[1] Gilson: *L'esprit de la Philosophie Médiévale*, vol. ii., pp. 225–6.

Truth is held as eternal and inviolable by the genuine believer, and it is not till conviction begins to wane that religion becomes mainly a matter of historical research. There is then a tendency away from the expression "I believe" to "We believe," or even to "They believe." This tendency is not conviction nor even philosophy, except to those who hold that history is philosophy. This last position is connected with the names of Vico and Croce, who agree that history—as distinguished from mere chronicle—is philosophic because it is selective and constructive and made from a definite point of view. It is living history carrying the thought of the past forward into the future, and the life of the spirit consists in such effort.

This view is attractive, but it forgets that the point of view adopted is apt to be arbitrary and shifting. Thus Dr. Arnold complained that ecclesiastical "history" was accidental story rather than coherent history. And Mr. Trevelyan says that Gibbon regarded man as always much the same sort of fool. There is obviously need of method in the treatment of history, and such method when deliberate and reflective is the same as philosophy. It is in the philosophy of history that history and philosophy meet, though it is not even then true that there is no philosophy but philosophy of history. For there is a philosophy of mathematics, which last can hardly be regarded as history. The philosophy of religious history therefore is part of the requisite material for the student of philosophy of religion, and in this way conviction as to the truth of both history and philosophy may return. History is saved from being mere narrative of facts, and philosophy from working purely in the abstract. Religious history may be seen to be a unity and a development, if studied in such treatises as that of Caird: *The Evolution of Religion*, or Pfleiderer's *Religions-*

philosophie auf geschichtlicher Grundlage, or Sabatier's *Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion d'apres la Psychologie et l'Histoire.*

It should be said, however, that philosophical history or even the philosophy of religious history is not identical with philosophy of religion, which tries to disengage fundamental ideas of religion from their historical context. It may be that there are certain essential forms of the religious spirit of man, which find embodiment in historical types of belief, but which are common to them all.

(*b*) Relations to Psychology

The attempt to discover essential forms or types of religion may take a psychological direction. Instead of treating religion historically we may make a cross-section through it in the endeavour to find a greatest common measure of all religions. The comparative study of religions yields here a great deal of material, and such works as Stratton's *The Religious Life* may exhibit a common denominator of historical movements. This may even lead to the attempt to construct a typical religious individual or set of individuals, such as the Saint or the Sceptic. All such work is indispensable but misleading, since the typical individual or the greatest common factor in religion is an abstract or epitome of numberless particular instances, and therefore needs supplementing by biographies and histories such as are given in James's *Varieties of Religious Experience.* Taken together, however, these two modes of investigation do not answer the questions which philosophy asks. For the comparative study of religion may exhibit the originality of one religion or the richness of another, and so reveal its distinctiveness, or it may reduce all to the same level by showing what they have in common; but the question of validity or truth remains. Which

of the various types can claim our allegiance? Is the average authoritative? The typical is not necessarily the ideal nor the constant the norm. Indeed, the typical may be fashioned upon different principles, described in the books upon scientific method, so that various types of the same kind of thing are attained. And again, what is constant—the same everywhere, at all times and in all places—is no doubt a supreme test of rationality and spiritual health, but it is unfortunately not one that is in our possession. Only completed history could put it into our hands. The supposed constant is a broken measuring rod. And indeed observation shows that very different forms of religion claim to be authoritative and even exclusively so. One of the distinguishing marks of religion is its demands upon the whole personality, to the point of intolerance of rival claims, because it professes to be ultimate. It is possible therefore that some apparently extreme form of religion may be the only right one, just as it was said of the Jewish religion in the ancient world that it was as a sober man amongst drunkards. Evidently then a philosophical question supervenes upon the psychological, namely, what is the scale upon which the pretensions of the various religions are to be weighed? This is a question which cannot be evaded, unless all religions are upon the same level. That will imply that they are equally true or equally false. This assertion is one which might come either from pure positivism or from sheer scepticism in religion. So we are brought to phenomenology.

(*c*) Relation to Phenomenology of Religion

The famous remark of Gibbon that in the later Roman Empire religion was in such a condition that to the populace all religions were equally true, to the philosopher equally false, and to the magistrate equally useful, finds

a parallel in the attitude of large sections of the world towards religion to-day. In particular the phenomenologists seek to describe religion impartially and in a purely factual way. The various phenomena of religion are treated as on a dead level, and judgments of value may not enter in to assess the merits of the facts. An earlier treatment of this kind is to be found in C. de la Saussaye's *Manual of the Science of Religion.* And a more recent attempt at pure description is seen in the voluminous works of Sir James Frazer, in which "history" and "science" are commingled. But indeed in all those volumes which profess to be purely historical and scientific in their dealings with the subject, there is the idea that cold facts can be left to speak for themselves, and that to criticize them is dangerous. This attitude is to be found in much so-called comparative study of religion, in which the data of each religion are laid alongside those of the rest, without any attempt to estimate their relative merits.

Of the usefulness of the results of such studies there can be no question, any more than of the purity of the motives impelling the scholars who undertake them. The fruits are to be found in enormous volumes of translations of texts and collections of facts. And the idea of encyclopaedic knowledge of brute facts is no doubt a high one, though strictly unattainable. There lies behind these aspirations, however, a certain simplicity of mind, which forgets that even the selection of facts involves an estimate of their relative importance, and importance cannot be divorced from degrees of worth. How different are the estimates of the various religions of the world given by different historians, as shown in the prominence given to them in their narratives! Moreover the very idea of a phenomenology—a science or history of pure factual description without previous assumptions—is itself a very dubious one, and begs a

question which is itself philosophical. Whether knowledge without presuppositions is possible is a debatable matter, and certainly it is hard to find examples of it. Nothing is plainer to-day than that apparently securely laid sciences are dependent upon previously assumed positions. The theory of relativity is a grand illustration of this discovery. Certainly in a matter like religion it is better to expose and admit prior assumptions than to profess a purely impartial but unexamined standpoint.

Furthermore, it may be that an adequate description of facts will reveal within them a movement in a certain direction, from lower to higher forms or the reverse. Such a movement is familiar to-day under the name of dialectic, and is supposed to be exhibited in economic history. If so, why not in religious history? Dialectic involves the idea of development or progression from less to more adequate, complete and comprehensive positions, and this implies a scale of values. It is significant that in one of the earliest and greatest phenomenologies—Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*—which largely deals with religion, there is expounded for the first time the author's famous dialectic. He thought that the facts revealed the dialectic, and indeed required it, as a thorough account of themselves. The dialectic, too, corresponded broadly with the history of the march of the human mind. If then history and science involve a dialectical, progressive or evolutionary movement, it is the business of phenomenology to describe it. That the history of religion exhibits such a movement is fairly clear from the labours of scholars for half a century, though the anti-religious may deny it. Even the denial of it, however, requires considered justification, as distinct from mere diatribe, and such justification is philosophy. The very neglect of religion reveals an attitude of indifference which when fully expressed is

not merely a statement of fact but of negative valuation.

It appears then that phenomenology, well considered, brings us back to philosophy, and that the essential question is that of philosophical method in the treatment of the facts. The question of method has become an urgent one in modern thought since the time of Descartes, and yet there is no one universally accepted method in philosophy. It is clear, however, that method requires selection of facts, criticism, and comprehensiveness of treatment. In religion especially, the vast volume of material prescribes the limitation of facts to what may be called a fair sample. The logic of sampling is not yet very definite, but clearly it involves qualities which are moral as much as logical. Those ostensible facts must be critically treated, so as to expose their weaknesses and their oppositions to each other. A great many of the so-called paradoxes of religion, of which we are at present hearing so much, belong to this class of apparent oppositions. Above all, comprehensiveness of handling is necessary, even if details go astray, since it is the great relations of things to one another that philosophy seeks. Any question, if treated at a certain depth and with a certain degree of system, becomes philosophical ; and religion at a certain level cries out for interpretation. The present study of religion will try to conform to the above canons, treating religion primarily psychologically, then phenomenologically and afterwards in a more philosophical manner.

CHAPTER II

RELIGION : ITS NATURE

THERE are many different ways of defining religion, most of them disclosing some valuable feature. Psychology

should describe however, and describe in the most self-evident way. Hence it may well begin with behaviour, gradually penetrating as far as possible beneath the expression to the spirit which animates it, until it arrives at the core. A super-mundane observer contemplating human religion would notice innumerable acts, some of the strangest kind, but mostly revealing some apparent form of deference towards superior beings. These he might well call acts of piety, for piety meant originally duties towards the gods, then also loyalty to family and state, and again reverence for the laws. The main phenomena of religion are thus covered by the word piety, a word revived for a special purpose in the seventeenth century and made the watchword of the Pietistic Movement. The sentimental associations of that movement need not now attach to the meaning of the ancient word, which has recovered its dignity at the hands of Wordsworth in various poems. It will repay us to consider, however, how the notion of piety had deepened and intensified by the time of the Pietists.

(*a*) Piety

The great interpreter of Pietism admittedly was Schleiermacher, who penetrated beneath external religious acts to their source in feeling. His fundamental idea was that religion was a matter of feeling. But the term was vaguely conceived by him, and it is a familiar criticism that feeling can mean various things, from general sensibility to emotion, and again to pure pleasure-pain. The latter had just been distinguished by Kant as a distinct factor in human nature, but Schleiermacher seems to mean by the term usually emotion. And certain it is that emotion is more primitive and rich than any *definite* mode of cognition, feeling or conation. Emotional attitudes may well have had biological

importance long before specific reactions of the human mind to circumstances were common. Pleasure and pain are the core of such emotion and are important as signs of the well-being or ill-being of the soul, of its success or failure in the deployment of its powers. That they are not infallible signs is no serious criticism of their uses. But furthermore, it is in pleasure and pain that the soul is most at home with itself, most intimate and withdrawn from the external world: in short, most subjective. Hence the Pietists were most apt to find there the seat of religion. In Schleiermacher, however, it was not any kind of feeling, any emotion, which was religious, but such emotion as involved a feeling of absolute dependence.

It is an old story how Hegel criticized this pious emotion, saying that by such a criterion Schleiermacher's dog ought to be religious. Yet it is fairly plain that this feeling of absolute dependence is found pronouncedly in some religions, notably in Mohammedanism. And the Quietists exhibit it within Christianity, but it cannot be said to be the chief characteristic of religions generally, and at any rate needs to be supplemented by other equally important features. The pagan dependence upon blind fate is hardly religion, and it is passive, resigned or suffering religions which most exhibit a sense of absolute dependence. But in many religions piety is found to be active, affirmative, obligatory. This was notably so in Zoroastrianism, in the religion of the Teutons, and in much of Christianity, so far as it followed the spirit of its Founder. In Roman religion the ancient Pietas was exhibited as loyalty to father, city or laws. In all such cases unconditional obligation is also felt as freedom. By union with the Deity the very pressure of external environment is overcome and independence obtained. Hence according to Pfleiderer,[1] from whom

[1] *Religionsphilosophie*, pp. 327–331.

much in the foregoing account has been obtained, " not mere dependence which excludes all freedom, but rather freedom in dependence upon God, is religion." This is certainly a fuller account of religion than that of the Pietists, and it does justice to the element which Hegel himself stressed as the characteristic of the most highly developed spiritual life, namely freedom. The modern idea of piety must therefore be made to include the positive, active, strenuous element in religion in that combination with its opposite which made the Apostle able to say " when I am weak then I am strong."

A similar result is obtained when we consider the meaning attached to the words " natural piety " by the great English poet of whom it is suggested by Seeley[1] that he was the most religious man, and the greatest reviver of religion, of his age. In famous lines Wordsworth had said

> My heart leaps up when I behold
> A Rainbow in the sky :
> So was it when my life began ;
> So it is now I am a Man :
> So be it when I shall grow old,
> Or let me die !
> The Child is Father of the Man ;
> And I would wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety.

The great Ode also lends colour to the idea that the poet regarded the innocent and receptive days of childhood as those of the greatest possession of religion, which the boy growing into manhood gradually lost. Doubtless such an account is largely autobiographical, for in a late poem he begs his wife to support him to the end against the fear " that friends, disjoined by death, may meet no more." It is easy therefore to interpret his attitude to Nature as one of receptiveness, of humility and " wise

[1] *Natural Religion*, p. 100.

passivity," in which he is "contented if he might enjoy the things which others understand." His criticisms of analytical science, and his complaint that "getting and spending we lay waste our powers," all seem to tell against the active life and in favour of quietism.

Piety, however, is a term frequently found in Wordsworth's writings, and one that expressed his own religious attitude. And certainly there was nothing weak or sentimental about this virile man's religion. It is interpreted by a chief exponent of his works as consisting first of all in the enjoyment of the life of nature, which is also a divine life; then in quietude, the calm of mind which finds "Central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation"; and again in the ceaseless intercommunion, which springs from the unutterable love that flows through all things and binds them together.[1] Such love, joy, peace were the very life of God in whom we live and move and have our being, and they were compatible with the doctrines of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and with lifelong insistence upon justice and liberty. Furthermore they accompanied a belief in the capacity of the highest human minds to exercise power similar to that of Nature herself, so that whilst the imagination of lower minds is enthralled by sensible impressions, that of the loftier souls seizes masterfully upon them, and feels through them the vivid spiritual life in Nature.[2] Such was the active piety of Wordsworth.

(*b*) The Religion of Gratitude

It thus appears that there are three aspects or phases of the life of Natural Piety. There is the comparatively passive stage, in which, like the curious child hearing

[1] Stopford Brooke: *Theology in the English Poets*, p. 107.

echoes of the sea in the shell which he holds in his hands, we receive " authentic tidings of invisible things." In this phase we are advised to be receptive, to reap " the harvest of a quiet eye that broods and sleeps in his own heart." The transcendent universe is not to be regarded as no more than a mirror that reflects to proud self-love her own intelligence. But a second phase is complementary to this. For the mind of man is akin to the spirit of nature, and is fitted to it as key to lock. The poet " considers Man and Nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of Man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of Nature."[1] This marriage of the human mind with nature is the source of purest joy, which is also religion.

> Here you stand,
> Adore and worship, when you know it not ;
> Pious beyond the intention of your thought ;
> Devout above the meaning of your will.

But a further stage supervenes, in which the mind returns to nature her gifts enhanced by its own powers. Spiritual love, " that adores, but on the knees of prayer, by heaven inspired," recreates the mighty world about us ; for by creative imagination unborne upon the wings of praise man penetrates in love and holy passion to the outstanding thought

> Of human Being, Eternity and God.

This belief of one who has been well-called the saint of natural religion, has been recently described as the Religion of Gratitude.[2] It was so styled by Wordsworth himself in the words " Theologians may puzzle their heads about dogma as they will, the religion of gratitude cannot mislead us. Of that we are sure, and gratitude

[1] Preface to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*

is the handmaid to hope and hope the harbinger of faith. I look abroad upon Nature, I think of the best part of our species, I lean upon my friends and I meditate upon the Scriptures, especially the Gospel of St. John ; and my creed rises up of itself with the ease of an exhalation. yet a fabric of adamant."[1] It is evident that the philosophic poet did not sever the religion of Nature from that of the Scriptures, but rather regarded the one as an endorsement of the other. It is permissible therefore to treat natural piety as exhibiting the same structure as that of Scriptural (or Revealed) religion ; both insist upon the affinity of creator and creature, both assert the essential nobility of man ; both express the extreme value of personal relationships and both lead back to the union of the human and the divine. Each of them finds its fine flower in peace, joy and love, which overflow in thankfulness. Gratitude itself is said to be the handmaid to hope and hope the harbinger of faith, the three Christian graces thus consummating natural piety.

What then is Gratitude, which appears to be common to both natural and Christian piety? It is said to be a complex emotion consisting of tenderness and self-abasement. It is a living sense of benefits received, and is so far a feeling of dependence. This last alone would even be humiliating and is sometimes the cause of our dislike to be recipients of favours which we cannot return. But tender regard leads us to respond in kind, or at any rate in words of thanks and praise, towards the giver. It tends to foster and cherish its object, to maintain and enhance it. In theological language, it leads us to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever and ever. In this respect it is a positive attitude which counteracts the other disposition to abasement, though frequently the two tendencies oppose each other and lead to a state of

[1] *Ib.* p. 11.

diffidence and hesitation. It is well said,[1] however, that when we think of a Religion of Gratitude we cut right across the usual divisions of religion, for we speak of one which might be held by a polytheist or a monotheist, a sacramentalist or a Quaker. Whereas if a man is miserable in his religion, whatever his creed, it is of little value, for he has not really known or responded to divine grace. In this way, then, the Religion of Gratitude is the norm or touchstone of all true religion. It is natural piety at its highest pitch, or even "sublimed to ecstasy."

(*c*) The Holy

This story of Natural Piety confirms our previous findings about Schleiermacher's account of religion, namely that there is a to-and-fro movement in the religious attitude, from dependence to independence, from abasement to assertion. All this is further verified by a consideration of the object towards which piety is directed. There is a general acceptance of the position that religion is concerned with the holy or sacred. This discovery is by no means confined to Otto, though he has the reputation which comes from a lengthy treatment of the question. In his work *The Philosophy of Religion* he shows how the more passive interpretation of religion by Schleiermacher gives way to the more activistic one of Fries, who is accepted by Otto as his own master.[2] Schleiermacher had ended in an æsthetic view of the world, based largely upon Kant's third Critique ; Fries began with this last, developed it and laid the foundations of an æsthetic theology. In particular he used the idea of Ahndung or divination, so much employed later by Otto.[3] In Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* it appears in

[1] Martin, *op. cit.* p. 92.
[2] *Op. cit.* pp. 16 and 223.
[3] *Ib.* p. 23.

relation to the description of the Holy as *mysterium fascinans et tremendum.* The qualities of awesomeness, mystery and fascination are in the wide sense of the word æsthetic, though they involve other sides of our nature besides the affective. A consideration of these qualities may confirm our previous analysis.

That the awesome, mysterious and fascinating do not exhaust the contents of religion has been often pointed out, and that they belong to the lower rather than to the higher levels of religion is true enough. It would be difficult to describe the Religion of Gratitude solely in these terms, still less the religious adoration directed towards a person. Yet with whatever enrichment of meaning they may need to be supplied, there is little doubt that they define the chief attitudes of piety. In awe there is the receptive, submissive, even repressed condition of soul which is produced by overwhelming power or by moral dignity ; in wonder at the mysterious there is that diffidence and hesitation we found previously in the religion of gratitude, a to-and-fro movement which makes the transition to the next phase. In fascination is to be seen the attraction which the Holy exerts upon the believer, the positive attitude so noticeable in gratitude and love. It may be said therefore that the familiar account of the Holy endorses the foregoing study of the nature of piety, and so long as piety is understood in its full Wordsworthian and modern sense, and the holy is extended to cover persons and scriptures as well as natural phenomena, we may define religion as piety in the presence of the holy. Such a definition is at the descriptive level, but it has the merit of exposing the phases which correspond to each other on the two sides of the religious situation.

CHAPTER III

THE PSYCHICAL ROOTS OF RELIGION

THE newer treatments of the question as to the sources of religion in human nature are marked by stress upon the exploration of the subconscious and the unconscious. Indeed it may be said that biological rather than psychological factors tend to be invoked. Instead of mind it is life that is studied as the fount of inspiration. This tendency is common to such writers as McDougall, Freud, Jung and Bergson. And there can be no doubt that Life is one of the great categories of religion.[1] Indeed some would say that it is the supreme category. Yet this position is open to the objection that in mere life—that is to say, in the pre-conscious—there is no religion. We cannot properly say that animals are religious ; man alone is so. And he is man by virtue of his conscious aspiration to higher ends than mere life. Whilst on the one hand it is said " I am come that ye may have life, and life more abundantly," it is said by the same speaker that " He that loseth his life shall find it." Evidently it is some quality of life that matters, not its mere quantity. That quality consists in its ideality, its movement towards the Best that human nature can conceive or attain. Here comes in the element of consciousness, of thought or reason in its fullest sense.

Furthermore, it is true that the presence of thought modifies the nature of life so that it remains mere life no longer. It does this, however, not just as an addition to life, but as pervading and enriching it with its own characteristics. The vital is not deprived of its qualities by the coming of the conscious, but it is completed and

[1] Cp. Unamuno : *The Tragic Sense of Life*, esp. Ch. iii.

enhanced. To understand this point one has to look into one's own experience as a living and rational being. No other proof is possible. But the distinction between biological " drives " and purposive actions is one which is coming into psychology apace, as is again that between the purposive and the purposeful.[1] Clearly, a blind impulse differs from a purposive instinct, and that again from a purposeful scheme. The difference consists in degrees of consciousness. If it is said that

> One impulse from a vernal wood
> Will teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good
> Than all the sages can

that is so only because of the sense of divine presence which it conveys ; and it conveys this, on Wordsworth's own showing, only to the contemplative mind. Otherwise, as Lord Morley remarks, it tells us nothing about the morally good or evil. The reactive effect, then, of consciousness upon animal drives, impulses or instincts, must be regarded as that which raises the non-religious or pre-religious life into the religious.

(*a*) The Unconscious

Evidently, then, when the unconscious is regarded as the source of religion, the word must be used in a relative, not a strict, sense. According to Jung it is the historical deposit of racial myth-making tendencies. These have become condensed into typical primordial images which are ever-recurring psychical experiences, the psychical expression of certain bodily conditions in relation to the environment, revealing the unconditioned creative power of the mind.[2] Such images are those of Prometheus the fire-bringer and culture-hero ; of Zara-

[1] McDougall : *The Energies of Men*, pp. 136-7.
[2] Jung : *Psychological Types*, pp. 556-557. Cp. p. 272.

thustra the reformer or again the super-man ; of Faust the enquirer ; of the Virgin Mother and of Christ the Messiah. These images are collective possessions, and as being general attitudes to the world and its problems are religious.[1] For "our views in regard to all problematical things are enormously influenced, sometimes consciously but more often unconsciously, by certain collective ideas which mould our mental atmosphere. These collective ideas are intimately bound up with the view of life or world-philosophy of the past hundred or thousand years. Whether or no we are conscious of this dependence has nothing to do with the case, since we are influenced by these ideas through the very atmosphere we breathe. Such collective ideas have always a religious character, and a philosophical idea gets a religious character only when it expresses a primordial image, i.e., a collective root-image. The religious character of these ideas proceeds from the fact that they express the realities of the collective unconscious ; hence they also have the power of releasing the latent energies of the unconscious."[2]

Religion is thus a function which belongs to the psyche, is constantly and everywhere present, belongs to the tough-minded or matter-of-fact person as well as to the tender-minded or ideological, indeed is found wherever man's orientation to the world about him is *unconditional.*[3] The collective function tends to be repeated in the individual in the form of phantasy, and wherever we can observe a religion at its birth we see how even the figures of his doctrine flow into the founder as revelations, i.e., as concretizations of his unconscious phantasy. A case in point is the story of the Temptation of Christ, which he however understood for what it was, whilst his

[1] *Ib.* 229.
[2] *Ib.* p. 271.
[3] *Ib.* p. 392.

successors have often taken it literally. And so with the rest of his doctrines.[1] In certain cases individuals or societies come to identify themselves with their mythical deity, and thus we see the rise of the mystical religions. This involves the notion of the relativity of God to the human subject ; the existence of a reciprocal and indispensable relation between man and God, whereby man is not merely regarded as a function of God, but God also becomes a psychological function of man.[2] Jung quotes, as illustrative of this idea of the relativity of God, Scheffler's verses :

I know that without me
God can no moment live.
Were I to die, then He
No longer would survive.

I am God's child, His son,
And He too is my child ;
We are the two in one
Both son and father mild.

The likeness of this teaching to the Hindu *tat twam asi* (that art thou) is obvious.

Upon Jung's theories it may be remarked that they are highly suggestive, and may in large part be justified by more careful and critical investigation. But at present they seem to be very speculative, and based upon arbitrary and capricious interpretations. Above all, they assume two hypotheses which are very dubious. First, it is held that there are such things as collective unconscious ideas which mould our mental atmosphere, and which are transmissible as racial myths to individuals, at least as tendencies. Now even if we can understand a mental atmosphere as composed of collective ideas, its transmission to individuals in the form of root-ideas is

[1] *Ib.* pp. 70-71.
[2] *Ib.* p. 300.

extremely doubtful. The whole question of the transmission of acquired characters is so inconclusive (or rather negative) that it is not safe to suppose that root-ideas are passed on by inheritance. The theory of the recapitulation of the racial experience by individuals is seen in its most precarious form when it is applied to ideas. A mental atmosphere is most evidently a social product, and handed on by social inheritance in the form of tradition and culture. There is no reason to suppose that mythological or religious ideas differ in this respect from other ideas, in so far as they are distinguished from general attitudes or tendencies of human nature.[1] Moreover, the similarity of religious "root-ideas" may yet be explained by similarity of conditions in various parts of the world, along with the constancy of human religious needs.

Secondly, Jung supposes that by a process of self-identification of the subject with its mythical deity, after the fashion of Scheffler, the rise of the mystical—and ultimately all—religions can be explained. Yet it is surely plain that this process is limited to the monistic type of religions, and fails of application to the dualistic and pluralistic kinds. For in them the separateness, or indeed the antagonism, of the worshipper and the worshipped is maintained. In theistic forms of religion, again, in which the sense of sin is strongly pronounced, the disparity between man and God is held to prevent any identification of the two. There is need of much subtlety to show that I identify myself with that to which I am alien or opposed. In any case the notion of the relativity of God to the human subject, whereby man is not a function of God but God is a psychological function of man, is really not open to a psychologist who believes in the real existence of his fellow-men. The same

arguments which make God my "projection" will also make a projection of my neighbour, and indeed of the external world. It would be unfortunate for the psychologist if he were bound by his own theories to a belief in the existence of himself alone, and so to mere self-examination. We may avoid this absurdity by holding that the universal and unconditional orientation of man to the world about him, which Jung asserts, bespeaks a reality which may properly be called by the generic title God.

(*b*) Libido

The concept of libido is so variously used that it is, until defined, of little use in the study of religion. As used by Jung it is simply psychic energy, and in that sense is a neutral term having no special reference to the religious life. With Freud it is apparently identical with the pleasure principle, which is primarily rooted in the sex instinct.[1] So far as it is distinctively the tendency to the sensuous in human nature, it is doubtless a strong factor in our behaviour, but has nothing specially to do with religion, which generally stresses the ascetic side of experience rather strongly. In the form of the sexual impulse the notion of libido is near to an important truth for religion. There can be no doubt that Love is an important—perhaps the most important—factor in religion, as indeed it has been shown by Shand to be the governing sentiment in human life. And its connection with sex-impulse has recently been shown to be closer than was previously supposed. This is not to admit the "pan-sexualism" of Freud, whose fancies have been abundantly criticized by skilled psychologists. But Love as a fundamental trait of mankind expresses itself in many forms, of which the

[1] Crichton Miller : *Psycho-analysis*, pp. 34–35.

sexual is one. Self-love and love of others go hand in hand. Man is inherently social, and his sociality expands from love of kith and kin to love of friends, companions of the opposite sex, groups and societies.

Social love points beyond even these, however, to a great Company or a great Companion which is of an ideal nature. In this love the life-impulse seeks its like in the world beyond itself, and, in famous words, is restless till it finds its rest in God. Libido thus finds its completest expression in the love of God. In this form it is religious love. Such love has recently been analysed by Nygren into two kinds, namely *Eros* and *Agape*, the former being Platonic, pagan, human love, and the latter heavenly or Christian love. A real connection between the two through *Caritas* is denied by Nygren,[1] who strongly opposes, but does not reconcile, them. For him true religious love is the opposite of human aspiration ; the one is the outcome of God's grace, the other is the expression of man's desire. This view is supported by many references to texts, whose sense, however, is said by critics[2] to be forced. Indeed the whole conception leads to a dualism in human nature which cannot be said to be justified by psychology, much as this may have to take account of the fact of sin. It is unlikely that the whole conception of charity, so carefully worked out by the mediæval thinkers, has been a fundamental mistake in Christian ethics ; and furthermore, a recent writer makes it the essential conception of all religion.[3] In the form of group-loyalty *charitism* is argued to be the social substance of religion, a conclusion which is reinforced by recent developments in Christianity. Libido has here developed into a sentiment.

[1] Nygren : *Eros and Agape*, p. 39. [2] Dewar : *Man and God*, p. 61.
[3] Heard : *The Social Substance of Religion*, esp. p. 200.

(*c*) Vital Impetus

Bergson stresses another aspect of psychic energy when he explains the nature of *l'élan vital.* In a letter to a friend he says " The considerations put forward in my *Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* result in an illustration of the fact of liberty ; those of *Matter and Memory* lead us, I hope, to put our finger on mental reality ; those of *Creative Evolution* present creation as a fact : from all this we derive the idea of a freely creating God producing matter and life at once, whose creative effort is continued, in a vital direction, by the evolution of species and the conservation of human personalities." Here are three fundamental ideas : the fact of liberty, tension and extension, and creation. They all spring out of the experience of duration. This is an immediate apprehension in which the interpenetration of states of mind is realised. Past and present fuse into each other, so that there is qualitative multiplicity along with continuity of experiences. This is felt as freedom or indeterminism, so that " the gates of the future are open." Freedom, however, admits of degrees and is most real in a condition of mental concentration. This concentration is tension, which is contrasted with the opposed tendency to relaxation, which is in fact extension or the tendency to become spatial. Pure space is a limiting conception. It is extension at its extreme, which is never reached in fact, and is therefore equivalent to nothing, itself a fiction or pseudo-idea. But reality consists of a never-ceasing opposition between tension and extension, between concentration and expansion, between duration and relaxation.

In its purest form tension is creativity, which notion is taken strictly and without any sense of a final objective, so that even finite centres—personalities—are most

creative when their actions resume their pure play, not a striving towards an end. The difference between the two forms of activity is compared to that of a fountain, in which the upward movement is free, the downward determined by gravitation. The function of the universe is thus to be " a machine for making gods," that is freely acting beings. The vital impetus incessantly renews the universe by recreation of matter, which is exhausted energy. It produces matter, life and mind not simultaneously however, but in a fan-wise manner, though each successive production contains something of the former. Thus life retains something of physical energy ; mind something of life ; similarly each tends to be degraded and to fall back to the lower and previous status. But the free creative impetus at the source renews all degrading mind and life, and sends it forwards even towards immortal personalities. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that life is built upon matter, and mind upon life, as if they were a hierarchy ; rather these three tend to diverge, though they retain a common factor, the Creative Urge, and are thus, though different, the complementaries of each other. Such, in brief outline, is Bergson's theory of the Vital Impetus.

It is evident that from a religious standpoint Bergson's idea of creative impetus is of first-rate importance. For it has upset and displaced mechanical explanations of human nature, and has connected human with cosmic creation. But the fan-like movement of evolution is of doubtful validity. It has not so far been accepted by the biologists, who still abide by the notion of hierarchical stages of evolution. Lloyd Morgan, an accomplished scientist, for instance, accepts the notion of successive stages of energy, life and mind, emerging one out of the other. For him evolution is consecutive, not divergent or even convergent, in its main lines. It

is noteworthy too that Bergson himself, whilst he regards the three chief directions of evolution as divergent, yet also holds that they are complementary. And after stressing the differences between them, he is found repeatedly softening down their opposition, as do many of his critics.

In particular the attempt to find two sources[1] of religion in man's intelligence and intuition, leading respectively to practical and social religion *versus* mystical and spiritual religion, is open to criticism. Intelligence and intuition are rather the analytic and synthetic aspects of the one movement of reason. Intellection can be regarded as a series of intuitions—as in mathematics—whilst intuition can generally be defended by arguments. St. Paul's way of thinking is an instance of the latter sort. Both need their completion in *synopsis*, a mode of apprehension which, though practised by Bergson, finds little recognition in his theory. It has sometimes been remarked, indeed, that Bergson has little appreciation of the function of Reason in the classical sense of Aristotle and Hegel, in which it is not the divisive but the integrative activity of mind. As such it is that which combines the work of intuition and intelligence into a whole. They spring out of the vital impetus, no doubt, which splits up into two tendencies, therein showing a dialectic of analysis and synthesis. These reunite, however, in a comprehensive view, which is that of the higher reason.

It may be held therefore that whilst religion springs from a creative urge, this exhibits itself as working through man's physical, vital and mental nature in a successive or pyramidal fashion. In the first stage it is chiefly a nisus to development; in the second it is an impulse to satisfaction and completion; in the

[1] Bergson: *The Two Sources of Religion and Morality*, esp. ch. IV.

third it is aspiration to the divine. Yet the last is in some sense implicit in the first, and the higher stages make explicit what is latent in the earlier only because they all spring ultimately from Creative Reason. Otherwise we are committed to some strange theories of evolution which seem to make the stream rise higher than its sources. In short, theories which attempt to derive religion from some irrational origins such as the merely unconscious, a blind libido or even *Agape*, a creative urge without an objective, seem to be inadequate to explain that tendency to integration and wholeness which is accounted for by the presence of reason at the root of human nature.

(*d*) The Religious Attitude as Three-fold

It appears from the study of these recent accounts of the roots of religion that they each stress important factors in human nature. It is true that there is a spontaneous tendency to orientate oneself imaginatively to the rest of the universe, and doubtless to construct myths which have a similar nature in many parts of the world. There may even be religious root-ideas which being common to the mind everywhere express themselves in a more or less uniform fashion throughout history. And that religion lives in the sphere of imagination rather than of pure thought is an old observation. According to some, like Ruskin, this is its guarantee of seizing upon essential truth. "A myth in its true technical sense," it is said,[1] "is the instinctive popular representation of an idea." And Plato's myths are "sensible representations of universal human thoughts." "They are truly philosophical because they answer to innate wants of man; they are truly poetic because they are in thought creative."[2] In this sense, but not

[1] Westcott: *Religious Thought in the West*, p. 3. [2] *Ib.* p. 2.

in that of Jung's subjective phantasy, we may accept the value of the thought that religion is an imaginative construction, or rather that it involves an imaginative grasp of reality.

Secondly, there is no question but that love is at the heart of religion, and that it may draw into itself all sorts of desires, emotions and passions. There is no need to pit heavenly against human love, spiritual against natural; rather "first that which is natural, then that which is spiritual," charity being the social bond between them. Sex love is but one product of libido, and in its highest reaches may be so much spiritualized as to become the very type of religious union; but it needs to be balanced against intense love of the group, for social love has its spiritual side, and both are completed in the love of God.

Thirdly, religion springs also from a creative impetus in human nature, which is however not arbitrary in its exercise nor without objective. It is rather a dialectical movement, proceeding by analysis and synthesis, and controlled by the premonition of an end which is not definitely seen. It is thus no animal faith nor vague aspiration, but a turning of the human spirit to its goal much as a needle turns to the magnetic North. This is so because the human spirit's origin is in principle one with its objective, which is: to be creative reason.

We are brought back then to three—not two—sources of religion in human nature. From imagination is derived religious myth and eventually theology; from libido spring *eros*, *caritas* and *agape*; from vital impetus morality and purpose. They are none of them irrational, however, but gradually manifest their character as implicitly contemplative and spiritual.

(*e*) The Interplay of Subject and Object in Religion

The foregoing discussion has emphasized chiefly the subjective side of religion, and has neglected the religious object. The upward striving of the human soul might even appear, according to some writers, to be the whole of religion. Evolutionists like Professor J. S. Huxley[1] often convey the impression that human aspiration is the important part of religion; the response from its objective is either regarded as beyond knowledge or denied as illusion. Agnosticism or disillusion is for them the fate of the developed mind of man. Even Professor Alexander, with his "nisus to deity," says, "our human altars still are raised to the unknown God."[2] Evidently, on this showing, religion becomes purely subjective. Fortunately, however, even with such writers, it is impossible to avoid reference to the object of the religious attitude, which object they often inconsistently proceed to describe at some length. Thus most of them are ready enough to portray it as *mysterium fascinans et tremendum*, but they are unwilling to allow that it makes an intelligible reply to man's overtures. The main point appears to be that whilst we must "accept the universe" we cannot expect any supernatural or superhuman response from it; hence though we may find and even promote ideals within it, such ideals are purely immanent within human nature.[3]

Such idealism, however, does not do justice to the religious situation. There can be little doubt that religion has generally stressed the superhuman reality of its object; a glance at history will show that. It has also believed in the responsiveness of the object to its solicitations, and in the response being that of another

[1] *Religion without Revelation.*
[2] *Space, Time and Deity*, vol. ii, p. 47.
[3] Cp. Freud: *Future of an Illusion*, pp. 85 and 97.

genuine voice, not a mere echo of its own. And it must be altogether questioned whether religion could persist if men thought otherwise. So long as the illusion were not found out, he could seriously pursue it; when it was discovered to be such he could at best regard it as a game. Ideals are not self-justifying unless they carry with them the marks of authority; that authority is recognized as coming from a source higher than and beyond ourselves, who accept it as properly commanding or attracting us, or (in Mr. J. S. Huxley's words) interpenetrating with us in communion. It is therefore, *other-than* ourselves, though not *wholly-other;* and our aspirations are controlled and corrected by the reciprocal action of it with us. There is thus a process of self-enrichment on the part of the devotee and a corresponding one of self-disclosure on the part of the religious object. How much more than this there is in this interpenetration is a further question; that there cannot be less seems clear upon an examination of the religious consciousness; how it is possible can be explained when it is understood how we come to recognize the presence of a friend.

There can therefore be no such thing as religion without revelation, in the wide sense of those words. All religion is revelation, said Hegel; and mere subjective aspiration would not long remain religion. Religion involves discovery, and discovery not merely in the sense in which one solves a problem, but as the disclosure of other being. Self-set problems may while away an hour, but those of religion are such as involve man's destiny, and are by so much a serious enquiry into the nature of reality, involving both discovery and revelation. It is also true that there has been advancement in man's discovery of sacred being, so that he has found in his object that which corresponds with his

own level of development. This is not surprising, and no evidence of the projection of his own phantasy upon the void, for he can always best appreciate that which he most resembles. The religious object consequently will appear to keep step, in its revelation, with human capacity; this, far from being a sign of anthropomorphism, will be a mark of man's increased ability to receive what is disclosed. That this disclosure should cease when man begins to regard it as spiritual or superhuman seems antecedently altogether improbable. Why should man's ideals, which have led him fairly successfully to interpret nature and man, fail him when he aspires to understand God by what is highest in himself? The eye, said Goethe, can perceive the sun, because it is sun-like.

Mr. J. S. Huxley says "man's scale of desires and values, his spiritual capacities, dictate the direction of his religion, the goal towards which it aspires; the facts of Nature and life dictate the limits within which it may move, the trellis on whose framework those desires and emotions must grow if they are to receive the beams of truth's sun, if they aspire above creeping on the ground."[1] It is odd that Mr. Huxley does not stress the part which the sun—here admitted to exist beyond the aspirations of the human plant—plays in calling forth its energies and capacities. Why should human nature and its immediate environment "dictate" the goals and limits of human aspirations and merely "receive" the beams of the sun? May not truth itself—elsewhere admitted to be ultimate and absolute[2]—not only draw the human mind in its direction, but actively go forth to seek and illuminate the life which seeks it? Truth's sun is surely a power, higher and more spiritual, than the weak and

[1] *Religion without Revelation*, pp. 175–6.
[2] *Ib.* p. 368.

fallible eye which beholds it, and hence it is possible that there is acceptance by this, not only of those rays which it enjoys along with other beings, but of those which are fitted to its own nature at its highest, and which may be called spiritual. Such acceptance is the counterpart of the putting forth, by the sacred reality, of its energies ; there need be no dictating in either case. It is reasonable therefore to believe not only that there is no religion without some degree of self-disclosure on the part of sacred reality, but that there is also that form of spiritual communication which has been specially called Revelation.

CHAPTER IV

STAGES OF REFLECTION

Impressions, Criticism, Formulæ, Wisdom

The mutual relations between subject and object in the religious situation involve a dialectic or development from implicit to explicit belief. Belief is here taken in the wide sense of James Mill's definition : "every species of conviction or assurance ; the assurance of what is before our eyes, as of that which we only remember or expect ; of what we know by direct perception, as well as of what we know on the evidence of reasoning or testimony." Such conviction is at first naïve ; it rests upon custom, habit, authority, the ascendancy of age, tradition and social pressure. From these the ordinary man can rarely escape, any more than from his surrounding atmosphere. Even those who are not born or bred in a definitely religious community receive its influence, whilst those who belong in youth to an organized church retain its imprint commonly

throughout life. The first stages of a new religion especially are marked by directness, freshness, simplicity of belief, along with much vagueness and credulity. The overpowering effects of a great personality give scope for wonders, signs and portents, as well as for the quiet impression of strength and wisdom which is conveyed to intimate friends. The Synoptic Gospels are evidence of the simplicity and spontaneity of the mind of the young community stirred to its depths by the exhibition of divine power.

A stage follows in which the vigorous but crude faith of the early believer is subject to analysis. Partly the need of an apologetic, a defence of the new belief, accounts for this; partly an adjustment of the new to the old demands a compromise. Intelligence working upon the raw material of primitive opinions finds conflict and contradictions within them, and endeavours to criticize them. This critical work is painful but indispensable to growing belief; it is both destructive and appreciative. The logic-chopping of St. Paul is wearisome compared with the freshness of the Gospels, but was necessary to exhibit their content to Jews and Gentiles.

The impression of first-hand evidence and testimony begins to wane with the second generation after a newly founded religion, and the authority of the evidence begins to replace the evidence of authority. Doubt and questioning begin to creep in, and scepticism must be met by formulated doctrines. These may even be laid down as inviolable beliefs, and then dogma takes her revenge upon reason. After a great reformation the course is the same. The new discoveries become matters of controversy, confessions are drawn up, creeds and institutes rival one another, and careless genius becomes methodical scholasticism. This process is by no means all loss, for the crudities of early belief need to be purged

away in the fire of criticism till the pure essence remains. And there is a genius of method as well as a genius of inspiration.

There succeeds a stage in which the quintessence of the faith is retained, along with a surrendering or neglecting of historical irrelevancies or scholastic formulae. The beliefs have become explicit and are summed up in aphorisms, in proverbs or reflections. The meditations of St. John, and the concentrated wisdom of his reputed Epistles especially, seem to represent the deeper meaning of the gospel history. Philosophy begins to displace theology, wisdom succeeds poetry and prophecy.

The dialectic is seen on a larger scale during the mediæval period, when to the comparatively naïve age of early Christianity, with its immediacy of presentation, its missionary and practical zeal, succeeded the age of the Fathers. Then came heresies and orthodoxies, schisms and regulations, the whole being dominated by a theory of Illumination which spelt the interpretation of primitive Revelation. Next came the age of Scholasticism that bound together the results of preceding discussions in a great system of theology and philosophy, which both completed and undermined the earlier beliefs, for it endeavoured to explain them. This was the signal for a new cycle of thought : from the attempt to return to the original sources by Protestantism—accompanied by great literalism and authoritarianism—through the rationalism and scepticism of the eighteenth century, to the great reconstruction of Schleiermacher and Hegel. We are now beginning a new cycle, starting from the great new discoveries in science, history and religious research.[1]

Whilst there is a movement from implicit to explicit in religious belief, this need not be regarded as a purely rational process. It is complicated by non-rational and

[1] Cp. with the above Delacroix : *La Religion et la Foi*, livre I.

irrational factors, by impulses, passions and arbitrary acts, by the apparently accidental meeting, addition or opposition of ideas. One cannot read the accounts of the great œcumenical councils and believe that they were an expression of pure reason. Still further, when beliefs are transmitted from age to age they are subtly altered by change of meaning in their terms, so that, for instance, realism means to-day the opposite of what it meant in the Middle Ages. Dogmas and doctrines, when adapted to a new world-view of philosophy, take a new turn; they become pictorial or symbolic instead of historical or scientific. Sometimes they gain a richer content—as, say, in the notion of atonement—with the deepening of thought upon them. It is not uncommon for them to reverse their original intention, so that the propounders of dogmas are the first to suffer by them. Beliefs may rise to prominence and fall into obscurity, by what seems to be no more than a fashion, like the enthusiasm for an ascetic life or the faith in the merits of a crusade. There is no inevitable progress of religious thought, therefore, but also reaction, reform and transformation of ideas. All the same, we can see the broad lines of advance, including both persistence of fundamental principles and continuity of direction, in the history both of Eastern and of Western religious thought.[1]

Analysis of Reflection into Three Necessary Beliefs

Are there any necessary objects of belief when reflection becomes fully explicit? Any ultimate termini of thought in which the mind must come to rest? The question is not an idle one, for evidently the definition of belief above adopted from James Mill suggests not only many

[1] Cp. Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion*; Radhakrishnan's *History of Indian Philosophy*; and Tiele's *Science of Religion*.

degrees of conviction but also many varieties of objects believed in. It is evident that there may be degrees of conviction, ranging from extreme uncertainty, through various stages of probability, up to complete certainty. It should be evident also that certainty increases with the explicitness of belief, as previously explained, for criticized and unified thought is far more likely to be credible than naïve opinion or mere sense-data. (The most reliable sense-data are those which are obtained in a psycho-physical laboratory, and they are so only because they have been purified by scientific, that is to say, rational methods of investigation.) Hence it appears that the experience which is most reflectively analysed will be that which produces the highest degree of conviction, and will lead us into the presence of the objects of thought which are most likely to be ultimate. That we cannot, as human beings, attain absolute certainty is as true as that we cannot live in complete uncertainty, and that our beliefs have always more or less of probability. Yet there are certain ultimate principles, like the Laws of Logic, and certain terminal objects of reality, which we must accept if we are to think coherently at all. They may therefore be called necessary.

(*a*) *Self*

The most obvious of these objects is the self, which is the point of departure of all knowledge. Whilst there are many interpretations of the nature of the self, its existence as an entity cannot be denied without denying all knowledge whatever. Even William James, who described the mind as a stream, had to allow a more or less permanent focus or core of experience, which could for the time function as a centre of reference. No more than this need at present be demanded, but the fact of a continuant in the midst of the flux of experience seems

undeniable. Otherwise we are delivered up to mere succession of events which have no thread ; no memory or expectation is possible, still less rational thought. Further, it is impossible to think of such a continuant without believing in it. For it is the foundation of all belief. Belief means not merely " It is so," but " I believe that it is so." The reference to the " I " is unavoidable. This is at least part of what Descartes meant when he founded philosophy upon the dictum " I am conscious, therefore I am." Similarly Professor Stout, whose position is broadly in favour of Common Sense, says " There are some objects which we cannot apprehend without at the same time affirming them. One of these is the self. I cannot think of my own existence, in so far as my existence consists in being conscious, without at the same time believing in it."[1] It may fairly then be described as a necessary object of belief.

(*b*) *World*

A second article of belief is the presence of an other-than-self in all experience. There is no need to go about by way of God's veracity, in the manner of Descartes, to guarantee the existence of an external world. An externality of some sort seems to be directly apprehended, whether this be the human body—St. Francis's " brother ass "—or an externality grasped through its employment. The primacy in apprehension would seem to belong to the objects beyond the body, which is gradually discovered to be one amongst them, but is distinguished as " mine " from " theirs " or " its " by its greater controlability. But however evolved, the sense of exteriority appears to be as unquestionable as that of selfhood. There is a duality in all human experience which cannot

[1] *Analytic Psychology*, p. 112, vol. I.

be reduced. Even the solipsist has to recognise this as *prima facie* evidence, though he may try to explain it away by elaborate subtleties. Furthermore, the apprehension of such an external object carries with it belief in a world of reality. For as Dr. Stout again puts it "The existence of an object means for us that it has a place in the scheme of existence ; that it forms a determination or qualification of reality in general. Unless the thought of this reality, however vague it may be, is at the same time an affirmation of it, no specific thought of a specific object is possible.[1] The belief in such a vague field of objective existence is the beginning of that conviction in a more or less orderly world which we afterwards explicitly define as the Cosmos, and which is a second necessary object of belief.

(*c*) *Ultimate Reality*

It is possible to attempt to limit knowledge to the two objects of belief already discovered, to man and the external world. Various forms of Agnosticism have this in common, that they try to eliminate all superhuman or spiritual beings from knowability, and so to exclude anything that may be called Revelation. Even then, however, they contrive to offer a substitute for such beings, and even to raise an altar to the Unknown God. Such devices are a late product in the history of religion, which amply shows how man has perpetually believed in higher beings than himself, and worshipped them. The evolution of religion, broadly speaking, is the story of the rise of higher and higher—which means more and more spiritualized—conceptions of deity. When man comes to realize the changeableness and variety of human ideas of deity, however, he is apt to become exhausted in his pursuit of God, and to renounce it as an impossible task.

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 112.

This takes place at high levels of speculation such as the end of the theistic period in Indian thought, in late Greek history, and in the modern phase of European life. Then we have suggestions of religion without revelation. Merely natural and human process is substituted for supernatural being, and the worship of nature or humanity for that of supernal deity. The tendency of human nature to generalize and idealize remains, for all that, and in various guises the God who has been expelled returns.

This result is strikingly illustrated in Dr. Julian Huxley's work *Religion without Revelation.* Whilst we are repeatedly told that we must be agnostic or unbelieving about anything beyond the facts of outer nature and of human experience, and though we are presented with a version of the Trinity in terms purely of these natural and human processes, we are also told that Mr. H. G. Wells's 'Veiled Being' and Mr. Herbert Spencer's 'Unknowable' are better understood as "the Eternal Power which is outside man: power possibly in part spiritual, certainly in all its most obvious aspects Material."[1] The word 'eternal' betrays the unwitting theologian. Similarly those who, like Samuel Alexander or William James, find the universe to consist merely of process, are impelled to complete the series of temporal events by reference to a whole, called by the one God or the universe as possessing deity,[2] by the other a 'multiverse' which yet makes a 'universe' that is coherent, though its "eternal form of reality no less than its form of temporal appearance" be pluralistic.[3] It is true that James's personal God is not the universe with its eternal form, but a finite being; it is only the ideal portion of a hypothetical wider whole; yet since his multiverse is struggling toward perfection the tendency

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 329. [2] *Space, Time and Deity,* vol. ii, p. 352.
[3] *A Pluralistic Universe,* pp. 325.

to unite his universe with God is noteworthy. It is an interesting question whether James's God could ever so fully have controlled the rest of reality that He could in any sense be called infinite.

There is, it appears, a trend even in naturalistic and humanistic writers towards the completion of the finite series in the thought of an entity described as eternal, infinite or one. Such an entity must transcend the series, and so far is what is in philosophical theology called God. Though it is true that common thought does not easily arrive at this idea, and whilst it is also true that the popular notion of God is that of a finite being, yet when the belief is fully thought out it becomes that of a complete, infinite and eternal being. This result is made plain once again by Dr. Stout who, in his book *Mind and Matter*, asks what kind of unity is to be ascribed to the whole which comprehends individual selves and other things. He argues that the question is not raised at all until a relatively late and specialized stage of human development is reached. "Primitively the explicit conception of the whole is not present so as to give rise to questions about its nature . . . it is unwittingly presupposed. . . ."[1] He further asserts that the idea that Nature is a self-contained unity seems to break down under intolerable difficulties, and that it cannot exist at all or be what it is apart from a Being beyond it and distinct from it. "This Being, whatever else it is, must be an eternal and universal Mind, giving to Nature, through and through, a character which is otherwise inexplicable."[2]

Summary

It may be asked why there are just three great objects of belief, and whether the number is not merely con-

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 306–307.

[2] *Ib.* pp. 314–5.

ventional. The answer is that they are the historical results of reflection upon experience, and that they correspond to the great directions of human thought. Figuratively speaking, we look within, without, and above. In introspection we discern directly our own nature, thereby discovering the material for the science of psychology and the other sciences which are built upon it. In extrospection we are in the presence of at least our own bodies, and through them of a wider world of bodies which we call the external world. By idealization of these two we are led to believe in a being which encloses and transcends them both. Even if we merely prolong them indefinitely in thought, the straining towards completion becomes what Kant called a regulative idea, that is one which sustains action and aspiration even if it cannot be coherently thought out. But agnosticism apart, the human mind does reach out to some being which transcends the limits of space and time. This effort may be variously described as divination or intuition or enthusiasm, but at its best it is reason at its highest pitch. The greatest thinkers have been convinced that at this point they touch the divine.

It is possible to argue that the great objects of reflection are but three aspects of one and the same Reality, and not three disparate forms of being. There is no need at present to discuss this, still less to dispute it. But it may be pointed out that the external world as understood by physics is very different in its characteristics from the mental world, and that the latter can with the utmost difficulty, if at all, be shown to be continuous with the other. The same must presumably be true of that which transcends space and time, in relation to them. If there is anything timeless and spaceless it will be very different from our world. There is thus a *prima facie* presumption that we have to deal with three disparate

kinds of being. If, however, upon deeper thought it should be believed that they are all reducible to one stuff or substance, yet the difference in the modes of apprehension above described would suffice to render its different aspects worthy of separate treatment. It may be that there is only a dialectical movement of thought throughout the whole order of reality, which is all of a piece; yet the emphasis is first upon the position in which the mind itself is, and upon its own nature, then upon the external environment in which it finds itself, and finally upon the, perhaps hypothetical, being which sustains and encloses all. Such a broad division is common to the chief forms of religion.

CHAPTER V

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGION, CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

The general nature of religion having been set forth, it is desirable to consider its relations to other forms of development of the human spirit. Those relations are complex and subtle, for it is as easy as it is unjust to express them in some simple formula, such as that religion is the mother of the arts, or the enemy of science, or indifferent to morality. These are commonly taken as the great products of culture, which is regarded as the polishing and perfecting of human nature by its own efforts. In so far as religion is considered to involve revelation by some supernatural agency—as we have seen reason to believe that it properly does—it is consequently apt to be opposed to such culture, and a radical antagonism asserted between that organization of religion which we call a church and the organization of culture

which is called civilization. The splitting asunder of the various activities of the spirit of man, which is so marked a feature of our times, demands a fresh enquiry and careful statement of the mutual relations of them and their products. The discussion can be conveniently connected with the views of certain recent thinkers.

It is evident that a sharp line cannot be drawn between religion and culture, at any rate on historical grounds. For culture is often attributed to the gods ; the Greek worship of the Muses is an obvious instance. And again religion may be absorbed into culture, as in the case of certain humanistic religions, like the religion of Humanity. In the lowliest religions, once more, religion and culture are intermingled, as is so amply shown in Tylor's *Primitive Culture*. It seems likely indeed that early religion was of an animistic sort, in which the different activities of human life were bathed in a spiritualistic atmosphere, where secular and sacred were little distinguished.[1] Only gradually were art, science and morality differentiated from this primitive philosophy, to find themselves opposed not only to religion but to one another. It is indeed odd how often critics of religion fail to notice that the various forms of culture are frequently in mutual opposition as well as in conflict with religion. Science can compete with art, art with morality, and morality with science. The Renaissance is often taken as the type of a period in which science and art flourished at the expense of morality ; the Puritan age is said to have stressed morality to the neglect of art ; and the nineteenth century in Europe probably over-estimated science as against art and morality. Religion is not the only sufferer from division of interest.

[1] Cp. Hocking : *Types of Philosophy*, ch. II.

(*a*) Religion and Science

Lord Russell, in his book *Religion and Science*, gives the following account of their relations. "Science is the attempt to discover, by means of observation, and reasoning based upon it, first, particular facts about the world, and then laws connecting facts with one another and (in fortunate cases) making it possible to predict future occurrences."[1] "Religion, considered socially, is a more complex phenomenon than science. Each of the great historical religions has three aspects: (1) a Church, (2) a creed, and (3) a code of personal morals. The relative importance of these three elements has varied greatly in different times and places." . . . "Nevertheless, all three elements, though in varying proportions, are essential to religion as a social phenomenon, which is chiefly what is concerned in the conflict with science. A purely personal religion, so long as it is content to avoid assertions which science can disprove, may survive undisturbed in the most scientific age."[2] Further, religion has historically been bound up with certain eternal and absolutely certain truths, received on authority, and applied deductively to human situations, whilst science is inductive and tentative in its method. Freed from these beliefs, however, religion has emotional importance, for "the mystic emotion, if it is freed from unwarranted beliefs, and not so overwhelming as to remove a man wholly from the ordinary business of life, may give something of very great value—the same kind of thing though in a heightened form, that is given by contemplation. Breadth and calm and profundity may all have their source in this emotion, in which for the moment, all self-centred desire is dead, and the mind becomes a mirror for the vastness of the

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 8. [2] *Ib.* pp. 8-9.

universe."[1] Yet, "when we assert that this or that has 'value,' we are giving expression to our own emotions, not to a fact which would still be true if our personal feelings were different." For values are a matter of taste, not of objective truth.[2] "I conclude then that while it is true that science cannot decide questions of value, that is because they cannot be intellectually decided at all, and lie outside the realm of truth and falsehood. Whatever knowledge is attainable must be attained by scientific method; and what science cannot discover, mankind cannot know."[3]

On this showing there are three questions to be discussed, namely, the nature of fact, the nature of value, and the relations of these to each other in their forms as science and religion. It may be found that these questions are not simple, but require rather complex answers; although it is true that many theologians as well as scientists have been content to have the issue put in the above manner, and decided in favour of a purely personal religion.

Fact, Truth and Value

There are shades of meaning in the term 'fact' which are distinguishable though allied to each other. In Lord Russell's sense it evidently means data discovered by observation and experiment, ultimately based upon the evidence of the senses. This is regarded as the raw material of the sciences. In another sense the term means deed, as when we speak of an accomplished fact. This is the meaning of primary importance for Vico, and those like Croce and Gentile who follow him. The two meanings are combined in the pragmatism of William James, for practice, according to him, must terminate in

[1] *Ib.* p. 189. [2] *Ib.* p. 238.
[3] *Ib.* p. 243. See ch. IX generally.

sensory data. Even when reasonings are added to the facts, the reasonings are either mere means to the attainment of the terminal points, sensory data, or are themselves regarded as self-evident principles, like those of mathematics, and so again are data in a wider sense. These various kinds of data, however, are all looked upon as having reality independently of their being known, and merely waiting for recognition, but when recognized are promoted to the rank of truth. Truth consists at least in the acknowledgment of fact.

Truth is more than this however, else there would be no difference between reality and illusion. The disk of the sun which is covered by a penny in front of the eye, is many times greater than the earth ; its apparent smallness has to be corrected by a great many other facts before the truth can be obtained. Hence it is well said that truth is more than facts ;[1] it has depth and perspective and can be obtained in its completeness only when all the facts are known. This does not abolish the truth-claim of particular facts, but it shows that the claim is liable to much error, which can best be overcome by relation to every other such claim. The supposed data of science have therefore to be criticized and unified before their claim to truth can be admitted to be just. Truth is therefore an ideal rather than something simply given, and science itself is the pursuit and partial achievement of that ideal. If the data of scientific truth are taken as mere existences like sense-data, or as so-called subsistences like mathematical principles, they so far are mere facts but are not true till they are apprehended and correlated. Brute facts may be real, yet they are not so far true, but may be sources or error. They do not differ in this respect from the emotions which are said to be the source of religion or of other values. And if

[1] Cp. Tagore : *The Religion of Man*, pp. 79, 100, etc.

sensory facts can be the starting point of truth, why may not emotions with their values?

Truth being an ideal, it is a value, and is related to our desires. We are told that "in his purely philosophical character he (the philosopher) wants only to enjoy the contemplation of Truth."[1] Evidently wanting and enjoyment are elements in desire, and so partake of whatever subjectivity there is in desire. Truth thus appears to be subjectively conditioned just like Beauty and Goodness, and we cannot contrast it as objective over against the subjectivity of the other two. In the form of Science it is a human product, moulded by human desires and emotions, just as are Ethics and Aesthetics. We can no more say of the Moral Law than of the Scientific Law that it is "an attempt to give universal, and not merely personal, importance to certain of our desires."[2] The desire for truth is a pre-condition of scientific knowledge, and in some people it amounts to a passion. The love of truth itself has its moral aspect in the form of veracity, and hence it is truly said by Max Planck that physics is based upon the principle that it must contain no contradiction, which in terms of ethics implies honesty and truthfulness, both the scientific and ethical principles being universally and perpetually valid.[3]

Accuracy and veracity being thus akin, and springing from the same desire for truth, together they shape the edifice of science.

Science and Religion

Turning now to the question of the relations between science and religion, we may notice first that the difference between them is not chiefly that between the authoritative

[1] Russell: *op. cit.* p. 233.
[2] *Ib.* p. 232.
[3] *The Philosophy of Physics*, p. 35.

and the tentative. Whatever may have been true of mediæval theology, the method of modern theology is frequently inductive, dogmas being regarded as generalizations from the facts of religion. But reversely, modern science is so much specialized and so highly technical that the amateur has to trust the expert much as the layman had to accept the authority of the theologian in the Middle Ages. Not only so, but recent science has, in its theory of knowledge, gone far beyond the notion that it consists in the collection of facts ; it recognizes not only the systematization of facts, but their relativity to the observer. It is found that the conditions of observation and experiment affect the phenomenon observed, so that pure and simple facts, uncontaminated by the presence of the experimenter, are not to be found. The personal equation enters into all observations, and though there are methods for largely overcoming this complication, these are themselves subject to the same interference until completeness is reached. To overcome relativity the principle of totality is invoked, which takes account both of the object observed and of the instruments of observation and experiment. Evidently this involves an indefinite regress before any one fact is fully certified, so that the principle of totality in science is an aspect of that belief, previously discussed, in an ultimate necessary being which we call God.[1]

So far then science and religion are in agreement. Indeed the method of modern science is itself said to be the outcome of the logical discipline involved in the theology of the Middle Ages.[2] Sometimes, however, it is claimed that the difference between them consists in the fact that modern science is exact, whereas religious knowledge is inexact. This is not quite correct, for a

[1] Cp. Max Planck : *op. cit.* pp. 28 and 72.
[2] Whitehead : *Science in the Modern World*, p. 15.

large part of religious knowledge is historical, and history may claim to be an exact study. So far as science is descriptive, as in subjects like botany, it is on a par with much of the data of religious belief. And it may be held that the more concrete subjects are really more wealthy in their possession of truth than, though not so precise as, the more formal studies like mathematics. The real difference between them lies in the statement that science tends to become quantitative, whilst religious knowledge is decidedly qualitative. In this respect it is more akin to æsthetic experience than to exact science, for whilst it is true that some parts of religious experience—like some parts of art, music for example—can be correlated in mathematical terms, the distinctively religious data are irreducibly qualitative. Experience of love, reverence, penitence, ecstasy and the like may be capable of statistical reckoning, but they do not cease to have their distinctive flavour, any more than the tones of a musical scale lose their individuality because expressible in terms of the vibration of a string.

The differences between science and religion consist then not in an opposition between knowledge and emotion, nor in a disparateness between scientific and theological method, but in the antitheses between the more positive and the more normative ways of thinking. The sciences are more purely factual, they are partial and in that sense abstract ; they are also abstract in the sense that they tend to become mathematical in so far as they become exact. Religious knowledge is, in Baron von Hügel's phrase, vivid yet dim. It clings more to the richness and fullness of reality than to its measurability ; it is qualitative rather than quantitative. It stresses the ideal elements in experience, and so goes beyond science, though it does not oppose this. Science, in so far as it rests upon the sensory data of the laboratory, is a

highly artificial and abstract thing, and it is no wonder that it comes to be explained as dealing with pointer-readings upon instruments and not with the facts behind them.[1] Fortunately the greater part of science is not of this sort, but is descriptive of the broader features of nature. Even so it does not profess to deal with the ultimate realities, the foundations or ends of the universe, which is just what the normative sciences are concerned about. Religion does claim to deal with final reality, whether mediately through reasoned argument or immediately through mystical union. And it treats that reality as sacred.

(*b*) Religion and Art

Readers of the æsthetical works of Hegel and Ruskin are familiar with the idea of the intimacy between Art and Religion. It is obvious that religion and art are both emotional, that they both use pictorial language by preference, and that they then tend towards symbolism in their more spiritualized forms. The world of pure thought is uncongenial to them, so that the language of the philosophy of religion or of æsthetics is apt to seem alien to their life. Historically there has been close connection between the two, though it is not safe to say they spring from a common root. Apparently the art of the cave-dwellers was practical or sportive, but had no direct relation to religion. And primitive music has the same independence of the specifically sacred. With the rise of civilization, however, some forms of art come to be hallowed, especially architecture in the form of places of worship. Indeed architecture remains to the end the most comprehensive of the arts, as furnishing the home for the rest. But every art has been taken up into religious worship at some period, and some arts like

[1] Cp. Eddington : *The Nature of the Physical World*, p. 251.

music lend themselves specially to the devotional life. It is remarkable, in fact, that whilst it is complained that the divorce between art and religion is to-day almost complete,[1] this is far more true of the plastic and graphic arts than of the mobile ones, poetry and music.

Art, Religion and Life

The historical connection between art and religion is understandable if both are expressions of the same fundamental impulse, the furtherance of life. Art is an expression of the joy of life, and religion, at least in its healthiest forms, is concerned with the promotion of life. "I am come that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." Life tends to exhibit itself in beauty, and disease in ugliness, so that health and beauty commonly go together. This is true of spiritual as well as physical life ; the word decadence is applied to either indifferently. Much of the admiration of to-day for the so-called primitives of various sorts is based upon a worship of energy that can only be called pagan. So far as it goes, however, it is still worship, and worship of what is taken to be both primal and ultimate reality. It need not therefore be called anti-religious, though it is far from being Christian. We can then agree that art and religion are both expressions of the individual's sense of the emotional significance of the universe : they are manifestations of the spirit which can transport us beyond the ordinary emotions of everyday life into ecstatic conditions in which we enjoy the finally real. They believe in the intrinsic and unconditional value of certain things, which are therefore the things in themselves which philosophers often seek so vainly. Hence "art and religion belong to the same world."[2]

[1] Gardner : *The Principles of Christian Art*, pp. 11, 283.
[2] Clive Bell : *Art*, p. 82.

Art differentiated

They are not identical however, for evidently there is much outside art which can provoke the same emotions. What then is the differentiating character of art? It is tempting to reply, with Mr. Bell, significant form, meaning form behind which we catch a glimpse of ultimate reality (*Ib.* p. 54). Thus we are led to suppose that art has to do with pure form, a point repeatedly pressed by the same author, till the sensuous content of art in sound and colour tends to vanish altogether or at least to become entirely subordinate to form. This surely would lead us to regard mathematics as ideal art; and although there is undoubtedly an æsthetic quality in mathematical constructions it would be a bold thing to regard it as the purest form of art. The sensuous content of art is necessary to its very existence, and so we must express its nature as sensuous content organized into form significant of ultimate reality. In Mr. Bridges' words in *The Testament of Beauty* (p. 23):

> Beauty is the highest of all these occult influences,
> The quality of appearances that thru' the sense
> Wakeneth spiritual emotion in the mind of man:
> And Art, as it createth new forms of beauty,
> Awakeneth new ideas that advance the spirit
> In the life of Reason to the wisdom of God.

In spite of all that has been said, however, it is plain that peoples may be highly religious without being very artistic. The Jews, Romans and Mohammedans are illustrative cases, though it is not generally observed that the artistic impulse, when lacking or repressed for theological reasons in certain directions, is apt to find other outlets. Thus Jewish and Moslem literature, especially in the Bible and the Koran, compensated for dearth of graphic art, and some say that the Aeneid of Virgil and the De Rerum Naturæ of Lucretius are

great religious poetry : the highest expression of the spiritual genius of Rome. Where a people is highly endowed with art-power, however, it is evident that this greatly reinforces religion. The myths of India, the various arts of Greece and Italy, the wonderful creations of the Middle Ages, all point to the same conclusion. Indeed it is a common belief since the days of Ruskin that the arts attain the highest perfection in their religious employment. Reversely, it is held that a renewal of art commonly comes through a revival of religion. The rise of Gothic art from peoples gradually imbued with the spirit of Christianity, the first steps in modern art by men inspired by the life of St. Francis, the great modern music following the Reformation and centering in Bach's religious compositions—called by Söderblom "the fifth gospel"—the religious poetry and song accompanying the Evangelical revival and mingling with the Romantic movement, the pre-Raphaelite recovery of the earlier catholic tradition that also distinguished the Oxford movement in religion, the opinion that much recent art is suffering from irreligion[1] : these and many such examples confirm the belief that art and religion are intimately related. It might even seem that they rise and fall together.

Art partly independent

According to Mr. Fry, this is not so, and he points out that the movement of art is partly independent of the trend of religion. Thus it was some centuries before early Christianity fashioned a new form of art ; later Gothic went on vigorously after mediæval religion began to decline ; and the French Revolution, so far as this was a spiritual outburst, turned eventually towards a reactionary form of art, that of Romanticism with its

[1] Gardner : *op. cit.* p. 279.

sentimental respect for the age of faith. Finally the new revolutionary movements of art seem to be out of all proportion to the consciously recognized changes in thought and feeling.[1] In reply we may suggest that these remarks apply more to a philosophy of life than to religion proper, and that they are made from a particular standpoint which estimates as reaction what others would consider to be progress. Furthermore, the arts considered are those which are called plastic and graphic, and which require a long period for the development of technique. This is conspicuously so in the case of architecture, whereas the freer arts of poetry and music respond more quickly to the spiritual atmosphere of the times. Thus the early Christians only slowly delivered themselves from the ban under which the Hebrew religion, in which the leaders of the first generation were nurtured, had placed the arts of representation. But the literature of the New Testament—or at least of the Gospels —is as fresh as the Figure it portrays. Music also felt the new influence, for whilst the early Christians adopted the forms both of Hebrew and Greek song, "we find the old music continued with just that degree of difference which might be expected in the work of a new race which had something new to express."[2] Indeed Sir Hubert Parry is quoted as saying "From the very first the spirit of the Christian religion was most perfectly and completely reproduced in its music, and even the various phases it passed through in many succeeding centuries are exactly pictured in the art which most closely presents the spiritual life of man."[3] As for the later Middle Ages, Mr. Fry himself in most eloquent words shows how St. Francis, whose "conception of

[1] *Vision and Design;* Essay on Art and Life.
[2] *Oxford History of Music.* Vol. I, p. 25.
[3] Wibberley: *Music and Religion,* p. 56.

holiness was almost as much an æsthetic as a moral one," inspired the Franciscan movement with ideals possibly derived from the Waldensians, so that it would be hard to refute the position that it brought about the great outburst of Italian art.[1] The French Revolution, again, though officially celebrated by the pseudo-classical work of David, was also the age of nature-worship, newly born in Rousseau, Wordsworth and Goethe. Finally modern art, however chaotic in the cases of architecture, sculpture and painting, is conspicuous for the religious poetry and music of Bridges and Elgar.

General correspondence

A general correspondence can thus be traced between the rise and fall of art and religion, and this is not surprising, for as we have noticed æsthetic expression is commonly a sign of spiritual health. Admiration, which is the properly æsthetic emotion, is also a large part of religion, and it culminates in adoration. Religion and art are exposed to similar dangers, however, for when they concentrate attention upon the personal feeling of the subject instead of upon the object worshipped or admired, they turn to morbidity and corruption. Thus it is that art is often blamed for the degradation of religion, and ages of puritanism arise, when art of various kinds is despised or prohibited. For it is felt that it leads to Idolatry, the prostration of the self before objects which are inferior to it. This was the attitude of Zoroaster, Plato, and Milton, to mention but a few conspicuous examples. The result is a period of iconoclasm, accompanied perhaps by an effort of reformation. It is noteworthy, however, that such destruction of old forms of art is usually followed, in a people which has æsthetic gifts, by the rise of new and

[1] *Op. cit.* : Essay on Giotto.

nobler ones. Plato himself created great myths which superseded those of Homer, Milton produced an original and sublime type of religious poetry, the Protestants in banishing much of the old ritual also opened the deep springs of music in the works of Bach.

When, in an artistic people, the purification of art is not accompanied by a religious reformation, it is a sure sign of the paralysis or decay of religion. Art is the most mobile and sensitive expression of man's higher powers, and the decline or revival of religion may commonly be foretold from a consideration of the arts. Thus it was that Ruskin prophesied so much that has come true, which was incredible to the students of politics and religion in his day. The present confusion in the arts, world-wide as it seems to be, is an index of the unsettlement of religion which is probably destined to go further. It is significant that the general drift of the arts—in spite of much disorder—is towards realism, simplicity, sincerity. So far it is commendable and in tune with the spirit of modern youth, of which it has been said that it questions every virtue except sincerity. Sincerity, however, is just the corner-stone of that new common-wealth, both in art and life, which the great critics and reformers, Carlyle, Ruskin and Morris set out to build. And insincerity it is which continually frustrates our efforts to fashion a brave new world. Politics and religion alike are in need of a drastic purge which will bring us to the elemental realities of life. It cannot be said that war provides such a purge, for as Kant said it makes more bad men than it produces good ones, but a new period of puritanism might be as salt and fire to a corrupt civilization.

Art integral to Religion

At present the fine arts are isolating themselves in-

creasingly from the common life of the peoples. There is a flood of mixed and crude art being diffused through the radio and the cinema, which is largely of the nature of propaganda. But the purer art is becoming the cult of a few, who are even tending to glory in the fact. In this way it works as a substitute for or even a rival of religion ; as Mr. Bell puts it : " Rightly therefore do we regard art and religion as twin manifestations of the spirit ; wrongly do some speak of art as a manifestation of religion."[1] We are then easily led to the doctrine of art for art's sake, as if it had no integral relation to religion. Doubtless such assertions have in mind conventional or institutional religion, but even then art and religion cannot safely be regarded as twin manifestations of the spirit. The true relation is that of part to whole, for art is the sensuous presentation of the divine, which however may appear in other ways. The claims of the artist and the theologian are often so stated as to be irreconcilable : the one demands independence of, the other subservience to, religion. Thus Bishop Westcott in a chance remark says : " as an element of worship Art must be seen to be distinctly ministerial,"[2] whereas Mr. Bell insists that it is an end in itself. Evidently what both should have said is that art is an integral part of rounded and complete religion.

Another antithesis may be considered. It can be contended that religion is destined to be superseded by art. For religion contains affirmations of supernatural or metaphysical truth ; gods are named and worshipped who are not real, who bind the worshipper down to false beliefs, and who thereby rivet man's faith to superstitions. Whereas when art detaches them from their local habitations and names, and sees their ideal significance, religion

[1] Bell : *op. cit.* p. 82.
[2] *Religious Thought in the West*, p. 339.

is liberated and becomes purely æsthetic. Hence religion must perish that art may survive.[1] This simple solution is counterbalanced by such teaching as that of Tolstoy, in which art appears as entirely subordinated to religion, and intended solely as a means of communicating ideal emotions. Art thus becomes an emotional language, valuable in so far as it propagates spiritual truth. Consequently a vast amount of the most authoritatively accepted art is condemned as worthless. Evidently such religion is not far from asceticism, and is incompatible with an æsthetic view of life. It is akin to the spirit of the monks who destroyed Hypatia. Religion, however, in its history belies both these theories, and shows itself in its greatest representatives, like Christ and St. Francis, full both of grace and truth. Metaphysical truth is necessary to religion, though such truth may be constantly deepened and renewed ; grace is also required that it may be wholesome and acceptable to man.

Both Miss Harrison and Tolstoy are right, despite their apparent opposition, in so far as they discuss in religion a tendency to go beyond the merely factual, whether in art or knowledge. Art which is merely sensuous is on a par with mere positivism in science. It contains the raw material of beauty as facts contain the data of truth, and is liable to the degradation which is called sensualism, as science is in danger of falling into mere empiricism. But both contain indwelling movements towards a norm. The lower art must perish that the higher may survive, just as superficial knowledge must give way to deeper truth. So religion cannot rest in the immediately given but, including the aims of art and science within itself, presses on to ideal completeness and perfection. It is said that in mediæval Florence a painter was required to matricu-

[1] Cp. Miss Harrison's *Ancient Art and Ritual*, passim.

late in the Guild of physicians before he could practise as an independent artist, and that this close connection between medicine and painting goes back to very early days, receiving further illustrations from the fact that St. Luke was the patron of both artists and doctors.[1] In this example one may see exhibited the way in which both science and art combine in the one life of religion.

(*c*) Religion and Morality

It is customary for us to associate religion and morality as if they were integral to each other, but it is not evident that intrinsically they are more closely connected than, say, religion and art. It is largely an accident of Western civilization that they are usually spoken of together, and even of that part of it which most directly follows the Hebrew tradition, namely the puritanic strain in Western Christendom. The Greek Church, however, emphasizes the æsthetic side of religion, as well as the mystical, and is often accused of neglecting the ethical aspect. In Matthew Arnold's terms, we have been Hebraizing whilst the Eastern Church has Hellenized. In any case it is plain that there may be immoral religion as well as irreligious morality. Early civilizations such as those of Peru and Mexico show abundantly a divorce between the two, even when allowance has been made for primitive conceptions in them both. Historians of religion regard it as a sign of great advance when the specifically moral religions like Judaism and Zoroastrianism begin to appear. When they do, religion and morality tend to march together, but it is quite easy for one to lag behind the other, especially at times of great upheaval like the Renascence, when people like Benevenuto Cellini can be observed to be piously immoral. On the other hand we find that in times of religious uncertainty many fine

[1] Cartwright: *Painters of Florence*, p. 5.

characters, such as John Morley, will exhibit a purer and higher morality than most religious believers.

Morality distinct

In any case, morality and religion are not simply identical, for whilst the characteristic feature of morality is the sense of obligation, the specific mark of religion is holiness. This distinction is already implied in Kant's treatment of the two, for he sharply distinguished between morality and piety, yet the confusion on the matter is shown in many modern books in which the difference between the two is taken very seriously.[1] It is felt that they should coincide, yet are not identical. For either morality can manage without religion, or religion be independent of morality, or again each may affect the other. Taking up these positions in turn, it is argued that morality can exist without obligation or sanction of any sort, simply as the necessary expression of life. Life is dynamical and tends to expand in certain normal directions, egoistic and social and creative, towards an undefined ideal. This ideal, however, is only a matter of hope, not of knowledge, and hence there is only one commandment: develop thy life in all directions, both intensively and extensively; to that end be a most social and sociable being. What you *can* do that you *ought* to do. Perhaps in consequence humanity will arrive at a goal not foreseen but which it creates for itself. At any rate, advance! Such in brief is the message of naturalists like Guyau.

Upon this teaching it may be remarked that it is strangely called morality without obligation, for it contains at least one commandment: to expand life in all directions; and at least one exhortation: advance!

[1] Cp. Guyau: *La Morale sans obligation ni sanction.*
Pokrovsky: *Le Sentiment Religieux; Base de la Morale?*
Laird: *Morals and Western Religion.*

No purely scientific, that is, positivistic ethics should utter commands. Further, the question arises whether morality without sanctions of some sort—and ultimately religious ones—can be sustained. In some cases—like that of Guyau—morality is fostered by hope, and so long as animal sanguineness persists in human nature this may suffice to promote morality. But when reflection arises and it is questioned whether the result is worth the effort, then doubt or even despair appears, and morality becomes paralysed. We are told[1] that instead of saying " I ought, therefore I can," it is more true to say " I can, therefore I ought," that is, that the power to act creates a certain impersonal duty. If on reflection, however, we become convinced that all our actions are in vain, and doomed to lose their beneficial results in the vast death of the solar system (in Mr. Russell's famous words), can it still be said that life is worth while? Shall humanity still say " I can, therefore I ought " or " I can not, therefore I ought not to try "? Doubtless heroism may remain, even defiance of a cosmos which is so hostile to our aspirations, but what morality can there be in doing the foolish, the futile? Why not eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die? It is the rational impossibility of putting aside such questions, metaphysical and religious, that raises the question of sanctions.

Religious obligations

Furthermore, when it is once admitted that not only cosmical considerations bear upon morality but religious also, that is to say the existence of a deity which in any sense determines destiny, then arises the question of religious obligation. For there may obviously be duties towards God. Whether these are treated as matters of

[1] Guyau : *op. cit.* p. 248.

prudence, or of divine commandment, or of ethical insight proper makes no difference to their obligatoriness to the worshippers who recognize their claims. But in fact certain great religions have been primarily ethical in their appeal. Early Buddhism (after its supposed first stage of agnosticism), Stoicism and Deism may be cited as primarily ethical religions, grounded in the moral character of their cosmical deities. One cannot read Marcus Aurelius without feeling his identification of the cosmical with moral law. And Immanuel Kant's famous declaration that two things filled him with awe : the starry heavens above and the moral law within, point in the same direction. Indeed it is Kant who finally clarified the nature of Deistic religion when he explained it as Duty conceived as Divine Command. When he went on to explain that the perfect performance of duty required the postulation of a God adequate to guarantee that it should be attended by deserved happiness, or at least able to ensure its complete fulfilment, the question of religion sanctions for morality was fairly posed.

It is often supposed that morality is debased, or at least made impure, if it is subject to sanctions. Many eloquent pages in Guyau show how the most self-sacrificing acts of men are felt to have an intrinsic superiority to prudential ones, and are performed irrespective of sanctions. And doubtless if sanctions are conceived merely as rewards and punishments of virtue and vice there is little to be said for them. But long human experience shows that they may at least be accepted as " safeguards for fools " who have not yet learned what is beneficial in the long run. Further, the legal system of rewards and punishments can itself be moralized, when used for the promotion of maximum good. The idea of law as itself creative of new benefits to those who are subject to it gains ground daily. Doubtless it is difficult " to make the punishment

fit the crime," so that merit and demerit shall coincide with profit and loss ; it does not follow that they are incommensurable, for the whole legal system of civilized nations is there to show that the attempt is fairly successful. The endeavour to abolish rewards and punishments is utopian, when it is not antinomian. The idea of law as educative remains when criticism has shown that there is no simple ratio between virtue and happiness, vice and suffering. In this educational sense sanctions remain indispensable to developing human nature. If then God is conceived as a divine educator, religious sanctions have an important part to play in the future of the race.

Religious sanctions

In a deeper sense, however, the importance of religious sanctions of morality may be established. This is to be found in the difference of temper in which morality is performed according as it has or has not religious support. Much the same civilized morality, let us suppose, is accepted by both Guyau and Lord Russell, and they are both without belief in a controller of cosmic history, a Providence. Yet they adopt different attitudes towards the same situation. The one bids us go forward in the spirit of hope, trusting that perchance humanity will succeed in its aspirations ; the other reconciles himself to the utter defeat of humanity's desires. Can it be supposed that hope and despair will in the long run sustain the same general code of morality ? Granted that mankind has a vastly long period in which to improve or decline, is it not plain that the belief that history comes to a *cul de sac*, or that it repeats itself endlessly, will breed a different moral temper from that induced by confidence in indefinitely renewed possibilities ? History seems to show that upon the former views supervenes pessimism, with its accompaniment

of a sentiment of pity and apathy; whilst the last commonly produces energetic and co-operative progress. If morality is conceived not merely as a code of overt actions but as also covering motive and desire, it is evident that pessimism and optimism promote different types of morality. But courage and despair are dependent largely upon the believed attainability of the desired end, and hence are greatly affected by the degree of assurance in divine control of destiny.

Religion, it seems, both endorses morality by educative rewards and punishments, and animates or depresses it by the degree of support which it lends. Lastly it may even be said to be that which ultimately makes morality possible. For let it be supposed that the world was given over to a malevolent being who acted as the great undoer of reasonable actions, so that good and evil consequences were impredictable from any course of behaviour. Then there would be no reason for doing one act rather than another, and morality would vanish into caprice. Only a metaphysical belief in the law-abidingness of the universe can make morality ultimately reasonable. Such a belief, however, involves an assumption of constancy in the direction of the universe towards goodness which is tantamount to a belief in a controlling providence. This was the real point of Kant's argument for a Supreme Being who should guarantee the realizability of our moral ends. Moral theory eventually passes over into a pragmatic theology which when thought out becomes metaphysical. Thus later Buddhism developed a theology in which Buddha was deified; Stoicism merged into Neo-Platonism, and the Deistic "absentee" God was transformed into the speculative Logos of Martineau and the modern Unitarians.

When therefore we are told[1] that the sole element

[1] Guyau: *L'Irréligion de l'avenir*, p. 358.

which is respectable in the idea of sanctions is the conception of ideal good as having sufficient power of realization to impose itself upon nature and to invoke the entire world; that the moral sentiment may be considered as being the great force and the great spring of action of the universe; that the ambition of morality progressively to invade nature by the intermediary of humanity is that which is most lofty in the philosophic domain; and that that which is great and fine is sufficient for itself: we are bound to say that this is to take too sanguine a view of human nature. It may be true enough that a very superior society, composed of sages like Buddha or Jesus, would be able to dispense with the notion of sanctions[1]—though this is so only in the lowest sense of sanctions—yet society is not in that condition, and the experience of the world-war and its consequences does not encourage a cheerful view of its moral powers.

The supreme sanction

It is a fact indeed that the greatest saints have declared their dependence upon higher powers for the fulfilment of their tasks. Jesus constantly affirmed the necessity of faith, not simply in the neutrality of the cosmos to our moral endeavours, but in a Heavenly Father who endorsed, supported and justified our efforts to be good. This dependence is technically described as the receiving of divine grace, and is one great point upon which all churches seem to be agreed. Apart from some such confirmation of moral striving it is likely that the philosophy of Omar Khayyam would be adopted by a very large part of mankind.

Granted that humanity is sound and wholesome at its core, it is yet weak. It needs the correction of sanctions

[1] *Ib.* p. 237.

conceived as disciplinary measures to guide it in the right direction ; it requires the support of assurance that its efforts are not vain when confronted by the crudities of social life and the pressure of external nature ; above all it demands evidence that there is sufficient constancy in the cosmos to ensure that morality is not a grand deception. But reversely it is true that morality has been a great purifier of religion. It has criticized impure and immoral religions, and has refined the notion of sanctions even in those which were moral. The banishment of superstitious fears in this life, the criticism of crude notions of divine reward and punishment, the condemnation of coarse and horrible ideas of heaven and hell, the setting up of ever higher incentives to the good life : these have been among the great services of morality to religion. Sanctions have become, under this chastening, conditions of morality and aids to its performance. But it does not appear that it can dispense with them ; for whilst virtue may be its own reward it is not its own guarantee of success. Sanction, which means legally endorsement, and so reward and punishment, also expresses the thought of sanctification or consecration, which is a religious idea.

(*d*) Summary

The foregoing study has shown that the relations between religion and the three commonly accepted values are complex. Religion may strive for a time against one or more of them, as they may compete with each other, but ideally religion embraces all the values, and adds to them the peculiar character of holiness. This, it is true, is not a fourth value, but a way of treating those when experienced. That way has been fully expounded by Otto, under the general description of the response to the numinous. Numinousness, however, does not appear

to be a character which is independent of the values, so that a person may be religious without appreciating them. Whilst he may be comparatively insensitive to truth, beauty or virtue, he cannot be outside or above them. That would make him inhuman. The religious characteristic called the numinous thus appears to be diffused over the values ; any one of them or any feature in them may be specially regarded as holy. There are exceptionally holy persons, places or actions, which may exhibit the familiar traits of mystery, awesomeness or fascination. But the most distinctive trait of the holy seems to be that tendency to wholeness which we have remarked in studying the values separately. They point beyond themselves to a completeness, both of themselves individually and in union with the others, which is the truly religious impulse when made explicit. Holiness and wholeness, it is said, are twin ideas, and both express that tendency to holism which is inherent in human nature.

Religion hallows the values

It is worth considering, in short, whether the intrinsic nature of the great values lies in those qualities which Science, Ethics and Aesthetics consider and analyse : their coherence, obligatoriness and harmony ; whilst their sanctions consist in those marks—mystery, overpoweringness and fascination—by which their numinousness is described. Religious sanctions would thus appear as more general and diffused than legal rewards and penalties ; and in fact in Dante their symbolic meaning far surpasses their literal illustration. The ultimate consecration of them then appears in their reference to an ideal whole, whether conceived as an impersonal cosmos or a personal being. As Bishop Westcott puts it : " Religion in its completeness is the

harmony of these three, of Philosophy, Ethics and Art, blended into one by a spiritual force, by a consecration at once personal and absolute. The direction of Philosophy, to express the thought somewhat differently, is theoretic, and its end is the true, as the word is applied to knowledge ; the direction of Ethics is practical, and its end is the good ; the direction of Art is representative, and its end is the beautiful. Religion includes these several ends, but adds to them that in which they find their consummation, the holy. The holy brings an infinite sanction to that which is otherwise finite and relative. It expresses not only a complete inward peace, but also an essential fellowship with God."[1] This statement needs to be qualified by substituting the word Science for Philosophy, which in its fullest sense as Wisdom is itself the all-embracing life of the spirit.

But corruption secularizes all

Religion and culture are thus not antagonistic, though they are not identical. Religion both sanctions and sanctifies the values which culture produces, so far as they tend to ideal unity. They are not therefore to be regarded as secular, by contrast (say) with the results of the activities of a church. Normally there is a certain concentration of the sacred in churchly activities, and a diffusion of it in everyday life. But 'religious' activities may be profoundly secular, and 'worldly' pursuits deeply sacred. There are for instance very secular churches and also very sacred though workaday institutions. The struggle at the Reformation largely turned upon the rediscovery of this truth, though it had been already announced by St. Francis. The ideal State of Dante was also conceived as having its foundations in metaphysical truth and so as having an existence parallel

[1] *Religious Thought in the West*, p. 344.

with, though independent of, the church. The sacredness of the State as a divinely founded institution alongside of the Church has been the theme of many great thinkers, and the source of many a conflict between the two powers. It cannot to-day be admitted simply that the church is sacred, and the state or other societal formation secular. The religious life may be pursued in many avocations, and the irreligious within the church itself. The work of artist, thinker, husbandman may be far more sacred than that of the priest. All depends upon whether it is done "as for Thy laws."

The life of culture, consequently, is sacred so far as it refers to ideal ends; it is secular so far as it is debased. The mark of secularity is corruption: the refusal to achieve the best that is possible. The mark of the sacred is ideality: the attempt to reach the highest that is attainable; for in the long run the sacred and the ideal coincide. Science, art and morality may thus be incipient religion, or again the expression of a religious world-view. The business of religion is to hallow the common life, of which culture is the fine flower. It is well said that "the test of a true faith is the extent to which its religion is secular."[1] It might with equal justice be said that the test of a purified faith is the extent to which its religion is cultivated. Consequently that organization of culture which we call civilization is, in general, a sacred thing: at once the soil in which a high religion grows and the recipient of benefits which religion returns to it.[2] There are corrupt civilizations as there are corrupt religions, and the two react upon each other in the most complex ways. But history shows that broadly speaking they rise or fall together, and the

[1] Oman: *Grace and Personality*, p. 75.
[2] Cp. Church: *The Gifts of Civilization*, ch. I.

Apostle who admonished us to seek the graces of faith, hope and charity, also advised that whatever things are true, honourable, just, pure, of good report, virtuous and praiseworthy, should be thought upon as a religious duty.

PART II

PHASES OF RELIGION

CHAPTER VI

PRIMITIVE RELIGION

So far we have been concerned with the general analysis of the nature of religion and of its relations to other interests of man. It is now necessary to study the contents of the various religions in order to appreciate the purport of them all. This might easily involve enquiry into the history of religions, a vast field of research. To avoid this, it is a philosophical practice to study religions at various levels. These need not be selected on historical grounds, but according to a plan. The question is : what plan ?

A dialectical method, such as that of Hegel, is tempting, but apart from doubts about the validity of the method, it is evident that the new material discovered since his time has rendered his scheme faulty. The new wine has burst the old bottles. Yet Hegel remains, in the words of William James, a great impressionist, and is still most illuminating. However mistaken his examples and however forced his logic, the attempt to arrange religions according to the degree of elevation of the objects worshipped is classical and authoritative. It will be most satisfactory therefore in an introductory work to select typical examples from the grand divisions of religion into Naturalistic, Humanistic and Spiritual, making room for some indefinite or mixed examples.

The title, primitive religion, is used in default of a

better ; for it is not obvious what is to be considered primitive, nor whether what is believed is religion. Rather the beliefs may be held to be pre-religious, the common, but indefinite roots from which religion, magic, animism, and other definite tenets sprang. Hence the whole attitude of man at this level may be treated as an elementary philosophy, out of which both genuine religion and mere superstition arose. It will be argued that even so religion has a certain priority to magic and other superstitions, which are a degradation of it.

The primitive character of such a first philosophy is relative ; it is found amongst uncivilized man at all periods, and not only amongst savages. Whilst backward peoples furnish the finest examples of its presence, it is found in young children and probably in all persons at times of great sensitiveness to world-influences. The enquiries of scholars equipped with psychological insight and method have shown that the earlier researches by the more purely historical students are superseded by the discovery of an original, but indefinite, world-view, which underlies all positive forms of cult, adoration or worship. In particular, we refer to the work of Karl Beth, whose lead we in the main follow.[1]

Early Energism

The attempts made to explain religion as arising from magic seem to break down. Whether regarded as an advance upon magic (as by Hegel) or as a retreat from it after its failure (as by Frazer) religion cannot be understood except in its own terms. These terms are that it is a life which is other than and beyond the sensuous, a life in which the sensuous is both secured and elevated. This life invokes the belief in a super-sensuous power or energy, which is realized by sympathetic (symbiotic)

[1] *Religion und Magie.*

feeling. It is not originally inferred or argued to as from effect to cause, but is immediately experienced in a non-discursive manner. Not even the ordinary organs of perception are involved, but there is apprehension of a non-physical world through means which can perhaps best be described as telepathic. F. W. H. Myers spoke of a tel-æsthetic power in us which is independent of the sense organs, and which can be understood only by those in a fundamental psychic unity with the universe. This is apprehended, not by a quantitative difference in the amount of consciousness required in such an intuition, but by a difference in kind. This intuition is therefore the groundwork and presupposition of ordinary perception and argument. One might say that the everyday conscious life is bathed in a super-sensible energy.

It is probable, according to another opinion of Myers that in deep sleep there is a contact with this super-sensible world, for then there is release from the trappings of empirical experience and a purification of consciousness. That which happens more artificially in cases of trance and hypnosis may occur in deep sleep : a holiday from ordinary stimuli of sense and a discovery of the sources in the invisible world from which man derives his energy. Such at least is a possible explanation of the refreshment given to the human spirit in sleep. It is therefore not sufficient to invoke dreams as the origin of religious ideas, for though it is abundantly clear that the traditions and theology of a people may decide the special forms which dreams take, it is also true that they are not derived from capricious association, but have a sense and meaning which is often highly dramatic, clairvoyant and spiritual. The simple explanation of them as resulting from desires repressed or censored by custom and morality will not suffice, for often what replaces the forbidden desire is a deeper and more vital

desire. Thus the habit of the smoker whose dreams are coloured during abstinence by images of tobacco may be broken, not by convention, but by a strong desire for health, which may well be called natural morality. In general it is said that in dreams ethical and intuitive factors are enhanced beyond everyday experience, and are lifted almost into an eternity-perspective.[1]

Mana, Tabu and Totem

However true these speculations may be it is pretty sure that in certain characteristic beliefs of primitive religion, namely in Mana, Tabu and Totem we find the same fundamental idea of an all-pervading energy. The Melanesian word Mana has obtained currency for a generally accepted notion in primitive thought of a mysterious, impersonal, extraordinary power, which is yet manifested in material things as a kind of fluid or electricity. All unusual things which awaken astonishment—a dust-cloud on the way, abnormalities like epilepsy or deformations of the body, exceptional gifts, anything new, but also recurring events which are baffling like birth and death, certain foods and drinks—are ascribed by primitive man to an origin most simply described by us as supernatural, although our notions of natural and supernatural do not yet exist at this level. The notion of supernatural has a much wider range amongst the primitives than in higher civilization, though it does not vanish with advancing culture, but is made deeper and sharper.

Mana—which corresponds more or less closely to the Wakonda of the Sioux, the Orenda of the Huron Indians, the Mulungu of the African Bantus, the Andriamanitra of Madagascar and so forth—is thus not so much a world-view like animism, which contains the element of an

[1] Beth : *op. cit.* p. 38.

idealistic theory, as a sense of values that expresses both a religious temper and a gradation of religious levels.

For Mana is the most valuable thing that exists; it gives life-energy, success and happiness. One must endeavour to acquire it and use it for one's own ends or for the benefit of one's people. It can be concentrated in particular objects like fetishes or amulets, in a bird which embodies the fruit-bearing power of a tree, in a sheaf, or a human form, like the May Queen which sums up a season, and especially in weapons. Above all it is in human beings that mana is found, in medicine men, priests, judges or lords. It is that which inspires men and is possibly connected with the idea of intelligence, conscience and spirit, but is not equivalent to the notion of soul. Even persons and Gods are subordinate to mana, which is thus possessed in different degrees, but not in different kinds. The fact of gradation thus distinguishes the various possessors of Mana, which, after all takes us back to the universal and super-sensuous power which surrounds all things.

It does not seem, however, that any meaning so explicit as that of infinity belongs to the idea of mana, which is therefore not the equivalent of the more properly religious ideas of the endless, the Eternal. It is thus rather to be thought of as a pre-religious or proto-religious experience than definite religion.[1]

A similar result follows from a consideration of Tabu, which is sometimes regarded as the negative side of primitive religion of which Mana is the positive. Though Mana is valuable it is also dangerous, and even deadly if not rightly treated. Hence persons and things imbued with Mana must be isolated and prudently handled. Consequently there arise prohibitions of all sorts, many of

[1] Cp. Beth: *op. cit.* pp. 216–17.

them absurd, but also many having a useful function in primitive society. Things strange and mysterious, like the stranger, the new born child and dead bodies ; things connected with the cult, like priests and sacrifices ; certain relationships of men and women, especially between mother and son-in-law ; the killing of some creatures like the totem animal : these are familiar instances of Tabu. Offences against such tabus are punished by the authorities, by the community, or by self-suggestion, as when a negro falls ill, or perhaps dies from eating forbidden food.

The interesting fact about these tabus at present, however, is that the forbidden, the holy, and the unclean go together at this early stage of religion, as do, on the other hand, the common, profane and clean. Thus, Lev. 10, 10, says "ye may put difference between the holy and the common and between the unclean and the clean." Here holy and unclean are equated, as are common and clean. It is only after the purification of religion by morality that the holy and the clean become identified and this is at a comparatively late stage of development. Then purity becomes sacred. So tabus can vary with time and conditions.

Totemism is a familiar though not universal feature of early religion. The totem is a class of animals with which a clan is related and whose name its members adopt, such as the Crows, Lizards, Kangaroos and the like. Totemism signifies therefore alliance and relationship between a whole species, or part of a species of animals or plants, and the whole clan of a tribe. Commonly it is forbidden to injure, kill and eat all instances of the totem class, though sometimes it may be killed and distributed to members of another clan of the same stock. Generally totemism belongs to a social formation in which exogamy is the strict rule and

requires that members of a clan shall seek their wives not from their own totem class but from another. The totem is regarded as helper and protector and is called upon in times of need. But it is not worshipped, and hence it is said that totemism is not a religious, but a social phenomenon. Such is the usual interpretation.[1] However, it does not account for totemism to say that it is an economic or social formation. For the Totem is also a material embodiment of an anonymous and impersonal power, which is expressed in certain animals, without being confounded with them. The apparent deference shown to them is really directed to the impersonal energy which is manifested in them and of which they are a representation. The Totem is therefore not primarily a social or economic, but a mystic, thing. The clan and its members are in vital and sympathetic unity with the totem and the world energy which it symbolizes.[2]

Totemism thus appears to be a special form of manaism. The clan and its members are in symbiotic unity with one another and the cosmic energies. This expresses the sense that the cosmic forces, including the earth, are a unity, however loosely conceived. Fertility rites, such as the pouring of blood upon sacred ground, or the communion meal, are an enhancement of the original non-sensuous divine power, possessed by the fathers of the race, which has to be renewed in each generation. This is even said to be the original form of sacrifice. The special point about totemism, from a psychological point of view, is, however, that in it is seen a loosening of the earlier feeling of identity with the world forces and a rise of the group consciousness as members of a Totem class and of the self-consciousness of the individual over against the totem. This differentiation is overcome by

[1] Cp. Tiele : *Kompendium*, § 13.
[2] Cp. Durkheim : *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, pp. 188–9.

the various rites of the cultus which endeavour to restore the threatened division by a return to the original unity with the cosmic energies.[1]

Animism and Mythology

The theory of animism which was used by Tylor to explain the nature of religion, is the belief in the presence of souls or spirits within all things, which are thereby made alive after the analogy of men. These spirits are similar to those of human beings, but need not be conceived as the souls of dead men. Apparently there was a pre-animistic age, but animism is still the strongest key to the understanding of mythology. All the same, it is not a religion but a kind of primitive world-view which explains the behaviour of objects. It is possible for a savage to hold the animistic belief without adopting a religious attitude towards the spirits. This attitude arises only when he seeks protection from them, enters in communication with them and worships them. It is even possible to argue that animism is a falling away from the straight line of religious advance, since it peoples the world with innumerable living beings of whom the greater part are mischievous, and hence leads to demonology. In any case animism is rather a theoretical explanation of the nature of causes than a means of inducing reverence and adoration, and is so far more speculative than religious. However, animism can be blended in various proportions with a religious belief and it is commonly found attending even the purest and simplest faiths.

The direct line of religious development appears, however, to be the elevation of certain beings to a higher position in the scale of values because of their possession

[1] Beth : *op. cit.* p. 328. And cp. on foregoing Christopher Dawson : *Progress and Religion*, ch. IV.

of superior powers. Whether they are heroes or departed spirits or animated natural objects, animals or totems, they acquire "Mana" and are respected and feared. But it is not true that this is a process of men making gods in their own image, for often men worship objects very different from themselves because of their mysterious powers; the animal can be revered more than man himself. This can hardly be called anthropomorphism. But persons, places and things specially endowed with power can be treated separately, and hence particular gods arise. These may become detached from their habitations, and so by means of the myth-making imagination the world is peopled with gods. Very widespread is the idea of an original father of the whole race, who is known and respected, but little worshipped, and who is thought of as Maker or Creator. This belief has been supposed to be the relic of an original monotheism, possibly "revealed"; it is found, however, not only in connection with Totemism, but also with natural objects like the sun, thunder and the heavens, and can be better understood as the product of idealisation. For the various powers—totems, forefathers, giants, culture-heroes, nature-gods—being worshipped separately as representative of the cosmic forces, become High Gods who for the time being are absolute.[1]

For man is moved by two opposing motives in his treatment of the super-sensuous. On the one hand the religious object must be present, accessible and available at need. To that extent it must divest itself of its foreign and remote characteristics, become understandable and familiar. So sensuous objects become media of the divine, and cults of local objects—stones, places, fire and the like—arise. Even creatures lower and worse than man, real or imaginary, possess mana, and so much be con-

[1] Cp. on these subjects Wundt: *Folk Psychology*, Chs. I, II, III.

ciliated. Demonology is the consequence. Man is thus surrounded by a host of beings possessing powers bearing directly upon him. But at the same time the great Gods acquire dignity, distance from the world, poise and rest, and illustrate that sense of the wholly-other of which so much has been made by Otto. Certain experiences like that of storm and thunder in nature, and the tragic events of life, deepen this sense of sublimity and mystery and drive men on to desire the absolute. Between these two poles of the present and the remote, the immediate and the wholly-other, come all sort of intermediary beings with various degrees of personification, half-gods and god-men. It is not the whole truth, however, to say that man makes gods in his own image, for he also tries to fashion himself in the image of his gods. If his God is impersonal, the highest aim of his life is to divest himself of personality, as is seen in Indian religions. Both likeness and unlikeness have their parts to play in deification.

Tension

Religious thought swings then between the two poles of the immanence and transcendence of Deity, and as the experience of the tragic in life increases, the High God tends to become more remote and elevated and to stand alone. So monotheism begins to arise. For the tragic divides men into the optimists and the pessimists, and whilst the former may be content to enjoy the present good, the latter require some assurance against the obvious evil and hence are led to assume something ancient, permanent, eternal, which fulfils and completes the imperfect life they know and gives security to being. So the absolute God appears. The dualism of evil and good, lower and higher, sensuous and super-sensuous is overcome and the meaning of it all appreciated. This

resolution of the dualism which deeper life experiences is the secret of the religious ceremony : its meaning, which is identical with the Word or Logos. When this stage is attained the worship of the One God is in sight. The Great God may be shadowy and remote but he has a definite meaning. Definitely directed worship is possible, and religion, instead of being general cosmic emotion, or intermittent enthusiasm, becomes steadily turned towards the highest that man knows. This is the emergence of definite religion as contrasted with the vague and changeful religiosity of the previous stage.

Alongside the foregoing development in belief goes, of course, a corresponding one of practice. A great amount of man's early practice is utilitarian : searching for food, building habitations, making war and the like. These activities are accompanied, however, with a great deal of wishful thinking, by imagination and suggestion and by æsthetic representation, so that the symbol is taken for the thing symbolized. Thus pantomimes, imitations, disguises and mysteries, attended with song, music and dance, harden down into rites and ceremonies and establish the cultus. It is possible for this procedure to take two directions : the one towards higher and better, the other towards lower powers. The one invokes respect for those powers, the other is an attempt to constrain them. Commonly, though not always, the former are social and authorized actions, whilst the latter are anti-social and irregular. Hence the difference between religion and magic arises, though within magic itself there is a distinction between white and black magic according to its supposed good and bad effects. It is therefore not possible to derive religion from magic as some writers try to do. Magic is, rather, a degradation of religion, the downward tendency from the common world-view of manaism from which they both probably

sprang. It is sensuous, earthly and irreverent by contrast with the aspiring character of religion. Religion therefore does not arise from magic, nor from the failure of magic, for religion and magic are found together with each other to this day.

Cosmic Emotion

The concern of early religious man is to have faith in the universal super-sensuous power and to participate in its mode of existence. On this account he seeks union with it, not primarily through sacrifice, but through personal contact ; its presence is revealed to sympathetic feeling for the rhythm of the cosmos, especially in signs, wonders, demonstrations, warnings, helps and providences which bear upon man's fate. For religion is not especially based upon fear, but upon astonishment, admiration and awe, and it involves a sense of the nature of the whole before consideration of its parts. It may thus correctly be said to rest upon cosmic emotion. It may even loosely be said to arise from a sub-rational experience, as it tends to vanish in a super-rational one. Particularly noticeable is the way in which religious feeling sways between the two poles of the immediate and the remote, so that there seems to be a ceaseless attraction and repulsion between it and its object. On the one hand the believer tries to identify himself with this object ; on the other he sees it to be far beyond his attainment. The tension between these two poles is the life, and sometimes the tragedy of the religious experience. It is therefore not sufficient to describe religion as the sense of absolute dependence ; this emphasizes one pole of the antithesis, whereas it is matched by the equally important sense of security. This last seems indeed to be prior in early religion.

In short, the primitive religious (or pre-religious)

stage, in which there is simple, and largely unconscious, identification of oneself with the active being of the world, is gradually replaced by one in which the sacred object is set up at a distance and definitely worshipped. The great Gods and the supreme God appear. Then indefinite religiosity may be said to have become definite religion. But there is always a disposition, when adoration has become difficult and strained, for it to return to the simplicity of primitive experience and renew itself by bathing in the springs of elemental forces. Thus religions go back to their sources both for reformation and for fresh beginnings. These sources we have seen to lie behind and before animism and magic, and to be akin to the belief in Fate which lurks as a background to even the most developed religions. When scepticism has undermined popular theologies, a reversion to belief in cosmic energies is at once a sign of their overthrow and a point of departure for fresh constructions. But the growing powers of man's thought make new and more definite types of religion possible. These we have to consider.

CHAPTER VII

NATURALISTIC RELIGION

(*a*) Definition and Description

Vague religiosity becomes definite religion when it conceives the world about it as a cosmos, that is to say as "the sum of things and events subject to a single system of causal laws."[1] Such a world may be understood materialistically, or in terms of space-time, even in psycho-physical terms; but so long as such components are regarded as manifesting inexorable law, we have the

[1] Hocking: *Types of Philosophy*, p. 43.

essentials of Naturalism. Thus Spinoza's system, though it constantly speaks of God, equates God with Nature, understood as the fixed connection of things, and so far is a naturalism. (There are, however, other aspects of Spinozism). Such systems exclude belief in a being superior to the order of nature, a God who can direct it, or interfere with its course, who can be the free giver of special revelations and bestow unchartered providences upon man. Similarly they rule out the exercise of free will, that is to say really fresh beginnings on the part of man. In short, most, if not all, of the characteristics of ordinary theisms disappear in Naturalism, to be replaced, perhaps, by awe in the presence of the immensity of the cosmos, wonder at its marvellous manifestation of law, and admiration for its glorious harmony. This attitude is doubtless religious, and may properly be called cosmic emotion made explicit.

Historical examples of naturalistic religion are to be found in the ancient world, notably in the case of the faiths of China. Of them we are told that the fundamental notion is Tao, or The Way, which from the earliest times known to us has signified the all-dominating Order of Nature, according to which man's conduct has to be directed in order to be virtuous. The art of life, and especially of Governing, consists in the knowledge of Tao and the valuing of such knowledge. Out of Tao is drawn the whole content of Ethics ; the four chief virtues—the love of man, justice, wisdom, observation of all ceremonies—correspond to four attributes of Heaven itself. Together they comprise virtue and the happiness which flow from its observance. Further, from the notion of Tao have developed three outgrowths which are of the highest importance for Chinese religion : first the ritualism and morality of Confucius and his school ; also the deep and earnest

mysticism of Lao-Tse ; and finally the magical arts and soothsaying of the so-called priests of Tao. The great source of Tao is Heaven, upon which sun, moon and earth are dependent, along with human institutions and government. Heaven, or God, rules all things according to law, and hence any disorder in human affairs is a sign of failure in virtue. The life of men and their history is an edifying and warning manifestation of God's justice. Evidently, in all the foregoing we have what may be called Cosmo-theism.

In Babylon we find another and perhaps higher form of Naturalism developed. The older gods of heaven, earth and the deep waters (Anu, Bel and Ea) were unified into a triad, which in its entirety expressed the whole universe. The formula calling upon this triad of gods remained, through all political and religious changes, capable of ensuring the presence of the divine powers generally. Even at the time of the supremacy of Marduk, the God of Babylon, who came nearest to being the sole God, the tendency to triadism remained in the cycle of sun, moon and storm or rain. The historical importance of the Babylonian religion has been obtained, however, from its astral character. The periods of the heavenly bodies were studied and made the basis of both scientific and practical calculations, so that our astronomy, as well as astrology, spring from Babylonia. Everything exhibits conformity to law, earthly relations reflect heavenly, and hence oracles and omens can be believed and followed by those who know the cosmic secrets. These being revealed in the courses of the stars, it is no wonder that the pantheon embodied itself in the planetary system, although the gods to the end retained their animistic or demonic character in the popular mind. Obviously, here is to be found a naturalistic religion in which the idea of order is uppermost, though the prayers

addressed to the cosmic powers are said to approach most nearly to the psalms of Israel.

Egyptian religion marks the height of the naturalistic tendency. Early local gods, both in animal and human form, were gathered round the great object of worship Ra, the Sun, and priestly speculation explained them as his members, names or manifestations. This theology of the Sun developed till it became supreme in Egypt and absorbed the rest into itself; thus not only Osiris, the primal man and culture hero, becomes the Sun, but Horos is the morning and Atum the evening sun. Pharaoh himself becomes the son of Ra, the Sun-god. So of Amon-Ra it was said that he is "the one form which brings forth all things, the one alone who makes all creatures. All men have come forth out of his eyes and the gods are born out of the words of his mouth." "God is all, all is full of him; there is nothing in the universe which is not God." "Creating, he creates himself." This naturalistic pantheism was accompanied by the triadic motive represented in the group Osiris, Isis and Horus, which stands for cyclical movements in nature, such as the return of the seasons or the sequence of day and night, light and darkness. Furthermore, the cult of animal-worship persisted throughout Egyptian history, giving it that air of mystery which springs from the uncomprehended, and incidentally refuting the familiar dictum that man makes God in his own image, for animals are more mysterious than human beings to early peoples. Finally, the mystery of death obsessed the Egyptians, for they were lovers of life, their ideal being life, health and well-being, life in bodily fullness and earthly enjoyment. They believed in the triumph of light over darkness and of life over death. Hence their concern for the welfare of the dead in a future life, shown in their practices of embalming, and of

furnishing them with magical formulæ to be used amongst the dangers of the other world.

In all this it is easy to see how naturalism is breaking its bounds and reaching out to a higher world. Mystery is carried beyond the present into the past, the world of animals, and into the future, the realm of the dead. And, as Hegel pointed out, the tension between naturalism and humanism is well symbolized in the figure of the Sphinx, the half-animal, half-human being whose enigma is unsolved : the secret of life.

A Modern Instance

The foregoing type of religious thought has its counterpart in all civilized ages, and is well represented to-day by Lord Russell, whose account of it is eloquently given in his famous essay on " A Free Man's Worship." In a prologue it is said that to Dr. Faustus in his study Mephistopheles told the history of the Creation, saying :

> " The endless praises of the choirs of angels had begun to grow wearisome ; for, after all, did he not deserve their praise ? Had he not given them endless joy ? Would it not be more amusing to obtain undeserved praise, to be worshipped by beings whom he tortured ? He smiled inwardly, and resolved that the great drama should be performed. . . . And God smiled ; and when he saw that Man had become perfect in renunciation and worship, he sent another sun through the sky which crashed into Man's Sun ; and all returned again to nebula. ' Yes,' he murmured, ' it was a good play ; I will have it performed again.' "

We are then told that " Such in outline, but even more purposeless, more void of meaning, is the world which Science presents for our belief. Amid such a world if anywhere, our ideals henceforward must find a home. That man is product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving ; that his origin, his

growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms ; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave ; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are doomed to extinction in the vast death of the Solar System and that the whole triumph of Man's achievements must inevitably be buried beneath the *débris* of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation be safely built."

" Brief and powerless is Man's life ; on him the slow sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way ; for Man, condemned to-day to lose his dearest, to-morrow himself to pass through the Gate of Darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day : disdaining the coward terrors of the slave of fate, to worship at the shrine that his own hands have built ; undismayed by the empire of chance, to preserve a mind from the wanton tyranny that rules his outward life ; proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate, for a moment, his knowledge and his condemnation, to sustain alone, a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned despite the trampling march of unconscious power."[1]

(*b*) Analysis

An analysis of such cases as the foregoing reveals

[1] *Mysticism and Logic*, pp. 47-48.

certain common features which may be grouped under the heads of Power, Order and Rhythm.

(1) *Power*

Naturalistic religions are much impressed by the fact of power, which, whether manifested as blind, omnipotent matter with its trampling march, or as a more or less conscious order, is yet the Determiner of human destiny and without concern for Man's fate, which is but one incident in its course. This recognition of cosmic power, implicit in naturalistic religions, is made explicit in the naturalistic thinkers of the nineteenth century. Thus for Herbert Spencer everything goes back to the infinite and eternal energy from which issues all evolution; for T. H. Huxley civilization is but an oasis in a desert from whose drifting sand (matter) it arose and to which it is to return; whilst for the modern representative of this line of thought, Lord Russell, we have seen that religion consists in the proud defiance of a brutal and meaningless cosmos. Further, in his book *The Scientific Outlook* we have an exposure of the modern cult of force as it is applied in many directions in this technological age, from the making of machines and the artificial production of human beings to the glorification of war. Thus we are told that the leaders of the modern world are drunk with power: the fact that they can do something that no one previously thought it possible to do is a sufficient reason for doing it; and that the power acquired conferred by science as a technique, as distinct from pure knowledge, is only obtainable by something analogous to the worship of Satan, that is, by the renunciation of love.[1] Nietzsche, who must be classed as a naturalistic irreligionist, basing himself upon the thesis that life itself is *Will to Power*, argues that the very saint is prompted

[1] *The Scientific Outlook*, pp. 273–4.

by this motive to self-subjugation, and that for this reason the forceful ones of this earth have bowed before him, seeing in him the strength of will in which they recognized their own strength and love of power; they honoured something in themselves when they honoured the saint.[1] Similarly the same writer's frequent glorification of the fertility of nature, as compared with the apprehensions of the nineteenth century economist, rests upon his belief in the will-to-power of nature itself. For "The universe is a monster of energy without beginning or end," and power it was, if anything, which Nietzsche worshipped.

From these various examples it is evident how naturalistic religion is prone to rest upon the ultimacy of power as the significant fact for man, to tend either to glorify it and so to worship it, or to despise it and to set up a counter-worship of one's ideals as being superior to it. The latter attitude is a kind of self-worship and leads beyond mere naturalism to humanism.

(2) *Order*

A further discovery of naturalistic religion is the great fact of cosmic order. This has been seen in the Chinese worship of Tao, but is especially clear in the discoveries by Babylonia of the courses of the stars, and it lies at the basis of modern scientific naturalism which itself presupposes the mathematics of Greece. Where mathematics prevail order is required, and it is undoubtedly a great advance when the riot of the world of elementary religion is reduced to orderly sequence, or when blind power is seen to exhibit certain rules.

Thus it is suggested of Omar Khayyam and Lucretius, who were both ahead of their day in learning and in passion for truth and justice, that they justly revolted against their country's false religion, though they could

[1] *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 51.

substitute for it nothing better than rigid Determinism. As for Omar—the only mathematician amongst the poets of his country—" having failed to find any Providence but Destiny, and any world but this, he set about making the most of it," preferring to acquiesce in things as they are rather than to vex himself about what they might be. Lucretius " consoled himself with the construction of a machine that needed no constructor and acting by a law that implied no lawgiver " and so " sat down to contemplate the mechanical drama of the universe of which he was part actor."[1] Meredith, the great poet of evolutionary naturalism, in his poem, *Lucifer in Star-Light* makes even the prince of Darkness shrink in contemplation of the stars:

> " He looked and sank,
> Around the ancient pack marched rank on rank,
> The army of unalterable law."

It is plain that the sense of order, if it is only of ordered power, is an ascent in the scale of religious apprehension, for to some extent it relieves the mind from the oppression of blind force. Even in the case of Lord Russell, there appears to be an æsthetic delight in the contemplation of the march of the cosmos, which feeling would become religious were the universe only beneficent. (Though, strange to say, Lord Russell manages to combine accidents with inevitability, irresistibility with resistance, chance with empire.) The Reign of Law has become an accepted article of scientific faith in modern times, at any rate until recent physical discoveries have thrown some doubt upon it, and it has undoubtedly an important religious value. Whether it is Kant who is impressed with the starry heavens above, or Lucifer whose scars are pricked " with memory of the old revolt from Awe,"

[1] Fitzgerald's Introduction to the *Rubaiyat*.

the mind that sees chaos emerging into cosmos is on the way to a superior form of religion which may be called cosmotheism.

(3) *Rhythm*

Another characteristic of naturalistic religion, frequently to be found, is the tendency to interpretation of the cosmos in terms of rhythm. The prevalence of triads in much theology has often been noticed and even regarded as a curiosity,[1] but it is not surprising when we recollect how many of the phenomena of nature are periodic, and are easily represented in triple rhythm. The periodicity of the seasons, the months, and the years must easily have impressed observing man, and was simply understood as the life, death and reappearance of an animated being. From this to thoughts of family triads and interpersonal trinities is not a difficult step. Naturalistic theology, however, is apt to stop at the level of cosmologies which become more scientific with the progress of mathematical knowledge, so that in Babylonia, especially, we find an astrological religion which has greatly influenced civilization. The constant repetition of natural events, moreover, suggests to the mind the idea of perpetual recurrence, a notion which is found in India and Greece, as well as in some modern naturalists. Nature being conceived as an inevitable sequence of events which recur indefinitely, it is but a further step to suppose it to be a closed system whirling round incessantly. Indeed, it now seems to be involved in the very notion of a most general deterministic sequence that it should be cyclical, though modern science must hold it as unproved that nature is such a system.[2]

In modern naturalism such recurrence theories are not

[1] Cp. Macculloch : *Comparative Theology*, Ch. iv.
[2] Cp. Hobson : *The Domain of Natural Science*, pp. 84–5 and 98.

uncommon. Thus Nietzsche says : " The universe is a monster of energy without beginning or end. It is nothing vague and does not stretch into infinity, but is a definite quantum of energy located in limited space ; the play of forces in force-waves, at the same time one and many, agglomerating here and diminishing there, a sea of forces storming and raging in itself, for ever hanging, for ever rolling back over incalculable ages to recurrence with an ebb and flow of its forms." [1] This notion of eternal recurrence is said by Nietzsche's interpreter to be the product of a last yearning to retain the beautiful dream of immortality : a justification of life even when it is most terrible ; it was a test for the character and courage of the superior men who were " not only not to shun life like pessimists, but who like revellers at a banquet desiring their cups to be refilled, will say to life—Once again ! "

A somewhat different turn is given to the idea by Meredith, when he says

> " Behold in yon stripped Autumn, shivering, gray,
> Earth knows no desolation,
> She smells regeneration
> In the moist breath of decay."
>
> (*Spirit of Earth in Autumn.*)

And again

> " Into the breast that gives the rose
> Shall I with shuddering fall ? " (*Ibid.*)

The thought of rhythm and recurrence is extended to the stars where life may be infinitely renewed, even if it ceases on earth. For

> " The fire is in them whereof we are born ;
> The music of their motion may be ours."

[1] Cp. *Nietzsche* by M. A. Mugge, pp. 70 and 72.

And then we may hope to find

> " The issues known in us, our unsolved solved :
> That there with toil Life climbs the self-same Tree."
> (*Meditation under Stars.*)

But, after all, we are left in a " confusion of doubt and hope," according to Trevelyan,[1] for in *The Question Whither*, Meredith writes

> " Then let our trust be firm in Good
> Though we be of the fasting ;
> Our questions are a mortal brood
> Our work is everlasting.
> We children of Beneficence
> Are in its being sharers ;
> And Whither vainer sounds than Whence
> For word with such wayfarers."

It appears then that for such minds the theory of perpetual renewal is but an incitement to courage and dubious hope. Whether this is a lower or a higher kind of faith than that in an assured goal, it is at any rate very different in tone. It has even lost some of the intoxication of Nietzsche. Finally, Mr. Russell in the passages already quoted seems to suggest that the cosmic drama may be recurrent, though he speaks of the vast death of the solar system and of a universe in ruins, and finds in it grounds for bitter irony which leads him to a religion of unyielding despair. Plainly a recurrence of such a world as Mr. Russell finds the present to be would be a nightmare for persons like himself.

(*c*) Estimate

In estimating the religious value of Naturalistic Religion we at once observe its general tendency to Agnosticism. The immensity of the cosmos does not encourage one to expect answers to the questions, Why ?

[1] *The Poetry and Philosophy of George Meredith*, p. 154.

Whence? Whither? Thus we are told that Confucius noticed the order, determinations and ends of Heaven, but concerned himself very unwillingly with supernatural questions, and expressed himself very guardedly and critically upon religious matters. "Heaven speaks not but reveals itself in the orderly ongoing of Nature." What matters is to know the laws of existence and to follow them. The actions of men determine their fate. Good and evil are rewarded or punished on earth by happiness or sorrow. But prayer is of little avail, for he whom Heaven has injured has none to whom he can pray. There is little to be said about a life after death, rather "Live as if the dead were present." Omens and presentiments are merely warnings, for there are no direct revelations. The fundamental virtue of man is "childlike piety" which is the submission to the perpetual laws of Heaven, and further expressed in earthly justice and the duties of men.[1]

Upon the religious value of Babylonian beliefs opinions have varied widely, from those which see in them little beyond magical superstitions, to those which find them to be the great source of civilized religion and an approximation to monotheism. It does not appear to have been in the main more than a profound sentiment of absolute dependence and resignation. The benefits prayed for are earthly goods and even the psalms of penitence are like incantations. Amongst the numerous hymns of praise are few which reach a high level, through dignity of feeling or elevation of utterance. Occasionally the problem of theodicy is raised: "Who knows the will of the heavenly Gods? The plan of the Gods, full of darkness—who can grasp it?" But the answer to these questions is less clear here than in Egypt, itself the land of mystery.[2] There, as we have seen, the

[1] Tiele: *Kompendium*, § 26. [2] *Ib.*: §§ 41 and 44.

secrecy of the animal world impressed itself upon the imagination. Ra, the great God, becomes the One full of mystery, who, above time and eternity, rules all being. The different Gods represent the various cosmic appearances, the different functions and the degrees of evolution of one and the same hidden and mysterious God. And it was in this character of a mystery-religion that Egyptian belief affected the mixture of religions in Græco-Roman times.[1]

In addition to a tendency to Agnosticism, Naturalistic religion shows a leaning towards Fatalism. In the cases previously considered the fatalistic trend is strongly marked as respects the early religions. Whether in the form of crushing power or inexorable order or recurrent periods, the sense of fixed fate is overwhelming. The sense that the universe is closed to all possibilities is generally a check to the aspiring spirit, and to the resigned is depressing. It is true that many determinists have been great men of action, like Cromwell or Napoleon, but they have believed themselves to be instruments of Fate or the scourge of God and thus to have some quasi-rational objective to attain ; it seems to be impossible to believe oneself to be a mere event in the blind course of nature without giving oneself up to inertia. This inertia, it is true, may be mournful or gay, according to one's estimate of the goodness of the world. Thus, whilst Chinese religion produced—at least in its great representative figure Confucius—a cheerful acceptance of the daily round, Babylonian religion seems to have been gloomy with a sense of unavoidable departure to the underworld. In Omar Khayyam fatalism produced a sort of cynical indifference, or again a careless recklessness, which is expressed on other soil in the words " let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

[1] *Ib.* : § 33.

In every case, however, Naturalism offers to its devotee little Hope. Since it refuses to answer, or even to ask, the questions *Whence?* and *Whither?*[1] it can not tell him whether to hope or despair. There is little prospect that the future, or at any rate, the remote future, will surpass the present, and much likelihood, according to Lord Russell, that it will be far worse for man. Probably the wisest advice that Naturalism can give men is to enjoy the present as much as possible. Then, like Miss Martineau, one "accepts the universe"—an attitude which, however admirable, was well satirized by Carlyle's exclamation "Gad, she'd better!" For, on the other hand, human life may grow less and less worth living, and the natural reaction to the situation may be Lord Russell's religion of unyielding despair. There is indeed another possibility that the future is partly of our own making, and that our faith should be of the courageous sort. But it is well said of Meredithian belief in the regeneration of life from decay that it does not meet Claudio's protestation "Ay, but to die and go we know not where!" Experiments with life are possible to those of a strong character, but are likely to leave the majority outside the religion of Eugenics. Indeed, it would seem that the kind of religion one would adopt upon the naturalistic hypothesis would be decided upon temperamental grounds, not upon rational. True, "if thou canst not hope thou needst not then despair," but where we have so little assurance for the future and such varieties of attitude towards Nature, can we be said to have even Natural Religion?

Criticism

The criticism of the nineteenth century Naturalism was furnished chiefly by idealists like the Hegelians who

[1] The late Professor Alexander once told me that these were the questions one should not ask.

showed its defects in respect of theory of knowledge. For to Naturalism as then conceived, knowledge was an excrescence from the ongoing of nature. Nature was a watch, and man at most a self-winding watch, but thought had no control over the future of its movements. Psychology, however, showed more and more plainly that future action was decided by present purpose, and extended the range of mind into the sub-human, the animal and plant world. The system of animate nature was shown to be variable, adaptive, liable to seemingly chanceful outbreaks, till contingency appeared to invade the very elements of matter itself. This seems to be the verdict of recent physics. It was James Ward's powerful criticism which led the way to these results, but which supplemented them by showing that evolution itself points to the reality of directions, goals and ends. Nature itself in producing purposive beings as its latest and apparently highest achievements is so far purposive, and purposive evolution becomes a scientific idea. The watchword of the twentieth century becomes creative evolution, for which the gates of the future are open, not closed. The new teleology arrives, according to which the very quantities of the physical elements, and their proportions relatively to each other, are conducive to the emergence of life on the earth. The cosmos thus appears *as if* concerned for the promotion of purposive beings, and the question arises whether it is not really so. Can the stream rise higher than its source?

Similarly in ethics criticism has shown the inadequacy of naturalism to provide a guide to conduct. The worship of nature conceived as power tends to exalt the will-to-power in man, and ethics becomes a study of the art of success, whether in the individual, or some group like the nation or race. This tendency is probably the supreme practical peril of our day, leading as it does to

war and destruction. But when naturalistic religion introduces also the notion of order, then we find, it is true, the idea of ordered change or even orderly progress prevalent in scientific ethics. Thus it is portrayed, for instance, in Alexander's *Moral Order and Progress*. The difficulty is to find any criterion for conduct besides falling in with the evident course of events. Driving on the system of the universe is not an obvious moral obligation, though it may be expedient. Finally, when to the foregoing features of naturalistic religion is added the belief in rhythmic sequence, a factor truly important in its bearing upon life appears. But its effect upon conduct varies according to temperament. Whilst for a Nietzsche it leads to the exclamation *Da Capo !* for the majority of mankind it would probably spell intolerable boredom. Eternal recurrence is ethical futility, for no advance is made. The idea of cosmic rhythm is valuable if it introduces the sense of music, of poetry, in which Nature becomes an artist. But a true artist does not repeat himself, and if nature suggests creative artistry, it is because naturalism is breaking its bounds. Creative morality is possible because of the immanent teleology of nature.

Disruption

This disposition of naturalistic religion to enlarge its boundaries is well manifested in the religion of the Persians, enigmatic as much of it still is. The earlier stages, before Zarathushtra, were evidently a period of nature-worship in which there was a cult of the heavenly bodies, of the physical elements, and especially of water and plants Above all, the adoration of fire seems to have been a fundamental and permanent trait of the Iranians. Everything points to an early struggle with hostile nature and a selection of those objects as sacred

which were favourable to human life. Zarathushtra arrives, along with a great purification of religious customs ; he also intensifies the struggle to serve God by tilling and planting and breeding, and by expanding civilization in its struggle against adverse conditions. It then becomes a culture-religion, and its ethical virtues are those of a peace-loving and law-abiding community. Even when the prophet had received his Divine commission and made his reformation, he was still earth-bound. The conceptions as well as the Divine revelations of Zarathushtra are by no means profound. As we have seen, we have to do with an early stage of civilization. But the air is pure and wholesome. Labour, truth, right, obedience, the inexorable struggle against the powers of evil, against barbarism and destruction ; the untiring endeavour to gain new ground for civilization and orderly settlement for men ; peace and comfort under good rulers, and the certainty that the struggle is not dubious, but will be carried to victory ; assurance of the support of Mazdah and the good beings for the faithful labourer, the assurance of prosperity, immortality and bliss beyond the bridge of decision in the dwelling of the Lord, whither songs of praise have preceded the pious man—such is the world of ideas in which Zarathushtra moves.[1] His preaching is summed up in four points : (1) the social-ethical urge on behalf of a civilized life ; (2) a trust in the All-Wise Lord and his beneficient powers or spirits ; (3) the dualism between good and evil, purity and impurity, light and darkness ; and (4) the extension of that opposition into the future by a teleological conception of history, until the final triumph of Good—a new and unheard of idea.[2]

It is significant, however, that the reformation was

[1] Söderblom : *The Living God*, pp. 197–8.
[2] *Ib.* p. 211.

never fully carried through, and then the later stage of the religion fell back into legalism and dualism, till it was finally superseded by a more consistent monotheism, Islam. The great experiment, however, had shown how a conception of purpose in nature and history had disrupted the old naturalism. Cyclical repetition is impossible where a meaning is found in cosmical history, and a great urge to human civilization is given when hope is assured that effort will finally succeed. A humanistic type of religion is then attainable, even whilst the aspiration after Deity is sorely beclouded.

CHAPTER VIII

HUMANISTIC RELIGION

(*a*) Definition

When human nature discovers an opposition between its aspirations and the course of physical nature, and is thus able to set up an ideal of what should be over against what is, then humanistic religion becomes possible. Human interests take precedence of others, in particular those which are regarded as highest. Hence it is that humanistic religion is compatible with the highest idealism, involving sacrifice for a cause, to a degree which often puts to shame more conventional religion. All the same it remains centred in human nature ; its aim is to express fully the energies of man in the production of civilization and culture, or at any rate in the attainment of personal bliss. When it recognizes superhuman beings as deities it conceives them as no more than glorified human beings or communities ; the transition between human beings and such gods is easy. Whilst man is mortal and his gods immortal, it is possible

for the mortal to attain immortality; the boundary between the two worlds is thin. For these reasons such religion is called theanthropic, and is said to be characteristic of Aryan peoples. We may find examples of it in Buddhism, in Greek mythology, and in the modern religion of Humanity. Whilst these reveal different temperamental attitudes they agree in being an attempt to escape from or overcome the physical environment and to centre religion in man.

(*b*) Description

Buddhism may well be regarded as a protestant movement, which arose in revolt against the decaying priestly and popular religion. It is significant that in a famous sermon Buddha emphasizes the need of release from earthliness, from earthly impulses and desires, in order to understand the new truths of his teaching.

> To what end is the world revelation, which I won in fiercest struggle?
> The truth remains concealed, o'erwhelmed with desire and hatred.
> Deep, toilsome, secret is it, hid from the grosser sense;
> None may see it whose mind is benighted with earthly endeavour.

Buddha had discovered the middle way between the desires of the worldly (sensual) life and the pains of asceticism, which last were commended by the orthodox religion. The great truth is that life is suffering—in all its modes of birth, old age, sickness, death, union with the unloved, separation from the beloved, failure to attain one's wishes—and that suffering can be overcome only by a knowledge of the other noble truths. These are that suffering arises from the thirst of desire, which produces rebirth and transmigration, and consequently that desire must be extinguished. This is to be

accomplished, lastly, by pursuing the eightfold way of virtue : right belief, right feeling, right word, right deed, right mode of livelihood, right endeavour, right thought, right meditation. These open the way to peace, enlightenment, Nirvana.

Thus arose a kind of puritanism, which sprang from an inward principle of morality. " Nobody becomes a Brahman through his flowing hair, his family, his birth. He who possesses truth and righteousness, he is blessed, he is the Brahman." " Why do these Brahmans constantly wash themselves and quiver in the baths ? Do they expect to attain purification from their sins ? Then must frogs and turtles enter into heaven and all water-snakes and dolphins are bound for blessedness." Purity reall comes from confessions before the assembly of monks and through a virtuous life. For though Buddha did not repudiate the Vedic books, nor attack caste as such, and therefore was no social reformer, yet he ascribed no decisive value to them for salvation. This came through adherence to the Buddha, acceptance of his teaching and entrance into the community. The formula came to be : " I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Doctrine, I take refuge in the Order." For the good life was possible in the stricter sense only to monks and nuns, though there were also orders of lay men and women. Thus a community, much like that of St. Francis, came into being. When adopted by a great ruler like Asoka it became a great agent for the purification of religion from old superstitions, and did much to spread a mild and beneficent morality throughout India. In time great temples and schools arose and thus Buddhism indirectly fostered a great culture, but it is true that to the end it remained a monkish ideal.

The theoretical aspect of Buddhism is shown in its psychology, ethics and negative philosophy. Fundamental

is the theory of the series of causes, which explains the reason of suffering and so enables one to overcome the cycle of rebirth. Sorrow in its many forms springs from birth, which has its ground in becoming or change. This becoming arises from cleaving to existence which is itself the expression of life-thirst or desire. This is excited by perceptions which come through contact with external circumstances by means of the six senses. It is through these that the individuality, which distinguishes one person from another, is made prominent ; individuality arises from the consciousness which distinguishes subject from object. Such consciousness fashions for itself a subtle fine embodiment which does not vanish at death, but passes on into a new experience. As such it is the outcome of the blind tendency to persist which is itself the result of ignorance, namely, of Buddha's teaching. But if one knows the teaching, then the cycle of existence is halted and one may go into Nirvana, complete calm and peace. The wheel of life, a symbol as characteristic of Buddhism as the cross is of Christianity, ceases to revolve.

Behind this psychology lies a more radical theory : that of the flux of all things. All things are fleeting, nothing endures ; there is only a ceaseless change. The fire is not the same from moment to moment ; the river of becoming perishes and is renewed incessantly. There is therefore no soul, no Ego ; a permanent self is an illusion. Yet each event is determined by what went before, so that there is a causal connection between all existences, though there are no wandering souls. The connection is mechanical, for Buddhism makes no distinction between living and lifeless matter, between the organic and the inorganic. But as to ultimate questions, such as whether the world is eternal or not, and whether in Nirvana perfection exists, there is no answer. The

physician's business is to heal the sick, not to ask idle questions about origins and ends. It is thus evident how Buddhistic philosophy is practical psychology: its interest is entirely directed upon human nature.

The ethical theory corresponds to this practical spirit. Buddhism was originally a way of self-deliverance. Man is saved by his own efforts. The will bends all its powers to close the windows of the soul and to sink into itself untouched by the outer world. Though Buddhism laid more stress upon ethics than any other Indian religion, the Good is not the end of striving, but a means in order to attain deliverance; consequently, benevolence is here of a cooler temperature than belongs to sheer self-giving love. Love has, as its aim, complete immovable calm. "Joy and sorrow, honour and dishonour are balanced in me; I am indifferent to all; that is the perfection of my serenity." Serenity is greater than love; a doctrine which, however much it may have stoftened and quietened the Eastern temper, is very different from that of Christianity.

Whilst it is true that the earlier and purer form of Buddhism led to no positive metaphysics, in time Buddha himself became exalted to the rank of deity, and a vast cosmology and mythology developed. Here it passed beyond its humanistic phase and became a great theological system. In the worship of Buddha, who had foregone his own bliss in order to save mankind, it advanced from a theory of self-deliverance to one of universal compassion. In social life it encouraged tolerance, and in private life, purity. But it failed in India, largely through the lack of a metaphysic adequate to satisfy the speculative Hindu, partly through the corruption of the monks who became idle and luxurious, and also in consequence of the inability of a religion which is ideally monastic to satisfy the needs of every-

day life. The fate of Buddhism is an indication of the weakness of a religion which is based primarily upon humanistic considerations. Agnostic humanism seems to end either in disillusionment as to man's own powers, or in the demand for a more constructive and comprehensive view of the world.*

Hellenism

Another great attempt to build a religion and a civilization upon humanistic foundations is to be discerned in the history of Greece. The rise and fall of this culture has often been described, but the researches of the present century have put it in a new light, which floods indeed the whole Græco-Roman period. The account which follows is based chiefly upon Professor Gilbert Murray's *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, though the conclusions drawn are not identical with his.

The task of this religion was the civilizing of the naturalism which lay beneath it: the reign of Saturn. Investigations into the cults of the pre-Homeric period reveal an atmosphere of religious dread. Besides the dangers from natural forces like floods, dearths and pestilences, there were perils from wild beasts and human foes, and above all from innumerable spirits who had to be placated. Consequently there were many deeds which must not be done, many words which must not be spoken. These things were *tabu*. Further, there was a whole series of magical ceremonies, performed at the three great festivals of the year, for the purposes of appeasement, or of producing fertility, or of purification from guilt and death, in order to make possible the renewal of life at the spring. By these ceremonies was attained *mana*, a positive power belonging to a sacred

* Cp. Tiele, *op. cit.* §§ 90 to 96, of which the foregoing is largely a condensation.

animal or a God. For again, animals, such as the snake, symbol of the underworld ; the sow, emblem of fertility ; and the bull, sign of strength and fierceness, were sacred to the early Greeks. To such totem-animals cruel and horrible sacrifices were made. Gradually the desires connected with the foregoing rituals were purified and elevated by myths associated with the great natural forces, earth, moon and sun, till the Gods were made to inhabit the sky. These powers express " the collective desire personified," especially the fertility of the earth, the fertility of the tribe and the renewal of the seasons by the Year-Daemon, " a spirit that in the first stage is living, then dies with each year, then thirdly rises again from the dead, raising the whole dead world with him." [1]

Upon such a naturalistic background the Olympian Gods appear with the Hellenes from the North and attempt to make a moral reformation of the old religion. This they do by conceiving the world as governed by rational beings, struggling to overcome by intelligence and goodness a world of brute passion and undirected power. So arise the Homeric Gods in their beauty and nobility. They swept away most of the great fertility rites, and a large part of the superstitious worship of the dead, along with the cult of the man-God. Furthermore, they brought order into the old chaos of ancient folk-lore, tradition and popular theology. A more or less regular pantheon superseded the older confusion of deities and semi-divine beings, whilst the ritual concerning agriculture was arranged and clarified by Hesiod. Above all, religion was adapted to the new social needs of the Polis, which began to take the place of the old tribal organization. The Olympian Gods, being unattached to any special tribe or place, could become

[1] *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 32 (Watts's edition).

the patrons of the civilized Hellenes as against the barbarians.

It is said that this civilizing religion failed in all its chief aims. It never sufficiently had the courage of its convictions to banish the old superstitions, with the result that the mere grossness of nature-religion became vice in humanism. To the end it remained centred in man, though it did not become anthropomorphic enough (as Hegel put it) in the sense of interpreting the universe in terms of what is highest in man, his rational spirit. Whilst it purified the worship of the Greek city-states and promoted harmony among them, it did not ultimately rise above a high civil ideal, for " the real religion of the fifth century was a devotion to the City itself " and " the true Gods of the City were simply the City herself in her eternal and personal aspect."[1] When the city fell before the conquering empires the Olympian religion was shattered, for so far as the populace was concerned it had not reached monotheism. It could not survive the loss of its embodiment in concrete form. Gradually the Gods became symbols of high ideals, and even when the state had expanded from the limits of the city to the confines of the known world, the Greeks peopled it with the idealized forms of the old gods. But their power to evoke religious belief was gone, though they remained objects of beauty and noble types of human aspirations for all the ages : expressions of a glorious and wistful idealism.

It is true that the great thinkers, notably Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, by a criticism of the old mythology arrived at a high monotheism, which might have been the salvation of Greece. But their teaching went over the heads of their contemporaries, and only in the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus and the theology of Aquinas had it

[1] *Ib.* p. 71.

much religious importance. Platonism degenerated into a school of refined scepticism and Aristotelianism into one of progressive science. The real faith of the fourth century was expressed in the great humanistic schools of Stoicism and Epicureanism. The one taught a belief in cosmic reason which lived in humanity as virtue; and in proportion as confidence in the world-reason failed so the stress was laid upon the narrow discharge of duty. But in general it was cheerful, because the Cosmos centred about our Earth and spoke in its master, man; it was possible to accept the universe and fulfil its rational purpose gladly. The other, Epicureanism, whilst acknowledging a remote God, found its end in pure affection and friendship; refined pleasure, happiness, blessedness is attainable by man on this earth by limiting one's desires and living temperately. In the end this ideal becomes much the same as the Stoic, life according to reason. Both express the superiority of the spirit of man to the external world; they are both ways of escape from the call to transform that world. They are focussed in man.

In spite of the efforts of these great schools popular religion declined. It was possible to reject the old gods, difficult to supply their places. Instead of them came trooping in superstitions from many parts of the world. The fall of the city-state made it possible to revive the cult of man-god in the form of the conqueror Alexander. The ancient worship of the sun, now aggressive in Mithraism, returned along with Chaldaean astrology and the mysteries of Egypt. Cults of heroes and saviours became common whilst over all brooded the sense of Fate or Fortune inevitable or capricious. Meanwhile a young and stronger faith was pressing to supersede them all, and in spite of the Emperor Julian's attempt to restore the old bright paganism by neo-

platonic allegorizing, the old religion fell. It is said that the later religion of antiquity became mostly an apotheosis of good taste.[1]

The moral of this spectacle seems to be inadequacy of a religion which is centred in man permanently to maintain itself. Fair as its creations were, being in the end regarded as projections of human desires into the heavens, they failed to inspire creative action. Had the highest theology of Plato and Aristotle been generally accepted by the Græco-Roman world, it is fascinating to imagine that its civilization might have avoided its "failure of nerve" and attained that confidence and courage which the mediæval spirit achieved in spite of all its crudities. A faith which is centred in man rather than in God is apt to lose its nerve.

Positivism

A deliberate attempt was made a century ago to found a strictly humanistic religion. In 1848 Auguste Comte published his *General View of Positivism* which announced that monotheism was obsolete and that it was to be superseded by the new Religion of Humanity. The object of philosophy is the systematic study of human life, with a view to its improvement. For this purpose, the various sciences must be studied, but the supreme science is sociology. Theology and metaphysics are outworn, being incapable of answering the questions they ask, and the era of positive science has arrived. We cannot know the *Why* but only the *How* of events, their laws but not their causes, hence we are confined to a description of phenomena, logically proceeding from the most abstract and simple to the most concrete and complex. The first great half of the Positive Philosophy consists of an exposition of this hierarchy of the Sciences,

[1] *Ib.* p. 70.

the second of their application in practical policy. These, however, are subordinated to the religious aim, the worship of humanity. It is not humanity in the raw, but transfigured by imagination. The heart must be called in to eke out the head. The new religion will invoke the æsthetic powers as no religion has hitherto done. Art will be more important than science, for the glorification of man will be its object, and science is limited to fact. Hence a deliberate cult arises, having ideal Womanhood for the centre of devotion, though encouraging also a commemoration of the great benefactors of humanity in the past, which is their only form of immortality.

So far the Religion of Humanity resembles Roman Catholicism without a deity, or as Huxley put it, it was Roman Catholicism with the Christianity left out. Instead of God, we have Humanity to worship. The real sting of the situation, however, consists in the "external fatality," otherwise the Cosmos. For though Comte zealously shows the beneficent disciplinary action of Nature upon humanity, yet the head ultimately recognizes it as indifferent to man's fate. Hence poetry is invoked to transcend Science and a cultus of Earth and Space is added to that of Humanity. The supreme being Humanity has for its origin the Earth, common source of all beings. This Comte calls the Great Fetish, to which we owe thanks, for it has sacrificed itself to produce us. The earth is in space, which in its turn is the great environment in which we live. These three—Man, Earth and Space—form the positivistic trinity and are regarded as worshipful. But it is only by the help of poetry that we can forget the frequent opposition of nature to humanity and come to treat an indifferent cosmos as if it were a kind providence. The world about us is to be studied, indeed, only in so far as it is relevant

to human welfare and thus the whole religion is centred in man. It is well said by Ravaisson that "it is hardly more than a return to paganism, except for the cult of womanhood, which is borrowed from Christianity. But however crude, however unphilosophic, it suffices to weaken the law which makes of religion an inferior stage in the development of humanity."

It must be said that, after a century, the state of the world is a curious commentary upon Comte's predictions. His belief that Monotheism was obsolete has been partially confirmed by the rise of dogmatic atheism over a good part of Europe. Such atheism, however, was as repugnant to him as theology, for it provided an answer to unanswerable questions. It may be said that humanism has greatly extended its sway over civilization, a view which the rise of state-worship and the decline of the churches go to support. On the other hand it cannot be said that the Positivistic cult has gained ground during the century; indeed it is almost extinct. Furthermore, Comte thought that apart from some conflicts between Capital and Labour and between the town and the country, the military spirit was in decline and that serious and durable conflicts between the more advanced nations were likely to pass away. He was far from foreseeing the rise of dialectical materialism and the World Wars. These have resulted in a sharp division between religion and irreligion, as a consequence of means which he would have entirely deplored, rather than by the extension of civilization. His confidence in Order and Progress leading to the triumph of Positivism within a hundred years has been sadly falsified by events. His attempt to mediate between Dogmatism and Scepticism by means of a religion conceived as relative to humanity cannot be said to have succeeded in his own country, whilst his social gospel has been largely absorbed

into the theistic religion of the English speaking countries.

What is the secret of this modern failure of humanistic religion? Probably its position as a compromise accounts for much of its weakness, especially with such a people as the French. Being neither good paganism nor good Christianity it was not original and independent enough to attract ardent minds, who are necessary to be the apostles of a new religion. The chief disciples of Positivism soon renounced its cultus and the populace could not understand its scientific philosophy. In addition, two things impeded its success. Comte had not allowed, we have seen, for the intensity of the military spirit in the West, and assumed that civilization was much more stable than it is. But also he had not seen how closely industrialism is allied to militarism; rather, like Herbert Spencer, he supposed that it was bound up with the furtherance of peace. The deadening effects of the use of machinery were not so apparent to him as to his great contemporary, John Ruskin. Hence he supposed that the spread of the positivistic spirit would liberate the æsthetic impulses and give rise to a great new era of the artistic glorification of man. This expectation has been falsified; the mechanization of life has stifled art, the machine has interposed itself between man and nature and now the machine is turning against man himself. Doubtless such consequences are not inherent in the use of machines, but with these in the hands of men who admire yet cannot control themselves they are to be expected.

(*c*) Analysis of Humanistic Religion

It is now possible to analyse humanistic religion into its constant factors, as revealed by a comparative study of its chief forms. These are evidently all types of idealism in the sense of purely human aspiration.

Ideology

The recent term ideology more exactly expresses this meaning, for the word idealism has more than one sense. Since human aspiration is itself a dynamic impulse, it may be supposed that it is adequate to sustain man at a higher level of ideal living, and hence that it supplies the motives provided by the old theological religions. Possibly it is believed that it does better than these, for having discovered their vanity, man is thrown back upon his own resources and has to make the most of them. Perhaps it is thought that ideals are attractive, or that they release forces in their own direction after the manner of Fouillée's *idée-forces*. Whatever the psychological explanation, idealism implies some kind of evolutionary belief, for otherwise humanism is thoroughly precarious and limited to acceptance of the present moment. It is significant, at any rate, that the three religions we have just studied have all some forms of evolutionary teaching. Either it is the Buddhistic belief in Samsara—the wheel of life—escape from which is possible through a knowledge of Buddha's doctrine, thus giving a meaning to an otherwise meaningless flux; or it is the Stoic belief in a Divine order and purpose within the Cosmos; or again it is Comte's belief in orderly progress for mankind, indefinitely continued.

Such pre-scientific views have given way to the modern theories of evolution which profess to be an interpretation of science and history. They need not here be discussed but the tenor of them in so far as they bear upon human life is well expressed in these words of the late Lord Morley: "Our provisional acquiescence . . . in the wasteful straitness and blank absence of outlook or hope of the millions, who come on to the earth that greets them with no smile, and then stagger blindly under dull

burdens for a season and at last are shovelled silently back under the ground, can only be justified in the sight of humanity by the conviction that this is one of the temporary and provisional conditions of a vast process, working forward through the impulse and agency of the finer human spirits, but needing much blood, many tears, uncounted millions of lives and immeasurable geological periods of time for its high and beneficent consummation. . . . It is only the faith that we are moving slowly away from the existing order, as our ancestors moved slowly away from the old want of order, that makes the present endurable, and any tenacious effort to raise the future possible." (*Rousseau :* Vol. I, pp. 186–7, 1875 edition). Such a faith in a high and beneficent consummation for man was perhaps the commonest of sociological beliefs among cultivated persons before the Great War. It co-existed with religious agnosticism or credence almost indifferently and hence was well suited to humanistic thinkers of the type of Lord Morley.

Another great humanist, however, writing—or at least publishing—his re-considered views after the first World War used these expressions : " The Uncharted surrounds us on every side and we must needs have some relation to it, a relation which will depend upon the general discipline of a man's mind and the bias of his whole character. As far as knowledge and conscious reason will go, we should follow absolutely their austere guidance. When they cease, as cease they must, we must use, as best we can, those fainter powers of apprehension and surmise and sensitiveness by which, after all, most high truth has been reached, as well as most high art and poetry : careful always really to seek for truth and not for our own emotional satisfaction, careful not to neglect the real needs of men and women through

basing our life on dreams ; and remembering, above all, to walk gently in a world where the lights are dim and the very stars wander." (Gilbert Murray : *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 171.) This uncertainty is confirmed by the author's admiration of a " pure prayer " by a late Ionic Platonist, which is entirely of the nature of aspiration for spiritual benefits and is addressed to no personal God. Such things, it is suggested " help still in the forward groping of humanity " (*Ib.* pp. 198-9). Lord Morley's vast process, working towards a high and beneficent consummation has become, in fifty years, Professor Murray's forward groping of humanity under wandering stars. That this is not a forced or rhetorical contrast will be acknowledged by those who have lived before, and after the war, and are candid enough to confess the difference of tone.

Still, on merely humanistic grounds, what escape is there from Professor Murray's conclusion? What grounds of hope for humanity have we, after our recent experience, in history or science? Why may not that downfall, which has occurred to so many regional civilizations overtake modern world-civilization? The inevitability of progress is questioned on all hands to-day. Evidently human aspiration is not enough unless reinforced by a metaphysic or theology. This was the discovery of India when it turned early Buddhism into a speculative system, of Greece when its fair humanities broke down and were replaced by a new and aggressive religion, and of the Middle Ages which, when its religion threatened to be overwhelmed by popular superstition and by rival theologies, invoked the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. The Renascence is a period very illuminating for our thesis that a guiding star is necessary if civilization is to advance securely. Hailed at first as a revival of ancient culture, it is evident that, in rejecting

so much of the philosophical theology of the Middle Ages and in fostering so many rapid growths of new systems of thought, the Renaissance has lost its way. Instead of being the herald of a new era, it is the beginning of the end of an old one. Whilst there are mighty fragments of the old systems remaining, it cannot be said that present-day thought is a unity, or even that it has a dominant tone. Its characteristic is confusion and its great danger chaotic strife.[1]

Humanism To-day

What are the chief aspects of recent Humanism? Probably nothing could be more accurate than the remark of Professor Gilbert Murray that modern thought is divided between the two ancient schools, Stoicism and Epicureanism. "At times," it is said, "to most of us it seems as though nothing in life had value except to do right and fear not; at others that the only true aim is to make mankind happy." The second aim is the more obvious to-day, though not the more real. Whilst hedonism is not in fashion as an ethical philosophy, the pursuit of happiness is still the occupation of perhaps half mankind, or of all mankind for half its time. Happiness is variously conceived, no doubt, but in the Western world, at least, it generally involves the notion of comfort. Comfort comprises ease, convenience and leisure, and definitely tends to be expressed in terms of material goods. These goods have multiplied in the Western world in consequence of the advance of technology, and if we think of improving man's lot, we think first in terms of them. Indeed, the luxuries of one generation commonly become the comforts or even the conventional necessities of the next. It must be added that with the longing for bodily comforts, there also goes the desire for mental sanity and competence, so that an integral part of the idea of happiness is to have a

[1] Cp. Berdyaev; *The end of our time*, Ch. I.

sound mind in a healthy body. It has been said that the modern American ideal is summed up in the old wish to be healthy, wealthy and wise.

Over against this somewhat vulgarized form of Epicureanism there is to be found a stoical tendency in modern life. The World Wars have called forth probably the most extreme degrees of courage and endurance which the world has ever known. And in spite of the relaxation afterwards, there has been a steady cult of discipline and even asceticism, especially in the defeated nations. Quite possibly humanity has never known so strict a regimentation as has obtained in most of Europe during the past ten years. Living dangerously has become a virtue, and adventure has been applauded as being intrinsically meritorious. The Spartan and military qualities have been fostered in great systems of state education, and philosophies of force are being advocated by the most ruthless methods. The strife of classes, the promotion of national power and imperialism are again in the ascendant, and war is being glorified as itself a good. The philosophies of Nietzsche, Sorel and Karl Marx are being instilled into youth organizations, and a state of peace derided. In private life, the general insecurity fosters a recklessness of action that is a compound of carelessness and desperation, so that solid enjoyment is given up for the sake of snatching a present excitement. Preparation for a dread ordeal goes steadily forward and our nerves are constantly being hardened or dulled for horrors unprecedented in world history. It cannot be said that stoical virtues are not being encouraged, despite, however, the absence of the Stoic belief in World-Reason.

Cult of Heroes

Another, almost inevitable, characteristic of Humanism is the cult of the Great Man. This was so in the Græco-

Roman world in which Epicurus, Marcus Aurelius and Alexander, for instance, were exalted to a Divine position. Thus we are told that Epicurus was worshipped even before his death and that the homage which his disciples bestowed upon him united them in a close brotherhood, and continues in certain cases to this day.[1] Marcus Aurelius accepted the religious honours due to the Roman Emperor, and homage to him as a Saviour of Mankind has been suggested recently.[2] The exploits of Alexander made him seem the ideal of the Man-God who was a familiar object of belief in those days.[3] In modern times, Carlyle made the Hero the vehicle of a divine mission and the human director of history. It is remarkable how the notion of the Superman has taken hold of the twentieth century imagination, for it appears that whole nations can accustom themselves to such deference towards a Leader as can be compared only to the Emperor worship of the ancient world. The great revolutionary agents of recent times—Lenin, Mussolini, Hitler—if not abolishing the worship of God have certainly tended to offer themselves as a substitute. Indeed, it is true to say that so far as Christianity remains a popular religion, it is chiefly as the worship of a Man-God, so that the worship of Jesus has generally taken the place of the orthodox Christian theism. The success of the book *Ecce Homo* and of the idea conveyed in its title is a triumph of humanistic religion.

Recent Humanists

There are certain thinkers who have sought to combine the foregoing parts of humanism into a synthesis acceptable to our times. Thus in *A Preface to Morals* Mr. Lippman advocates a morality composed of epicureanism

[1] Söderblom : *The Living God*, p. 330.
[2] F. H. Hayward : *Marcus Aurelius*.
[3] Gilbert Murray : *op. cit.* pp. 153-4.

and stoicism, in the sense of a concern for the wide diffusion of well-being, which is pursued, however, disinterestedly. The happiness of mankind, conceived as the gifts of civilization, is to be spread as widely and as fully as possible, yet is to be sought without egotism. It is believed that such disinterestedness can be fostered in mankind so as to become its chief motive. By means of adequate education and the stimulating of social motives, love of human well-being will displace selfishness, and religion will be unnecessary. Disinterestedness will oust self-interest without need of a religious sanction. It is allowed that disinterestedness cannot be justified rationally, but it is the means of the next great advance in human evolution. Such a proposal is regarded as experimental and the justification of it as pragmatic. But whether humanity is capable of rising to such a level of morality is a matter of faith, which the history of mankind, ever since the book was written, has done little to confirm. As before in history, human nature seems to be unresponsive to disinterested motives unless they are sustained by a justifiable hope of achievement and endorsed by religious sanctions. Certainly, disinterestedness is at a low ebb in world affairs to-day. Humanism is not enough.

A similar conclusion may be drawn from a consideration of Nicolai Hartmann's *Ethics*. In this great work he argues for the independence of ethics from theology. The existence of God can be neither proved nor disproved and if it could it would be irrelevant or confusing to the ethical life. Human idealism depends upon the discovery of a realm of values which are composed of essences or principles comparable to those of mathematics. They do not issue from a Divine reason, but are valid in themselves and obligatory upon human beings. They are even "creative principles." "They can transform

Not-Being into Being. The *Generatio ex nihilo* which is otherwise an impossibility in all realms of Being, here is possible" (Vol. I, p. 238). The response of the human sense of values to these essences produces the various goods of life, in particular the moral goods, which for Dr. Hartmann form a complex system of Greek and Christian virtues, together with some others recently discovered by people like Nietzsche. This system, it must be said, is far richer than the usual humanistic compound of Epicurean and Stoic and modern Evolutionary ethics, for it embraces also certain theological graces like Faith, Hope and Love. These though necessary to moral idealism are directed, however, not towards God but to the future race which is to produce the supermen. This aspiration which is called "love of the remotest" is said to manifest itself in life as a really creative power, to be the form in which values become driving energies in personal life and in history, and to attract the faith of the strong to itself like a magnet. The power of faith transforms man and his human world, for within the limits of actual possibility the astonishing fact is this, that in the long run man always becomes what he wills to become. (*Ib.* Vol. ii, pp. 324–328.)

Nevertheless, it is said that if we had to estimate the value of this ideal by its effect, one would be in despair about it. Venture and sacrifice for it would look like a gamble in "futures" were it not that faith and hope can "remove mountains." In any case, however, all the moral value of the love of the ideal lies not in the effects, the object intended, but in the intention itself. For however much man may fail and err in his intended object, the moral quality of his intention can nevertheless be right and possess the higher, indeed the highest value. This occurs in the love of the remotest. (*Ib.* Vol. ii,

pp. 330–31.) Such is Dr. Hartmann's simple solution of the problem whether it is moral to attempt that which may very possibly be futile : the moral quality lies in the intention, though the intentions may take us to ruin. This verdict runs counter to a well-known proverb about good intentions paving the way to hell, and to the ethical judgment that we must aim at that which is reasonably practicable. The optimism which, whilst denying knowledge of Divine Providence, assumes that "man sees himself caught up into a larger providence, which looks beyond him and yet is his own" is surely unwarranted and even a little naïve. We have seen previously that modern science and history lend little support to the idea of an earthly providence which takes mankind to a desirable destiny, and it is hardly fair to borrow the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Love whilst discarding their attendant theology. There are numerous unsolved problems (which Dr. Hartmann regards as insoluble antinomies) on the borderland between the moral life and the religious, but it may be that they are capable of rational solution.

As respects Hero-worship, it may be accepted that Carlyle and Comte had rightly discovered that the modern world is in dire need of the guidance which genius can offer. For this reason it tends, like the Græco-Roman world, to give semi-divine honours to its great men, till finally the modern superman may receive worship like the Roman Emperors. The difficulty is that the traits of great men so often contradict each other that a Francis of Assisi and a Napoleon Bonaparte may find themselves in the same galaxy. It is noticed as "a grave and terrible fact that in the long catalogue of Roman Emperors, we have only one Marcus Antoninus, and even he, though a saint, was not tolerant of saintliness ; but we have a multitude who do more disgrace

than honour to mankind."[1] For absolute power corrupts the wielder of it till he becomes inhuman instead of God-like. It is necessary, therefore, for mankind to fix upon a typical person for religious homage and this has been done in two conspicuous examples—Buddha and Jesus Christ. In the case of Buddha, however, we find the gradual and traceable divinisation of a man ; in that of Christ the unique embodiment of God. In the one instance man becomes God, in the other God becomes man. Evidently it is only by an absolute standard that the direction of human efforts can be gauged, and when variable humanistic scales fail, appeal must be made to some superhuman and even Divine guidance.

(*d*) Summary

In conclusion, respecting Humanism and its attempt to provide an idealistic religion, it must be said that it has not yet shown ability to provide one that is both credible and permanent. The great attempts of both Buddhism and the classical world broke down before more daring and speculative religions, whilst the modern enterprise since the Renaissance seems to mark the end of an age. So far as lessons can be drawn from history it seems to be true to say that the ancient civilization of Europe dissolved in consequence of internal corruption and external war. Vice within and the barbarians without combined to render the Empire weak. But another great factor seems to have been the confusion of beliefs whereby the sober mind of Rome was confused and even debased. The mixture of faiths tended not only to the glorification of Rome but also to the weakening of Roman religion. Consequently it was undermined by a purer and more exclusive religion. Something similar happened at the Renaissance. With all its

[1] Fairbairn : *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 344.

enrichment of life it led to great looseness of morals and to internecine war. Especially the incoming of ancient and of foreign beliefs brought with it religious dissension, and the great age of religious wars began. So again in the twentieth century we are confronted with a widespread change in the conception of morals, which change is, by contrast with Western tradition, immoral. There can, unfortunately, be no question about the prevalence of war both within and without European borders. And the confusion of faiths from all quarters of the globe was never so great before.

On the principle that the world-history is the world-judgment must it not be confessed that in the Great Wars a predominantly humanistic civilization was condemned? For since the Industrial Revolution at least mankind had, in Berdyaev's words, been subject to progressive dehumanization. The machine had interposed itself between man and nature, without however justly distributing its benefits among men. Man was ready for mechanized warfare. In addition the modern principle of relativity, ill understood, invaded thoughts and morals, leading to grave uncertainty in the directing of life. Such doubt, uncorrected by a positive and widely-held metaphysic or religion, produced as before in history, a failure of nerve. It seems inherent in a humanistic creed to do so, for in humanity by itself there is little ground for hope. The salvation of the modern world would seem to lie in two things: the integration of mankind, through international co-operation, and a common, though diversified religion. Such a religion would involve a great simplification of existing beliefs and also a great purification of worship. The leadership of great men is invaluable for this purpose: no others are strong enough to break through ancient custom. All the same, the Leader needs a fixed point by which to

steer ; none go so far as those who do not know where they are going. Such a point can be found only in an absolute, the discovery of which leads us to examine a more spiritualistic type of world-view.

CHAPTER IX

SPIRITUAL RELIGION

(*a*) General Characteristics

Whilst the conception of the object of religion as spiritual is, in its purity, a late and high development, it is yet to be found in some degree all through religious history. We have previously seen how it pervades primitive religion in the form of the belief in a super-sensuous world, which is veiled from ordinary perception, yet which is superior in power and worth to the sensible world. Further, there is need to adjust ourselves to that superior world in modes of conduct suitable to sacred or divine beings. So arise the various forms of worship and of religious conduct. Again, early man believed in a host of spirits, souls of men who have passed into the other world and have gained some sort of immortality. That these are often grossly conceived, as foul fiends or angels, does not detract from their supernatural character. Immortality is half-way to divinity. Furthermore, such higher powers are gradually brought into subordination to supreme beings, who are regarded, temporarily or permanently, as exclusive and so as the only God. Spiritual monotheism arrives. Before this, however, in early religion, there is often found a belief in a Great Being, a Father of all, who is remote from earth and men, regarded perhaps as a glorified medicine-man or chief, and above all as prime author and maker. However this belief arose it seems to have little bearing upon

religious practice, though it is of much speculative interest.

The theoretical clarifying of this complex of beliefs leads to a theology in which the notions of divine creation, providence and a future life play predominant parts. Theism of the simpler kind makes a sharp contrast between the regular and the irregular, between uniform law and exceptions to it, so that a broad opposition arises between the natural and the supernatural. The customary is regarded as self-explanatory, whilst the exceptional is referred to as a special divine act of intervention or interference, hence the distinction between the orderly and the miraculous becomes also that between the regions of reason and faith. This opposition, so well established by mediæval thought still pervades much theology and is perhaps the greatest stumbling-block to a modern theism. For whilst supernaturalism of this sort has been a great inspiration to innumerable persons amidst the ills of life, its consoling and threatening power has been dearly purchased by misspent cults and misdirected prayer, or by the inertia that comes of waiting for extraordinary help to perform quite practicable operations. Superstition has gone hand in hand with supernaturalism, and consequently a breach has opened between science and theology which was quite unnecessary. Providence and miracle have been set at variance, when a deeper view of their relations might have shown them to be complementary, or even two aspects of the same thing. A modern theism must at any rate endeavour to reconcile faith and reason in other than the mediæval terms.

Tendency to Monotheism

However true this may be, it is evident that in the higher religions there is a general tendency to spiritual

theism, which employs these notions of divine creator, a world guided by overruling providence, and finite souls having aspirations to immortality. This minimum of rational theology is to be found in the Aryan group of religions as well as in the Semitic, where it reaches its fullest development. Thus of Ahura Mazda, the supreme deity of the ancient Persian religion, it is said that he stands high above all divine beings: "the most Wise Lord." In the earliest hymns he is glorified as the creator of all that is in the heavens or upon earth, as the God of Light and of Purity and Truth, as the Giver of all good gifts and especially of life and its power over death. None can deceive him—the all-knowing, the all-seeing, the watchful, whose eye sees what is planned in secret as well as in the open. He is the decider, the judge, who knows all that men or daevas have done or will do. "No god of the ancient world, except Jahveh, came so near to Monotheism as Ahura Mazda. These two antique divine forms alone were able, through the experience of the divine idea vitally felt by a prophet himself, to carry the notion of an almighty and unique, or almost unique Godhead."[1] Evidently here is to be found the framework of spiritual theism, however much it was overlaid by mythological and even degenerate superstition.

Again, in India the trend of religious thought is in the direction of spiritual theism, in spite of a strong leaning towards impersonal pantheism. The impersonal Brahman of the Vedanta, we are told,[2] condensed itself into a personal Godhead, and orthodoxy for the most part pursued a theistic path. Such a theism is very old in India, but its classical expression is given by Ramanuja in the twelfth century. According to him God is personal and the world and individual souls are His creation, yet

[1] Tiele: *Komp. der Religionsgeschichte*, p. 368. [2] *Ib.* § 106.

have part in His true actuality. "Ramanuja concentrates his attention on the relation of the world to God, and argues that God is indeed real and independent; but the souls of the world are real also though their reality is utterly dependent on that of God. He believes in a spiritual principle at the basis of the world, which is not treated as illusion. He insists on the continued existence of the released souls. Though the world of matter and the individual souls have a real existence of their own, still neither of them is essentially the same as Brahman. . . . Apart from Brahman they are nothing. The individual souls and inanimate nature are essentially different from him, though they have no existence or purpose to serve apart from him or his service."[1] Theism of this kind, it is added, is the faith of India; and it is strange that Western thinkers and critics should overlook this striking fact and persist in foisting on Hinduism as a whole the theory of abstract monism. Rather is this Indian theism the best type possible, though not without the usual difficulties of such theories.[2]

As for Europe, we have previously seen how as popular religion declined in Greece, a new world-view was thought out by the great thinkers, who are truly said to have produced a second Greek religion, for the benefit of the educated, however, and not for the common people. "Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were working at the same problem as the prophets of Israel and building up the rule of one God, a Being supremely wise and good, source of all beauty, and the worker of all that is wrought in the universe in place of the many fickle and weak deities who formerly bore sway."[3] With Socrates the effort took the form a of a criticism of life which led to an ethical theism. Morality which demands unconditional

[1] Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, vol. ii, p. 660.
[2] *Ib.* pp. 712 and 721. [3] Menzies: *History of Religion*, p. 301.

obedience is the highest power in existence. Whilst life and death and the future are uncertain, one thing remains sure, the moral order which is divinely sustained. This divine government makes a claim upon us, which is our vocation—in the case of Socrates to pursue philosophy. This calling is guided in his case by the warning of a divine monitor, a Daemon, which is more than the voice of conscience and yet less than a mystic oracle. Plato, however, starting from the Orphic opposition between body and soul and the longing for deliverance, purified the poets by a drastic criticism till he arrived at a cosmic theism. For him the way thither was by a catharsis, a purgation, but by means of truth and wisdom. Rational enquiry leads to belief in an ideal world in which the idea of the Good is supreme, but Plato's God is a living and personal being, akin to that of popular religion, but purer and higher. Aristotle, finally, rationalized this speculation till the outlines of a philosophical theism appeared clear and bold, and became the theoretical foundations of Western theology, both Jewish, Moslem and Christian.

(*b*) Central Line of Development

The religions which correspond to these names were not reached primarily by intellectual processes, however, but by moral and emotional intuitions. The Semitic mind, it is said, is not in its purity markedly intellectual or æsthetic, but concrete and practical. It tends to religion rather than to philosophy, to ethics more than to science. Whatever qualifications of these dicta may be made it remains true that the central life of religious development has been due to the spiritual genius and constancy of the West-Semitic peoples, most especially the Jews, who as it is said seem to walk in the ancient world like sober men amongst drunkards. Renan's

idea that the physical environment of vast plains and all-embracing sky induced the belief in the oneness and simplicity of God does not cover the facts, yet it may well have been a contributory influence. But the relations of man with his God seem to have been modelled rather upon social relationships and to have culminated in the notion of Fatherhood. Even this, however, was not the last word of Semitic religion, which is to be found in the affirmation that God is Spirit. This, according to Hegel, is the highest thought of Christianity and it is to the development and implications of this belief that we have now to turn.

Judaism

The religion of Israel is distinctively a founded religion. Its founder was Moses, who transformed a Sinaitic God of thunder and war and life into a God of righteousness. Jahveh, whose name perhaps originally meant the Self-maintaining, gradually becomes the Everlasting, the Eternal. He is a God who reveals himself through natural phenomena, but who rises superior to them, so that they become the stage upon which a great historical drama is enacted. So nature appears in a new light. The fears of the old nature-religions are overcome by a greater, the fear of a just God, who dominates history and expresses Himself through prophetic man. As such He is a deliverer and helper of His own people, who form a prevailingly theocratic community. The surprising characteristic of this religion is its exclusiveness, for it denies other gods, and stifles other cults, whilst at the same time it conducts a warfare between ritualism and ethical idealism within itself. God becomes a God of Justice and Mercy as well as the God for the whole world, and gradually leads many to the hope of a future life. This is bound up at first with the expectation of the

earthly triumph of a Messiah, but later on it takes more imaginative and eschatological forms. The elect will take part in the heavenly realm after a resurrection. Thus the religion becomes more and more pure and elevated, though it gives up the problem of evil as insoluble and remains the religion of a people regarding themselves as destined to rule the whole earth. The religion whilst strongly emphasizing the historical, personal and ethical, has not become wholly universal and spiritual.

Mohammedanism

A somewhat similar verdict may be passed upon Mohammedanism, which arose from the mind of a visionary who revived a monotheistic tradition in Arabia. His cosmological outlook, with its notions of creation, providence and judgment, was similar to that of the Jews and the Christians; his views of history as a form of divine revelation were not narrowed by national prejudices; and his God was a God for the whole world. The essential qualities of this God were justice and mercy, and man's prime duty obedience. The ritual requirements were few and the ethical demand high for a simple people. Whilst the great confession is that there is but one God and Mohammed is the prophet of God, the founder of the religion does not claim personal perfection nor miraculous powers. His chief gift to the faithful is a Book which is a revelation of the oneness, justice and mercy of God and the glories or honours of the next world. The whole presentation, whilst a great advance upon the current religious views of Arabia, is pictorial and anthropomorphic in a high degree. Monotheism is still attached to one place, Mecca, as it had been previously to Jerusalem. And when all is said, as by Carlyle, in praise of the uttered Word, a religion

which is tightly bound to a text is inevitably mechanical. Slavish obedience to the will of God is a rather unspiritual attitude, and though Mohammedanism showed itself capable of taking in elements from other faiths—Roman, Greek, Persian and even Indian—it has remained predominantly a religion of law. Its higher spirituality came through the influence of Greek philosophy in the Middle Ages, especially in Spain.

Christianity

As for Christianity, it centres, as does no other religion, in a person. And it is the self-consciousness of that person which is the most remarkable thing in his history. He regards himself as the Messiah and extends the claims of his office even to the right to be the world-judge. He is the Father's beloved son, who is sent to the servants, who alone knows the Father and to whom all things are entrusted. He is also the Son of Man in some unexampled sense. His miracles are worked through the power of the spirit of God and show that the Kingdom of God has come among the people. He is comparable to the suffering servant of God in the Old Testament, whose death shall bring deliverance to many. The Reign of God is his message, and whilst this is portrayed in figurative language, drawn largely from Old Testament sources, its essential character is righteousness. This is no provisional ethic, but the condition of all other Good, guaranteed by a heavenly father who is ever careful for his children. Yet sacrifice is necessary to the higher life. "He that loses his life for my sake shall save it." Sorrow and death are required of the Deliverer himself, and are foreseen and foretold by him. But he also predicts his return from the dead and his reappearance in the heavens, thence to judge both the quick and the dead. The belief in his resurrection was the starting

point of the new faith. The foregoing tremendous claims led to an identification of Christ with God and with the Spirit of God, in such wise that His Kingdom comes to be expressed in spiritual terms. It becomes worldwide and yet unworldly and its formula is " God is a Spirit, and His worshippers must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

The consequences of this utterance were only slowly drawn. Whilst Christ belonged to the most powerful and progressive theistic tradition which history has known, very much that was unspiritual clung to it. Largely with the help of Greek thought it freed itself from grosser representations of deity, but it was the great Fathers and Schoolmen of the Church who finally purged the Aristotelian cosmos itself from its partial independence of spirit. The doctrine of Creation has settled that question for the Church, but the bearings of that solution upon the relations of God to Nature and to History are still debated. The problem is to reconcile the modern world-view, both in the naturalistic and historical sciences, with the spiritual supremacy of Jesus Christ in religion and in the kind of cosmos which Christianity implies. The most thorough-going attempts to do this have been found in some of the great idealists, who have argued that the whole universe is spiritual and yet that it is focussed in the person of Christ, who is identical with God. New interpretations of this kind are possible, but they must take account of the following positions. First, that the Christian religion is highly personalistic ; its deity is personal and its historical founder a person. Then also it is historical, both as being founded upon historical events and also as a revelation developing persistently through history. Its God is a living God who is thus more than a deistic or pantheistic unity. And finally, it is both social and spiritual, in that whilst it appeals primarily

to what is most inward in man's nature—notably to love —it yet expresses itself in word and deed as a human fellowship.

An examination of the foregoing accounts[1] makes it plain that whilst from the beginnings of religion there has been an antithesis of the natural and supernatural, a sharp line between them has only gradually been drawn. The early distinction between them as sensuous and supersensuous has mingled with that between the ordinary and the extraordinary and both with that between secular and sacred. In dualistic religions like Zoroastrianism an opposition appears between light and darkness, life and death, truth and falsity—an ethical contrast. In India the opposition is essentially that between the finite and the infinite, whilst with the Greeks the line is drawn between the ideal and the material, the perfect and the imperfect. The Semitic religions emphasize the struggle between holiness and sinfulness—a spiritual antithesis. In none of these cases, however, is the division made simply between the regular and the irregular, the orderly and the miraculous, in the fashion of popular Christianity. The real divergence is between what is regarded as lower over against the higher, in whatever differing terms the dualism is conceived. In these theistically inclined religions the irrational is subordinated to the rational, the impersonal to the personal, the physical to the ethical. The important point is the transcendence of God over both Nature and History, these being conceived as events in space and time, whereas God is superior to both, being Lord of all things. These religions are in various degrees theocratic.

(*c*) Supernaturalism

The general tendency of these theocratic religions is

[1] Largely based upon Tiele, *op. cit.*

towards a theology in which the chief parts are played by the notions of Creation, Purpose and Ends. Whilst in their lower forms they conceive God as hampered by obstacles such as evil, or matter, or some defect in the material upon which God has to work, they give way to the belief that He is absolute creator of all things and that He has a purpose to carry out for worthy ends. This dramatizing of the cosmic process is apt to take mythological forms, as the foregoing descriptions have shown; yet the details of the representations need not be taken as more than æsthetic symbolism. The sovereign manner in which Plato, for instance, dealt with the old Greek myths, or Jesus with Old Testament visions and prophecies, need not lead us to question their rational theism. The essential thing is that the cosmos should have a credible meaning, a sufficient reason for what occurs within it. This can be found if, like a good play, it has a coherent beginning, middle and end. It can then be rationalized and indeed spiritualized, for it is in such categories that we can best comprehend the activity of spirit. Whilst the theistic religions have contained implicitly an interpretation of this sort, it is in the works of the great thinkers like Aquinas, Leibniz, and Lotze that the implications of this point have been made manifest.

The governing idea in the theistic religions is the supremacy of God over nature and history. This is compatible with various degrees of intimacy between them and Him, as will later be seen. But God is for theism essentially Creator, and all things are His creatures. Whilst this notion is a very difficult one to conceive satisfactorily, for the religious sentiment it implies the idea of complete dependence upon a living God. Both sides of this relation are necessary: God is the active source of all other existence, which would, therefore, be

extinguished without His support. Furthermore, the personal nature of God carries with it the idea of Providence, for the attitude of a personal God to His personal creatures implies concern for their welfare, and therefore control of nature as ministrant to their needs. Nothing is more characteristic of theism than this belief that all the issues of cosmic process are in Divine care and keeping : nothing gives such confidence in the outcome of the chequered history of man, even when the purpose of it is, as with Job, undiscoverable. But religious thought is not content with believing that " God's in His heaven, All's right with the world " ; it seeks to make this view intelligible by relating God and His cosmos to worthy ends. A doctrine of final causes is therefore required to complete a reflective theism, and is one upon which poets have lavished their imagination to portray future paradises, and philosophers their reason to conceive ideal worlds. It has indeed been the mainspring of human hope.

Various Emphases

It is possible to lay stress chiefly, or almost exclusively upon one or other of these leading ideas of theism. Thus one can insist upon the autonomy of the spiritual to the extent of claiming that its supremacy is self-evident or intuitive and that it is independent of proofs drawn from nature or from human reason. The vision of God is self-justifying. It is given to feeling, to genius or to mysticism, and it apprehends that " God is the Absolute Being, perfect, wholly independent, resting in Himself and necessary," whilst " nature is entirely contingent and dependent, and at every point of it we are compelled to ask ' Why? ' "[1] But we cannot answer these questions, for nature is really daemonic, that is, strange, mysterious

[1] Otto : *Naturalism and Religion*, p. 360.

and marvellous, indicating God, but otherwise confused and unintelligible in many ways. The contradictions in which we land when we ask whether time, space and causation have or have not beginnings and endings show that we cannot infer the existence of God from nature. But religion believes and knows through devout feeling that "in time the Eternal, in the finite the infinite, in the world God is working, revealing Himself, and that in Him is the reason and cause of all being. For this it has names like creation, providence, self-revelation of God in the world, and it lives by the mysteries which are indicated under these names."[1] Evidently such a view as this, with its emphasis upon the transcendence of God, and its flight from reason into faith or intuition, is in danger of ending in agnosticism. A vision of God which does not really attempt to justify the ways of God to man, or to reveal His purposes for the world, is apt to leave us in the dark about Himself, blinded with excess of light.

Similarly a theology which rests upon a vaguely conceived Providence is likely to be weak. This is often the residuum of a more complete view once held, though it may also be the approach to a fuller position. Providence may come to be the name for the moral order of the universe, reflected (as for Kant) in the starry heavens above and the moral law within. Such general Providence, exhibited in uniform laws of nature and history, is a source of great strength to those who believe in it. It enables a Marcus Aurelius to perform his duties with high serenity and indifference to personal comfort. But its tone, in face of the manifold sufferings of life, is apt to be sad. When it is supplemented with a theory of special providence it becomes stimulating and even exciting, but it is then in danger of giving way to superstitions. William James's "piecemeal super-

[1] *Ib.* p. 370.

naturalism " is a fascinating example of the way in which a theology becomes protean in its form according to the exigencies of life. It is sometimes hard to say whether it is to be called theism at all, since James's God seems to be full of unexpected capacities and defects. It may perhaps be called theistic pragmatism, since God himself seems to be experimenting and meeting situations as they arise. In so far as this God is successful in meeting the demands of his believers, by sudden interventions in answer to prayer and the like, he " works " and may be confessed as real and true. But his authority is likely to be discredited when calamity occurs. There can be no doubt, however, that James is right in claiming this theology as that of popular belief.

A complement to it may be found in that kind of theism which lays stress upon final causes, in the form of a Kingdom of Heaven, or a Realm of Ends. This strain of thought is dominated by aspiration for the perfect, which it grasps by faith or accepts as prophesy. The prophetism of the West-Semitic religions, conspicuously, foreshortens the future and anticipates the blessedness of the ideal life. When this belief takes philosophic form it becomes a belief in the ultimate reality of the great values, truth, beauty and righteousness. It is even possible for some to rest the whole weight of belief in God upon their ultimacy, for God is held to be their spiritual home. The great idealistic arguments of the nineteenth century were really expressions of this belief, Kant, Schleiermacher and Hegel finding God at the contact of human experience with the creative source of ideals. Sometimes that contact is itself ignored or repudiated, and we are left with a merely human idealism. Frequently the emphasis is laid upon certain great Ends to the neglect of the others, notably upon the reality of Goodness. Then the teleology of values becomes the

teleology of morality, and Creative Providence is subordinated to the achievement of Good. Thus it is possible to say that " as an inference from the way the world rules us and from the visible order of life and society, we might as readily speak of a Kingdom of Satan as of a Kingdom of God."[1] Such a view leads to an interim and apocalyptic morality, always confident that the thing it sees to be right has the might of the universe on its side, because of the self-evident omnipotence of ethical love.

It is evident that a theology which binds together these various one-sided views into a coherent whole will have great advantages over a partial system. It should be possible to construct a whole which, whilst asserting the transcendence of God, would combine His supremacy with the control of nature, leaving it no " Bacchanalian riot " (in Hegel's words) but a display of His purpose, yet allowing that history is a field wherein ethical choices are freely made by men who seek the highest values. The great constructive theologies of Aquinas and Calvin and the like are attempts to deal fairly and comprehensively with these different aspects of reality, without resorting to eclecticism. It must be said that they have had but imperfect success, owing partly to the complexity of the problem, partly to the lack of a grand unifying principle. It seems impossible in the long run to maintain a spiritualistic view of God with a materialistic theory of nature and a defeatist attitude towards human history. It is on this account that the great idealists like Leibniz and Hegel have had such great influence, for however defective their systems they have at least been built upon one principle, namely, the universality of spirit. This is compatible with degrees of spirituality, which lead to an antithesis between those extremes which

[1] Oman : *Grace and Personality*, p. 261. *Ib.* pp. 283 and 130.

we call the merely sensuous (or physical) and the purely spiritual. Different modern forms of this opposition, within the general framework of monotheism, may exhibit its nature as a polarity of forces.

Deism

Thus it is possible to assert the supremacy of the spiritual, its supernatural character, in the form of a transcendence of God over his works which is tantamount to separation from them. This attitude is what is commonly known as Deism, and its favourite illustration is the finished watch made by the perfect watch-maker. The real deism, however, was chiefly concerned to avoid "interferences" of God with the course of nature, by miracles, special revelations and special providences. The development of thought in the nineteenth century has gone far to fill the gap between deism and theism—even Christian theism—but yet in a theology so ostensibly theistic as that of Renouvier it is not difficult to find traces of its origins in the deistic eighteenth century. For, in his system, whilst all is spirit, God is essentially creator, and the spiritual beings which are created exhibit a pre-established harmony which is the order of nature. It is true that nature has become disordered, but that is the regular consequence of sin,[1] which disturbs the balance of nature and calls out for correction. In human affairs this occurs through wars and revolutions, but a restoration to virtue may occur by the efforts of humanity itself, which is the true Messiah. Some cataclysm of nature may finally wind up the course of history and give man's immortal spirit a fresh opportunity in a world restored to harmony. This theory which is given as the true philosophy of Christianity, evidently does not go far beyond the rational theology

[1] ". . . or la première faute Fut le premier poids . . ." (V. Hugo).

of the deists, both in its emphasis upon " the course and constitution of nature " and the remoteness of deity from it.[1]

Panentheism

A more intimate form of union between God and the world is to be found in those systems in which, whilst God transcends the world it is included in Him. It then appears as an expression of His being, but a willed expression, which thus amounts to creation. Nature is still a space-time system of things and things causally determined, but it is the home of spirit, and in its very sensuous character reveals God. Indeed, physical laws may be interpreted as the habits of spirit, just as the laws of a state are social customs come to recognition, the science of both of them being attempts to think the laws of God after Him.[2] Beauty especially may be regarded as the evidence of divinity in nature, for the sensuous is not merely a physical fact, but also a metaphysical discovery. Nature as thus conceived is communication in that it manifests in time and space that which is super-temporal and super-spatial. In this way it is a mediator between God and man, as well as the medium in which men live a common life. And it is the region wherein all finite minds coalesce and, finally, know themselves in some sense as absolute spirit. This version of the relations between nature and super-nature has been called Transfigured Naturalism,[3] and is an attempt to enclose the creation within God whilst preserving God's self-hood and creativity. Evidently it lays stress upon the divine immanence just as monadism does upon transcendence, but it is rather to be called Panentheism than Theism.

[1] Cp. *La Nouvelle Monadologie*, 7 me partie. pp. 532–5.
[2] Cp. Royce : *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, p. 462.
[3] Hocking : *Types of Philosophy*, p. 448. Cp. *Meaning of God*, p. 290.

Theism

In Theism proper, both God's immanence and transcendence are united. God is independent of other things in that He is their creator, whilst they are entirely dependent upon Him for their existence. God and the world are therefore not interdependent or "organic" to each other. God's activity is necessary to the continuance of the creatures, just as its cessation would entail their annihilation. All the same, they are all spiritual beings, though with most of them their spirituality is sleeping, and they take the appearance of physical nature. Being spiritual, they have a certain degree of freedom—that is, creativity which manifests itself in ways which taken individually are unique, but taken in the gross are general tendencies which we call laws. The creation is thus not a part of God, though it is a part of the Universe. Nothing escapes God's presence, and therefore His influence, but He is more and other than the creatures and so far is transcendent of them. Their purposes, when they attain the level of self-consciousness, are caught up into His purpose, one feature of which is just to leave them free to experiment and so to develop themselves. So whilst strange and extraordinary things may happen—"miracles," "interventions," "special providences"—they are consonant with a general plan which is the achievement of divine purpose. Such an attempted conciliation is that which alone can be called pure spiritual theism, and it is one which has been perhaps most powerfully justified in the system of James Ward in his *Realm of Ends.*

It is evident that in these various types of spiritual theism there is a difference of emphasis upon certain aspects of a field which is common to them all. In Renouvier the stress upon the pre-established harmony which is the order of nature, and the strict delimitation

of God's powers, throws the emphasis upon the scientific aspect of reality. The element of mystery and certainly of mysticism is relatively lacking. With Hocking nature appears as essentially a social medium, the activities between men are distinctively social, and the relation between man and God is social communion. It is probably correct to say of this universe, as of Royce's, that it is essentially social. In Ward the social element is relatively lacking, and whilst the scientific aspect receives great prominence it is mostly for the sake of criticism, but the real interest centres upon the metaphysical question of God. Theism is apt to swing between poles of realism and idealism, transcendence and immanence, so that tensions appear which threaten to explode the system. The right balance of tension held in unity is difficult to secure, and indeed what is fitted for one age may not be so for another. It may be necessary to emphasize different aspects in varying circumstances. So far relativity is involved in the presentation of theism, but it can be held that the normal and right proportion is kept in one system, for instance that of Thomistic theism, though we have seen that Indian thinkers make a similar claim for their version, as some Hegelian theists would for theirs.[1]

(*d*) God's Excellence

Common to all these types of Monotheism, however, is the insistence upon the absoluteness of God. It remains to enquire what this means. It implies, first, that God is supernatural and superhuman. The spatio-temporal system is given over to relativity, whether in the sense of the theory of Einstein, or in the sense that it cannot by itself be made intelligible. To be intelligible means to give a sufficient reason for itself, instead of being just a bare fact. Now, according to Goethe " Nature has no

[1] Cp. on the above Przywara : *Polarity*, esp. pp. 36–62 and 94–117.

system ; she has, she is, life and movement, from an unknown centre to an unrecognizable end." A similar pronouncement must be made by the pure naturalist, who, like S. Alexander, accepts the space-time constitution of the universe as an ultimate fact. Such a universe has no fixed internal standard wherewith to estimate measures or values. Since it has no fixed centre nor boundaries, it has no frame of reference beyond that which is accepted for human convenience, and is so far arbitrary. An arbitrary scheme is not absolute, but the very opposite, unless there is but one will which chooses. The mathematics of any one man is intrinsically no better than that of any other ; its validity depends upon its being the one and only mathematics for all people. So far it is not only supernatural, being that standard by which nature is measured, but also superhuman since its authority depends not upon any one person, nor upon humanity as a whole, but upon its absolute rationality. This seems to imply a God who is a mathematician.[1]

God is absolute again, in being super-historical. Whilst some of the chief spiritual religions have strongly emphasized the historical element in their origin and development, they have also maintained that God is above time and change. God Himself is the Eternal, He who is without change or shadow of turning. Whilst His revelation may be progressive historically, His purpose is changeless. The historical rests upon a background which is permanent. If that were not so, history itself would be unintelligible, given up to incessant ebb and flow of human activities, but really like " a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." The idea of progress is meaningless without the complementary notions of fixed beginning and end, and of course the same is true of the idea of regress. One cannot write

[1] Cp. Jeans : *The Mysterious Universe*, pp. 148–9.

of the decline and fall of empires or of the rise of republics, any more than of a development of moral ideas, without some touchstone by which to estimate advance or retreat. Religion itself in affirming degradation or elevation of worship does so in virtue of the devotee's approximation to an assumed ideal of holiness. Such an ideal, however, is not one that is endlessly receding. Mere idealism, in the sense of aspiration after the unattainable, is not religion. Theistic religion affirms that its idea is realized in at least one Being, who is the standard by which all other beings are to be judged. God's ideal reality is the pre-condition of such reality as relative and spiritual beings possess. It is not necessary to assume endless regress of the imperfect in a futile quest for the perfect, any more than (to use Max Planck's simile) it is necessary for a giant who overlooks everyone else to be overlooked himself.

For all that, it is not meant that God is merely changeless or without any relation to the space and time system. It means that within the changeful there is a Being with an abiding nature, a structure that is constant. This structure is revealed in varying degrees throughout the changing ; divinity is exhibited in the crystal, the rose, the history of a nation, but not in equal measures. God's presence in the created is graduated both in quality and quantity, so far as we can see ; the creation is a system of graduated values in which deity appears more and more manifest as we ascend the scale. This is the so-called hierarchical principle upon which the universe is organized. Excellence is not uniformly distributed, but ascends from lower to higher, this mode of organization being itself an excellence which brings variety and richness into the whole. A universe that has such a structure is far removed from Goethe's Nature ; it is the very type of that which is explicable. For we can understand a

world in which all beings conspire to produce the richest whole of value; such conspiracy, however, we cannot account for if it be not the result of one will, persistently directed toward the maximizing of the good. A personal spirit is capable of this, and so far as we know nothing else is. God may be more and other than Spiritual Personality; He may be super-spiritual and super-personal. He cannot well be less.

This solution of the relations of the absolute to the relative throws light upon the previously raised question of the supernatural in relation to the natural. We cannot adopt the old dualism according to which the universe was divided into the natural and the supernatural, the latter being marked by arbitrary and unaccountable interruption with the orderly and uniform sequence of nature. Indeed, recent scientific and historical views tend to reverse this position and to see in nature Hegel's "Bacchanalian riot" and in supernature that which is constant. Theism is not obliged to take sides in this controversy. It may rather adopt Carlyle's idea of natural super-naturalism, which asserts that all things according to their capacity are bathed in the Divine, and that the Divine is to be estimated by degree of spirituality. "Earth's crammed with Heaven," but in varying measures corresponding to the recipient's ability to receive. The natural is one pole of existence over and against the supernatural as the other pole. Its extreme limit is complete inertia, illustrated in the behaviour of sheer mechanism; its being is dependent, its activity derived, and is shown in the fact of historical change. The supernatural and superhistorical is independent Being which is creative. This is exhibited in Spiritual Personality constantly maintaining the highest ends. Beyond this there may be an unknown abyss of reality, corresponding to God's immensity. Emphasis

upon this last takes us beyond definite into indefinite religion.

CHAPTER X

MYSTICAL RELIGION

(*a*) General Characteristics

The term Mysticism is often used loosely as a synonym for religion. This is a common usage amongst Russian writers, who follow the tradition of the Greek Orthodox Church. Such a use is evidently far too wide for our purposes, blurring as it does the distinctions already made within the field of religion. It has been said, more precisely, that mysticism is religion in its most exclusive and concentrated form: that attitude of the mind in which all other relations are swallowed up in the relation of the soul to God.[1] If by this is meant that mysticism is mostly a matter of feeling, and that intense feeling strongly tends to exclude other modes of experience, the statement is defensible. It is perhaps true that mystic experience at its height in ecstasy is the most intense condition of the human soul. Short of that, however, mystical experience is notoriously compatible with many theologies and its very indefiniteness is what makes it so hard to discuss. Exclusiveness and concentration are rather qualities of those definite spiritual religions we have just considered. Certain forms of theism have proved themselves most intolerant, whereas mysticism seems to be common to most types of religion when they pass beyond the bounds of definition. Evidence of this will shortly be given, but the treatment of mysticism by Royce in *The World and the Individual* seems conclusive as to its vagueness. It is more plausible to argue, with

[1] Caird: *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, p. 210.

Hocking, that mysticism is identical with worship, and worship with prayer,[1] but this again is a narrowing of the meaning of the term which could not be accepted by high authorities.[2]

We are driven to make an inductive study of mystical phenomena in order to find their common features. The accounts of the psychologists like James, Delacroix and Farges suffice to show that the essential belief of the mystic is the One-ness of all reality. So far this is a positive and central assertion. One in some sense the universe must be, and a certain satisfaction of the mind which may truly be called religious doubtless follows from this assurance. We live in a world and not a chaos. But as James has so well shown in *A Pluralistic Universe* such unity may vary from a mere collection of individual beings to an integrated system, and the bare assertion of one-ness does not take us very far. We need to know what kind of unity is implied, and it is just here that the mystic fails us. For his next great affirmation is that his experience is ineffable. Like St. Paul, he has felt things not lawful to be uttered, indeed beyond the possibility of description. It is tempting to suppose that this is due to a defect of expression, but the testimony of the mystic is rather that the content of the experience is so mysterious that it defies characterization. The divine darkness which pervades the soul of the mystic at its extremist tension is nevertheless darkness, even though it arise from excess of light. The blindness which comes from overmuch exposure to the sun's rays does not seem to differ effectively from that which springs from the blackness of night.

One verdict is common to all forms of mysticism: that of the identity of the self with the One. In some

[1] See *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, Ch. 24.
[2] Cp. Evelyn Underhill: *Worship*.

cases which are restrained by orthodoxy the assertion is not pushed to an extreme, and then unity rather than identity is affirmed. But the more thorough-going type of mysticism is not content with anything less than complete identification. "That art Thou," says the Hindu, and the intention is to deny the ultimate distinction between the two. There is no more alternation of attention between part and whole, no rhythm between self-assertion and self-denial within a wider context, no paradoxical exclamation that "I live, yet not I," but an obliteration of the opposition between I and Thou, self and not-self. The famous description of the ecstasy as the flight of the alone to the alone, if taken as more than a piece of rhetoric, asserts the impossible because self-contradictory. It does, however, indicate that the relation of the soul to God is not just that of part to whole, and that wholeness is not properly to be ascribed to the One. Simple identity seems to be the goal of mystical aspiration. Relations vanish in the Absolute, and so even self-identity disappears, for one cannot say that "I am I" without distinguishing between the two terms of the assertion and the relation between them. The result is that for extreme mysticism the members of the unit vanish, and we are left with sheer simplicity, with form without content.

Another conviction of mysticism in general is the belief in the intuitive apprehension of God. There are different meanings of intuition, but common to them all is the idea of directness, immediacy, the seizure of the essentials of an object without the need for logical proof. This is often described as Vision, though those of delicate ear may say "Let others reason and welcome, 'tis we musicians know," whilst the amorous may speak in the terms of an embrace. In general, the language used is sensuous, and it seems truer to say that the mode of

apprehension of God is æsthetic rather than theoretic or moral. This connection of the mystical with æsthetic experience is not often noticed, largely, no doubt, because each has been comparatively little studied, partly because of the confused richness of them both. Yet it is true to say that the heart of these experiences is the emotion of love, which in its highest reaches strongly impels to mix and mingle with its object. Identification of I and Thou is the natural language of lovers. It does not follow that all mystics are artistic or that all artists are mystical, for the mystic is consciously directed towards God whilst the artist is engaged upon the production or enjoyment of some concrete object. And some artists are much more didactic or moral than others. But they all, so far as they are good workmen, grasp their objects intuitively and through them arrive at God.

The mystic is distinguished from the artist, however, by his peculiar method. He is a dialectician, who uses reason to repudiate reason. Commonly he is quite ready to use the weapons of logic against itself, to discredit it or at least to supersede it. Hence he follows the famous negative way, in showing that the highest experience is not comparable with any lower : it is not this, not that. Necessarily he reaches the point at which it is impossible to say any more about it ; the very straining after reality produces exhaustion and inarticulateness. It is not merely the defects of human consciousness that the mystic suffers, however, but the discovery that his prize eludes him. That which is successively deprived of all character becomes characterless, and he is left with the indeterminate. Here being and non-being become one and the same, or perhaps we are told of a condition which is beyond both. Reason is extinguished and at most undifferentiated feeling takes its place. This may be called absorption and regarded

as the highest destiny of man. "The dew-drop slips into the shining sea." But even this metaphor leaves us with definite beings, whereas the mystical aim is to go beyond these into a condition, or rather a non-condition, which can only be called annihilation. However much the mystic may protest against this interpretation, it seems to be the consequence of his own dialectic, and is indeed affirmed by some of the stricter schools of mysticism.

(*b*) Historical Manifestations

(1) *Taoism*

Historical illustrations of the foregoing are to be found in all the great religions. In China it is seen in the mysticism of Lao-tze. Tao, commonly called The Way, is nameless and secret. It is the form of the formless, the shape of the invisible, yet it moves in and through all things, and all things return to it. It was before God ; it comes out of the naught, and is the origin of heaven and earth. Sometimes it is spoken of with religious warmth, and appears rather as a pure and almighty deity than as the principle of all existence. But it is an ethical principle rather than a metaphysical one, and leads to the exaltation of passivity. The active virtues are repudiated and the milder virtues exalted until the ideal, non-activity, is attained. By emptying himself man is filled with the fullness of the eternal Tao ; the universal law is the law of his being, and he is one with the absolute. The best community becomes that of the monastery. In short, Taoism ends in quietism. Naturally the people were not able to live on the heights of such pure and rarified mysticism and turned to magical practices in which search for the philosophers' stone and for means of immortality played a large part. Hence original Taoism has nearly died out and its priests have

become soothsayers, magicians and ecstatics. It is well remarked that " At first sight it seems strange that Taoism, with its lofty indifference to life and worldly goods, should have devoted itself to these ends as if they were the *summum bonum.* Theosophy has, however, always evinced a strong affinity for magic ; and alchemy in the West, throughout its entire history, was intimately associated with pantheistic mystical philosophies."[1]

(2) *The Upanishads*

In India mystical religion reached classical expression in the Upanishads. This verdict seems to be received on all hands, though the proper interpretation of those scriptures has long been a matter of divided opinion. That at their highest they are monistic, idealistic and apprehended by mystical intuition is generally accepted, but whether they teach the personal or impersonal nature of God is disputed. Radhakrishnan holds that they are theistic ; Urquhart that they are pantheistic ;[2] the former that they are optimistic in temper, the latter pessimistic. Some hold that the Absolute is Spirit, others that It is the indefinite, the indeterminate, beyond all characterization. In fact, the two great Indian interpreters of the ancient philosophy are opposed on these points. Such uncertainty of meaning gives point to the charge that mysticism is vague religion, however deep. What is clear, however, is that Indian mysticism at its best is a religion of deliverance—especially from re-birth—and that it uses asceticism and ecstasy only as means to a vision, an unveiling which is received as a gift by the elect. Deliverance occurs through knowledge, not through action. The energy of the will is directed to isolating oneself from the world of perception,

[1] Moore : *History of Religions*, Vol. I, p. 60.

[2] *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 203. *Pantheism and the Value of Life*, Book I, ch. V.

not to pioneering research; it seeks freedom from illusion, a freedom which comes to a halt only at the void. (Tiele, *op. cit.* pp. 263–4.)

(3) *Spinozism*

It does not appear that there is any specifically Semitic mysticism: such as is to be found is a blend of Jewish or Mohammedan with Neo-platonic and possibly Indian speculation. The strongly theistic character of Semitic religions did not encourage mysticism in the orthodox; neither can it be said that the unorthodox favoured any special type of belief. There is one great example, however, of a Jew whose racial and religious inheritance is unquestioned and whose system of life and thought is strongly mystical. He may serve to show what the Semitic genius is capable of in this kind. Spinoza, after being called atheist, pantheist, theist and acosmist, is probably most accurately described as a mystic, to whom none of these names is strictly applicable.[1] Whilst following the mystic's way of knowledge from facts through science to intuition, he arrives finally at a vision like that of an artist's, where all is seen in the light of eternity and infinity. This is the "intellectual love of God" which demands no love from God in return. Of this it is well said: "It is the mystic's love, absorbed in the contemplation of the highest, and though Spinoza does not call it religion, it is in fact religion, where the religious impulse is founded upon the philosophic synthesis and the philosophy has taken fire from the emotion which it itself excites. Again it may be doubted whether it is not all the time the religious emotion which has inspired the philosophy." (Alexander: *Spinoza*, p. 18.)

What precisely it is, however, which Spinoza sees in

[1] Cp. Pfleiderer: *Geschichte der Religionsphilosophie*, pp. 55, 60, 67.
Huan: *Le Dieu de Spinoza*, p. 300.
Alexander: *Spinoza*, passim.

his vision has been the despair of interpreters ever since he wrote. His ultimate Substance has been regarded as a creative fullness and an empty abyss, as personal and impersonal, as one-in-all and one-yet-not-all, as a whole, and as the supreme abstraction, as the absolutely indeterminate because it includes all determinations. The world has been held to issue from God by way of casual efficacy, mathematical necessity and immanent procession. No wonder that it is found that the terms pantheism, theism and panentheism will not suffice to describe this mysticism and that it is finally named simply (but not illuminatingly) Spinozism.[1] It must be said, nevertheless, that it has been a source of religious inspiration to many minds such as Goethe, Coleridge, and Renan, and through them to many more who desire to combine science, poetry and philosophy into one emotional vision. To the multitude it is a mystery.

(4) *Neo-Platonism*

Mystical beliefs in the West may hail from the ancient mystery religions. These, in a purified form, had their influence upon the great poets and philosophers of Greece. Plato shows mystical inclinations in his longing for the endless and the eternal as well as in his sympathetic feeling for the old religious myths, but it is in Neo-Platonism that mysticism comes to its purest expression in the West. In Plotinus especially mysticism became a religion of deliverance. His fundamental idea was the re-union of the soul with the Eternal One from which the world has issued in decreasing degrees of perfection. From the eternal, indeterminate impersonal Being streams out Reason, the image of Being and the archetype of lower Things. This pure Reason is the origin of the gods and of souls. From their immaterial substance is

[1] Huan : *op. cit.* pp. 289, 304.

derived the body in whose dark matter—or non-being—the soul is imprisoned. From this condition deliverance is sought by the soul through the practice of virtue, until its original source is regained. This movement occurs first through the practice of the civic virtues, then through ascetic purification. Meditation and contemplation lead man to ever higher heights until perhaps he is seized with an ecstasy which enables him to participate in the blessedness of the pure One. Plotinus enjoyed this divine gift only four times in the course of six years. The experience is called divinization or deification, but it is ineffable and incommunicable and can only be described in figurative terms. It is properly not merely a vision but an identification.[1]

(*c*) Analysis

In making an examination of mystical religion we may notice first its manifold forms, for which it has indeed been notorious. It has been found to be compatible with many attitudes, from that of polytheism to practical atheism. This is because it admits of various degrees of unity with its deity, which again may be conceived either positively or negatively. Let religion be regarded as the ascent of a scale of increasing reality, till ultimately the whole—which is God—is somehow grasped, and it is a positive achievement. Let it be treated as a flight from the finite to the infinite and it turns to a negative pursuit, for the infinite is the negation of the near and given. In both cases it is a discovery of a *beyond*, but in the first it is an enrichment, in the second an impoverishment of our immediate experience. It is these tendencies to increasing concreteness or increasing abstractness that confuse the student of pantheism, and (one suspects) also its devotee. It has been remarked of the system of

[1] Cp. Whittaker : *The Neo-platonists*, ch. vi.

Mr. Bradley that it contains these two trends, so that it is possible to form contradictory interpretations of its religious import. Sometimes it seems to encourage a theistic attitude, at other times an agnostic. It is easy to see how this comes about, for our grasp of the whole of things must be so very sketchy as to resemble our ignorance of that which is most remote from immediate experience, the negative infinite. But a little positive knowledge of the whole is more valuable than many negations of the part.

Two Strains

It is here that Professor Hocking's suggestion is of value, that life exhibits a Law of Alternation in its phases, according to which attention turns from the whole to the parts and from the parts back again to the whole. "My world at its periphery is 'experience,' 'life'; at its centre it is 'substance,' 'reality,' 'God.'" Either, pursued alone and for long, induces spiritual fatigue. The one is the world of work, the other of worship. The whole of human life falls into these two phases—Duty and Love; but the practical temper is that which insists upon the limited and partial, whilst the worshipful attitude contemplates the whole. It is the mystic who thus brings us back to explicit religion. For "the man who prefers to have his religion in the obscure, in its diffused and partial forms is the man who puts the prize of life upon vagueness and the unexplicit. The mystic, on the other hand, who adds worship to all the rest, the mystic is the man who prizes the overt, the definite and the literal in religion."[1] Such an account of mysticism is possible to those who, like Mr. Hocking, hold that the whole is a Self, and can therefore be described in terms taken from human experience. Such

[1] Hocking: *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, ch. xxviii, passim.

a mysticism may be described as concrete or holistic to distinguish it from the abstract and indefinite. The former tends to determinateness of religion, the latter to the indeterminate. And it cannot be said that concrete mysticism has been the more common.

Mystical Theism

Rather has the disposition of mysticism been to say a transference of human qualities to deity is anthropomorphic, and to speak of the whole as against the part as "not that, not that." Professor Le Roy's treatment of the question is instructive in this regard.[1] Intending to show that his development of Bergson's theology is orthodox he yet finds that the ordinary arguments for the Being of God are anthropomorphic, and considers that we must find God in direct experience of reality, which is Becoming. To deduce God would be equivalent to denying him ; one does not demonstrate the existence of a concrete reality ; one perceives it. God is essentially incomparable, incommensurable, ineffable and so beyond all conceptual determinations.

To affirm God is to affirm at the first source of all things, even the highest rational necessities, a concrete Liberty, an Absolute which transcends forms and categories (*op. cit.* pp. 81–3). Considerations drawn from nature and history are only secondary instruments, the true light must come from moral experience (pp. 298–9). This discloses in the depths of the will, aspirations which become demands, and which point to an infinite beyond in a spiritual direction (p. 237). Human life is a perpetual bringing forth ; it is big with infinity and eternity ; this is what makes it truly human (p. 182). The discovery of this motion, as the principle and centre of our deeper will, marks the point of our

[1] *Le Problème de Dieu.*

insertion in God (p. 207), who, as a centre of duties and a subject of rights, ought to be treated by us as a person (p. 120).

What, then, do we really know of God? (1) We cannot conceive the existence of God under any of the forms known to us; (2) this existence is not below but above, not on the hither but on the farther side, and that infinitely, of every observable and conceivable form of real existence; (3) God is the universal and supreme source of realization, the sovereign principle of existence; (4) we must behave in relation to Him as to the principle and source whence we ourselves derive our own existence and reality (p. 289). Finally we are told that God is rigorously *one* and primary, admitting of no multiplicity; He is *necessary*, but acts freely though not arbitrarily; He is *that which ought to be*, of absolute merit, permanent and eternal, a super-reality to which the nearest analogy is creative love (*Ib.* app. ii).

It seems evident that Mr. Le Roy's position is nicely balanced between an affirmative and a negative assertion as respects the personality of God. He is both *élan de vie* and spirit, and must be treated as if personal. Yet there is no comparison possible between him and us, for analogical knowledge is merely conjectural knowledge and religion requires certainty, which can be furnished only by direct experience of God. This is found in moral aspiration, which reaches out after the eternal. Yet God is ceaseless creation and reality is becoming. Time and eternity do not seem to be reconciled in Mr. Le Roy's treatment. Infinity and eternity seem to have a negative character, for in this philosophy there is no room for a completed whole. Hence this new dynamic mysticism appears to swing uneasily between concrete and negative idealism.

Modern Idealism

A similar judgment must be passed upon modern idealism in general. This movement has deeply affected traditional and even popular religion, yet it is hard to say whether more in a positive or a negative direction. It is notorious that after Hegel it split into three schools which supported Protestant orthodoxy, speculative theism and pantheism respectively. On the whole the pantheistic trend prevailed, till, in the form of the Absolute, the God of religion tended to disappear. The negative qualifications of the Absolute outweighed so greatly the positive that the historical activities of religion vanished into a vague religiosity. Few have spoken more eloquently about religion, for instance, than Bradley and Bosanquet, yet the definite guidance towards the spiritual life which they furnish is very meagre. It is not surprising that William James complained of the "thinness" of their writings and turned to a radical empiricism. For indeed Absolutism and scepticism lie very close together.[1] The desire to become somehow identical with God easily leads to an effort which ends in mystical ecstasy and the discovery of the ineffability of that experience. This may lead to the confirmation of one's original views, and an enhancement of one's station and its duties. But it may even more tend to despair of rational knowledge of God, and so to the repudiation of his existence at all. This result seems to have occurred with some leaders of idealism in our day,

[1] Cp. Muirhead's remark about Bradley's later thought in *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy*, p. 299.

"So long as we are at all ignorant, all our judgments not only may, but must be, false. Press this conclusion . . . and it is difficult to see how we can escape . . . an uncompromising scepticism."

It need hardly be added that this conclusion need not be pressed and that there are great attempts being made to reconstruct idealism more positively.

notably Loisy and Professor Hartmann, who combine a moral idealism with theological scepticism.

Neutral Monism

A half-way house between overstrained idealism and scepticism may be sought in Neutral Monism. This position has been the refuge of many scientific minds in the last generation and has served as the confession of the agnostic. The mystic impulse to assert the identity of all things may remain when the mode of unity is avowed to be unknowable. Then it is asserted that things are somehow one, the oneness manifesting itself in various ways. Commonly those ways are reduced to two, material and mental, matter and mind revealing and concealing an underlying reality. This is the real thing, the thing in itself, which it is even possible to worship. We may raise an altar to the unknown (and even unknowable) God. Herbert Spencer's Unknowable satisfied the religious craving for mystery in the object of worship without requiring the worshipper to commit himself to any definite creed. This complete severance of faith from knowledge, of course, could not be sustained but it made possible an attitude of suspension between belief in outworn creeds and total scepticism. Honest doubt became itself a confession of faith. Agnosticism still has a wide appeal to those who find in the Numinous, with its character of mystery, overpoweringness and fascination, a sufficient account of inscrutable Deity. It is probable that the cult of the numinous will become the religion of those of our time who are disillusioned of popular or traditional views of God, yet are aware that they cannot do without an object of worship.

It is very doubtful, however, whether religion can maintain itself under these conditions. An object of worship which is so remote as those just mentioned cannot

justify even a mystical attitude towards it. Though that attitude remains it becomes more and more regarded as a suggestive emotion, having significance only as a psychical state, not as referring to other reality. Thus, whilst to-day a vague religiousness is widespread, and is even defended as superior to doctrinal religion, and whilst the psychology of religion was never so eagerly discussed, its ontological reference was probably never so much a matter of doubt and denial. Two or three conspicuous instances will illustrate this thesis. Guyau in his famous *L'Irréligion de l'avenir* professes belief in naturalistic monism which does not seem to differ from the neutral monism above described, and argues that mystical intuitions, though false, are often the presentiment of superior truths. Thus St. Paul's famous hymn to the love which shall abide, though heaven and earth pass away, foreshadowed a probable psychological discovery that through love individuals may enter into a collective consciousness which will become immortal. Even if that is not so, one must not be base but face death with curiosity ; it is, after all, the most mysterious novelty of an individual's life. Death has its secret, its enigma which we may hope will be revealed as our eyes close. Our last pang is also our last curiosity.[1]

Nihilism

Mr. Bertrand Russell, again, who gives his adherence to neutral monism, says that whilst the mystic emotion is of inestimable value in giving us the possibility of universal love and joy in all that exists, yet it does not reveal anything about the nature of the universe in general. Rather does Science teach us " that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the *débris* of a universe in ruins." So that " only

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 470–479.

within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundations of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built." (*Mysticism and Logic*, pp. 28 and 48.) Mr. Aegidius Jahn in his book *The Silver World* goes even further by saying that all mysticisms and intuitions are subjective illusions (p. 205), and that the great neutral monisms are really a confession of atheism (p. 256). "We have come to an end. . . . We stare into the deep, gloomy night. . . . The mist will never disperse; we shall never behold the prime cause of being, can never fathom, can never approach it; we remain for ever remote from it, without any bond of union, without any hope" (p. 319). One thing only remains, the sole positive thing in atheism—a great cosmic compassion, sympathy with all real, presumed and suffering beings (p. 358). However, regarded purely and objectively, life—compared with the infinities of empty space and the eternity of death—is worthless. *Vanitas vanitatum* (p. 368). The attempt to gaze into the profound black abyss of the Ultimate amounts to a glance into the grave (p. 375).

It should be evident from these opinions of distinguished writers, who fairly represent the tones of neutral monism before and after the first World War, that the mysticism attaching to that position increasingly fails to give religious satisfaction. What allowed Guyau to contemplate the future with hope, or at least curiosity, leads Mr. Russell to live with the courage of despair, and Mr. Jahn with hopeless pity for all life. It is not evident upon what principles each comes to his verdict upon the worth of living at all. It seems to be a matter of temperament. Yet it is significant that mysticism, under the influence of neutral monism, seems to become more and more sceptical. Along with this goes the tendency to nihilism, either in the form of belief in the

destruction of the ordered cosmos or in that of a desire for Nirvana. It is always difficult to say whether this last is positive or negative, though, on the whole, the latter interpretation seems to prevail. Buddha's own attitude seems to have been that of complete agnosticism. Certainly in the West agnostic monism has tended towards the belief that death is the extinction of individual life. The belief in the transmigration of souls is hard to maintain in the face of scientific evidence, but if it were true it would afford little comfort in a world which has become fundamentally meaningless. Rather life would be the unsubstantial fabric of a dream.

(*d*) Estimate

The result of the foregoing investigation has been to confirm the first impression that mysticism is indefinite religion, though it admits of all degrees of illumination, from ecstatic insight to mere agnosticism. At its highest it attains a synoptic view which for moments makes the mystic "the spectator of all time and all existence." It is in the light of this vision that he is able to return to the light of common day and discharge life's duties more efficiently. But at its lowest mysticism degenerates into superstition and magic. Momentary intuitions take the place of rational connections, so that a person comes to feel promptings and guidance for which there is no justification. It is difficult to distinguish these promptings from a belief in fortune and luck, and it is well known that men of genius like Napoleon and Mustapha Kemel professed to owe their successes to their stars. So far there is only superstition, but where fortune begins to be commanded, as when a leader acts on the belief that he will not die until his work is done, there magic arises. Religion becomes irreligion ; presumption takes the place of piety. This condition is akin to that negative mystic-

ism which attempts to ascend the scale of reality by repudiating the evidence of the senses and of reason, and expecting a miracle of illumination to occur in its favour.

It may be possible to accept the dictum that the mystic is the man who prizes the overt, the definite and the literal in religion, if it is also allowed that few mystics attain their prize, or attaining, manage to communicate it. These points, we believe, could be established by a consideration of the history of mysticism. Indeed, they are involved in the arguments used by the apologist in its defence.[1] It is also true that mystics and mysteries are commonly classed together, so much so that the mystics can be called the adepts of the system of worship, worship nearly if not quite identified with religion, and religion made to take its rise in mystery.[2] Mystery must, therefore, be considered an inevitable stage in the development of religion, and one which leads in two directions —towards ever increasing light and clearness, or towards increasing darkness and confusion. It is here that the positive and negative mystics diverge. For the first, mystery is the sense of ignorance which leads to the conviction that there is Another who understands and who completes our limited experience by complete knowledge ; for the second it is the sense of estrangement which becomes the conviction that God is Wholly Other than ourselves.[3] There may be alternation between these two attitudes within the same person, of course, but they correspond to two well-known types of mysticism.

Extremes meet

These can be exhibited within the history of Christianity. In the first three Gospels it is questionable

[1] Hocking : *op. cit.* pp. 348–9.
[2] Cp. Otto : *The Idea of the Holy*, ch. v.
[3] *Ib.* pp. 343, xii and 231.

whether there is much that can be called mystical, and it is odd that Christ is rarely placed amongst the great mystics, even by those who advocate Christian mysticism. It is in the Apostles Paul and John that they find their chief prototypes and in the writer of the book of Revelations their chief source of mysterious imagery. These writers are concrete and vivid enough in their expressions and in their poetical representations of Deity as Light, Life and Love, of the Church as the Body of Christ, and of Heaven as the New Jerusalem, have given to Christendom some of its most fertile suggestions. In the Middle Ages, the portrayal of the Christian life as a Pilgrimage, or as a Spiritual Marriage, or again as a mysterious transmutation by Spiritual Alchemy or New Birth, have furnished religion with ideas which are positive and practical in the extreme. In the modern period mysticism has found a rich source of inspiration in physical Nature, an impulse expressed in the works of poets like Wordsworth, artists like Turner, and musicians such as Beethoven and Elgar. Above all, the disposition to see God in the common affairs of life, and so to transform them that they reflect the glory of God, and bind the co-workers with one another and with Him in a spiritual unity, may be said to be the practical mysticism of the modern world.[1]

Over against this must be set the negative tendency in Christian mysticism which may be derived from oriental sources (though there is little evidence of this), but which is closely connected with the agnostic aspect of the philosophy of Plotinus. Especially through its interpretation by the reputed Dionysius the Areopagite was that philosophy turned in a direction opposed to New

[1] Cp. on the foregoing, Inge : *Christian Mysticism.*
Underhill : *Mysticism.*
Baron von Hügel : *The Mystical Element of Religion.*

Testament mysticism, and insistence laid upon the dark, strange unfathomable Abyss of Pure Being. Thus we enter the Divine Darkness, the Cloud of Unknowing, The Desert of the Godhead, where we know only that we know nothing. Hence such language as this is possible: "And therefore, where this (true) Light is, the man's end and aim is not this or that, Me or Thee, or the like, but only the One, which is neither I nor Thou, this nor that, but is above all I and Thou, this and that." And again: "if the simple Perfect Good were somewhat, this or that, which the creature understandeth, it would not be the All, nor the Holy One, and therefore not Perfect. Therefore also it cannot be named, seeing that it is none of the things which the creature as creature can comprehend, know, conceive, or name."[1] It only needs to be pointed out that we are consequently not entitled to describe God as One, and we reach sheer indefiniteness, indeterminateness, nothingness. Doubtless the mystic's intention is still to express the extreme limit of ecstasy, but his deity seems to vanish into a mathematical point. It is not surprising, therefore, that Churchmen like Dean Inge repudiate such negative mysticism as not Christian.

It must be admitted that the claims of mysticism to positive achievements may be placed very high. For instance, Miss Underhill who asserts that "normal man, by means of his feeling, thought and will is utterly unable to set up relations with spiritual reality,"[2] speaks thus of the really characteristic quality of the full mystic consciousness: "It develops the power of apprehending the Absolute, Pure Being, the utterly Transcendent: or, as its possessor would say, can rise to "passive union with God." This all-round expansion of consciousness,

[1] *Theologia Germanica*, pp. 163 and 213 (Golden Treasury Series).
[2] *Mysticism*, p. 61.

with its dual power of knowing by communion the temporal and eternal, immanent and transcendent aspects of reality—the life of the All, vivid, flowing and changing, the changeless, conditionless life of the One is the peculiar mark, the *ultimo sigillo* of the great mystic and must never be forgotten in studying his life and work."[1] This claim, often repeated, to have solved by experience the greatest problems of thought, rests, however, upon an experience which is admittedly ineffable and incommunicable and which must be for the great majority of human kind unattainable. The plain man, or even the trained thinker, can only look up admiringly and wistfully to the great mystic, and wonder whether this experience is truly revelatory of sublime truth, or whether it is not rather akin to belief in the efficacy of magic.

Connection with Magic and Theosophy

It is not possible, however, to deny the connection between Negative Mysticism and magic. Whatever may be the relations between magic and science, it is plain that magic and religion have had long-established relations and that they meet in the mysteries. Even in the most purified religion, there remains an admixture of magic, whilst magic retains that element of mystery which is the mystical aspect of religion. The central doctrine of magic is summed by Miss Underhill as follows: There is a super-sensible "cosmic medium" surrounding and interpenetrating the sensible world, a medium which is comparable to the ether of some physicists, but which is describable both in physical and psychical terms. There is, moreover, an analogy and a balance between the visible and the invisible world which makes it possible to penetrate the secrets of the

[1] *Ib.* pp. 43 and 531–540.

one by means of the other. Further, it is possible to discipline the will of man so thoroughly that he is able by this knowledge to control the equilibrium of the cosmos and so become the master both of himself and of his destiny. This ancient belief lingers in the form of sympathetic magic, in the idea that like is influenced only by like, and in more refined form in the notion that analogy is the last word of science and the first word of faith, and so furnishes the clue to the deepest problems of religion.[1]

Such crude philosophy is the very stuff of which much popular religion is made. It is an amalgam of mysticism, theosophy and magic and from the time of Paracelsus to Mrs. Besant has provided Europe with an esoteric cult. The modern world has seen a great spread of such mysticism, largely outside the churches, becoming increasingly a popular religion which may be loosely described as Theosophy. This is properly direct knowledge of God, which reveals the hidden truth common to all religions and practises the brotherhood of all mankind. Through a comparative study of myths and theologies it arrives at belief in the relativity of each religion and the unity of them all. Along with it may go a good deal of astrology, mythology, faith-healing and psycho-therapy, social service and moral aspiration. To-day it is taking shape as a mixture of the great religions, perhaps an international or even a world-religion. It has all the merits and defects of eclecticism ; it is loose in its structure and uncertain in its methods ; it lacks the logic of science. But of the purity and sincerity of its aims there is no reason to doubt, as there is not of the largeness and tolerance of its temper. It may be the pioneer of a true synthesis of the religions.

Where philosophy is unable to reduce events to accurate

[1] *Ib.* pp. 185–193.

laws whereby scientific prediction and control are possible it is likely that religion will retain a great deal of the cults, rituals, ceremonies and symbolisms of the quasi-scientific experiments of magic. And in fact the lower grades of every religion exhibit magical tendencies, whether the magic be white—that is, authorised and beneficial to the community—or black, nefarious and individualistic. The devotee's belief in the extraordinary powers of a wafer of bread or a text of scripture may be as superstitious as the Tibetan's use of a prayer wheel. Wherever rational connection of events is not obtainable and man's mind is diverted to nescience as the final end of striving, there he is prompted to seek occult powers for his private and immediate advantage. Then flourish the Black Arts and civilized religion decays. It is noteworthy that it is at such times as the decay of the Roman Empire and the break up of the mediæval, that superstitions of all sorts abound. To-day, with the spread of agnosticism and atheism, new mystical cults of paganism are arising, based mostly upon love of power, whether political or economic, and so fantastic are their methods and expectations that they may be called truly magical. Like all negative mysticisms, they provide no ground for hope and their end is nihilism.

PART III

TYPES OF RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY

CHAPTER XI

ATHEISM

IT is obviously possible to classify religions in various ways. Previously we examined them from the standpoint of their spiritual elevation, proceeding therefore upon a distinctively religious basis. One may, however, take a more purely philosophical attitude and consider them according to their logical coherence. The two modes of treatment will not necessarily yield the same divisions ; some religions may be religiously high in the scale without being very coherent, whilst others may be logically systematic, though otherwise low in the spiritual series. Thus atheism might be the most theoretically defensible form of belief (or disbelief) whilst in other respects the most unsatisfying to our higher nature. Again polytheism may be the most gratifying æsthetically and yet the least intelligible rationally. And some writers have ordered religions according to their ethical character, thereby finding certain agnostic unbeliefs like (say) one form of Buddhism to stand high in their valuation. From the point of view of speculative philosophy, however, clearness and consistency of treatment in the handling of the great fundamental objects of thought, or rather aspects of the universe—God, Man and Nature—are the most important criteria for the estimation of given religions. It is to be understood that we are now considering theories of religion, not religions

themselves, though the two are often confounded by the use of identical names. It will be convenient to study these theories in some of their leading representatives.

(*a*) Definition

Atheism is here understood as a theory concerning God and His relations to the rest of the universe : a theory which is essentially negative. It is not necessarily anti-religious, however, or even irreligious or non-religious. For, according to our previous discussion, religion consists in a worshipful attitude towards the sacred and there may be other things than God which are sacred. For instance, natural beauty or pure human love may be so described, and so far as a person is reverent towards these, he may be called religious. An atheist, however, is one who does not, for certain reasons, believe in God. God again is an ambiguous term and may mean merely the super-sensuous or the vaguely Divine or a superior being with whom one can enter into social relations. Many who would deny the last as savouring of anthropomorphism, would resent being called atheists in the wider sense of irreligious. It is in the stricter sense of a superhuman being with whom one can entertain social relations that the term is used in this present discussion. This is the God of the historical religions, though it may or may not be the Absolute of philosophy.[1] In this sense, one fears, a believer in an ultimate being composed of space, time or ether is an atheist, though he may be far from being an irreligious man.

There is, of course, the apparent exception of Buddhism to the assertion that the historical religions involve social relations with their Gods. Buddhism is the stumbling-block to all generalization about religion. It may have been originally a negative philosophy which repudiated

[1] Cp. Leuba : *God or Man ?* p. ix.

all knowledge of a supreme being, but when Buddha himself was exalted to divine status it manifestly became a religion of inter-personal relations. It is evident that to-day, so far as Buddhism is alive, it depends chiefly upon the personality of the Buddha, whom it worships with Divine honours. So far it is no atheism, whatever other form of theism it may be. If Buddha is treated as one amongst other Divine beings, he is a member of a polytheistic cult; if he is an expression of a whole, which itself is endowed with social qualities, he is still a factor in a personalistic pantheism; if he is worshipped as a sole and exclusive deity he is monotheistically regarded. It is when he is conceived as the temporary manifestation of a depersonalized Absolute or of certain "neutral elements" or even of the Void, that he becomes a feature in an atheistic universe. How far he himself would have accepted such a universe, and whether he would have repudiated the Divine honours which were accorded him by his successors, these are problems which still occupy the scholars. But of the fact that Buddhism became for the generality a personalistic religion, there can be no question.[1]

(*b*) Chief Modern Forms

Atheism, the considered opinion that there is no evidence or at least insufficient evidence for belief in personal Divine beings, may take several forms. It may rest upon general scepticism, or upon theological doubt only, or it may be positive assertion of the non-existence of God (to the extent of being anti-theistic), and finally it may endeavour to explain away as an illusion the idea of God altogether. These theories have no doubt their ancient and historical forms, for they are as old as religious

[1] Pratt: *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism*, pp. 249–250, 172 and 663–4.
Streeter: *The Buddha and the Christ*, p. 86.
Keith: *Buddhist Philosophy*, pp. 14, 132, 147.

speculation ; even the Bible has its sceptical and disillusioned books. But atheism in all its forms was never so widespread or aggressive as to-day, and it will be most profitable to discuss it in its modern presentations. These, as has been said, are not necessarily irreligious, nor are they to be identified with the secular as distinguished from the sacred. It is commonly said that some recent cults of the state or of an economic system, though evidently atheistic, have become new religions. They certainly call forth from their devotees such courage and devotion as were wont to go with the old theisms, indeed sufficient to displace the latter. For these new "ideologies" the state or social system is sacred whilst the old churches are profane. Atheistic practice may be idealistic, and theistic worldly. So it is that some (after Tolstoy) can identify true Christianity with Russian communism.[1]

(1) *Scepticism*

Whilst philosophical scepticism is as old as ancient India or Greece, its chief modern representative is David Hume. Indeed, he is said to be the founder of modern scepticism. His own personal convictions in religion are hard to discover, since his chief writings upon the subject are in either historical or dialogue form, the latter being published posthumously. He affects to believe in theism and even in Christianity, yet, most commonly, takes the rôle of sceptic. Furthermore, he admitted that his ruling passion was the desire of literary fame, and often he manifestly exhibits a spirit of mockery. Some recent research is inclined to treat him as a serious enquirer after truth and to make a favourable estimate of his achievements.[2] "In the end it is a philosophy of naturalism that develops from Hume's scepticism. A

[1] Macmurray : *The Clue to History*, pp. 206–7.
[2] Hendel : *Studies in the philosophy of David Hume*, p. 418.

constructive theory of knowledge and a new 'medium of truth' are still hovering before his mind. There is a genuine science of nature, be it of inanimate things, or of living beings, or of human society. It is harder, of course, to assure ourselves of such a knowledge in religion, but it appears at least to be possible. This seems to be the final attitude of Hume. . . . He is as much a 'philosophical dogmatist' as a 'philosophical sceptic.'" The question remains, however, whether upon his own assumptions and arguments he should have developed a science of nature and of man, not to mention a possible science of religion. The question is pertinent, since most modern atheism has its origins in Hume.

Hume's Criticisms

Hume accepts for everyday life the world of common-sense and experience, and professes that his scepticism is but speculative. His criticisms are none the less subversive of religion and science. For they centre in the principle of causality upon which our interpretation of the universe so greatly depends. If it fails in religion, it can hardly succeed in the "science of nature." And, in fact, for Hume it breaks down everywhere. Reversing the usual order, we may consider its failure, first in religion, then as regards the self, and finally as respects the external world. Hume's treatment of religion is found chiefly in his *Natural History of Religion*, his *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, and a few essays like those on Immortality, Providence and a Future State. He finds religion to arise in a quest for the *unknown causes* of events which play upon our hopes and fears, and which because of our anthropomorphic disposition we transform into spirits, gods and finally one God. Yet when this search for causes is pressed home, we are obliged to go on *ad infinitum* and cannot reach a First Cause. Indeed, there

may well be many causes rather than one, or perhaps two causes of which one is good and the other evil. Similarly, no one end or final cause of the order of Nature is discoverable ; indeed the evils in the world suggest defects in the power or powers which direct it. Improvements in the orderings of Providence can easily be suggested and so the most that we can say is that the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence.

It is evident that the criticism of causation which invalidates theology can be applied to the question of the immortality of the soul. Ethical and physical arguments may be used against that belief but the chief one rests upon the difficulty of the persistence of the soul. There is no proof of continuity of the soul. "Nothing in this world is perpetual ; everything, however seemingly firm, is in continued flux and change ; the world itself gives symptoms of frailty and dissolution. How contrary to analogy, therefore, to imagine that one single form, seeming the frailest of any, and subject to the greatest disorders, is immortal and indissoluble ?"[1] It is noteworthy, however, that Free-Will is opposed by Hume on the ground of necessary determination, and that the empirical continuity of the self is assured by memory, which appears from nowhere.[2]

Finally, the external world is dissolved by the same kind of reasoning. We know nothing of it but impressions and copies of impressions between which we can discover only succession, but not necessary connection. Causation then becomes only subjective belief maintained by memory and expectation, eked out indeed by constructive imagination. Mathematical truth no doubt remains, though it is not clear why it is exempted by

[1] *Essay on Immortality*, Vol. 4, p. 553 (A. & C. Black's edition, 1854).
[2] *Essay on Liberty and Necessity*, *Ib.* p. 94.

Hume from being more than accidental matter of fact. Indeed, it is not evident why all through his discussions he contrives to eulogise Newton and his physics, seeing that our knowledge of the world about us is so precarious. But similarly he wrote a history of England, which country he regarded, therefore, as somehow continuous, and an autobiography called *My Own Life* which presumably he expected to go down to posterity. These inconsistencies cast doubt upon his sincerity, however much they confirm his scepticism.

Their Results

Upon these results of scepticism, repeated in essentials by later writers like Thomas Huxley and Bertrand Russell, one may remark that they exhibit self-contradiction. Hume himself says that the dispute between philosophical sceptic and philosophical dogmatist is entirely verbal and that such disputes admit not of any precise determination.[1] It is understandable, therefore, that as Hume said of Berkeley, his various and confused hypotheses "admit of no answer and produce no conviction." But criticism may go farther and show that scepticism has no right to insist upon the distinction between truths of reason and matters of fact. They are overwhelmed in one common destruction. For since it is assumed that there is no necessary connection between state of mind, no persistence of the self from moment to moment, it is not possible to be sure that the conclusions of an argument follow from its supposed premises. The result must be mental chaos, corresponding to the chaos to which scepticism reduces the world and its God. Hume says that it is universally agreed that there is no such thing as chance. But why? It is only by lack of courage that the sceptic saves Nature and History from

[1] *Dialogues*, Vol. 4, p. 529 of Works.

the flames to which he commits Divinity. It is impossible therefore to regard him as a forerunner of modern naturalism, unless naturalism regards itself as a certain form of illusion. Hume's stress upon the function of imagination in constructing science has been followed by other sceptics, till it emerges as a conscious illusionism in some recent writers. It is commonly held in respect to theological matters, however, not to physical or historical. In short, the sceptic is apt to be not sceptical enough.

(2) *Agnosticism*

The reason for the collapse of scepticism is its divorce of knowledge from faith. It does not perceive that there must be a continuous faith in reason, even the sceptical reason, if thinking is to continue at all. A common way of expressing their divorce is the attempt to confine knowledge to the domain of Science and relegate faith to the realm of Religion. This famous solution was put forward in classic form by Herbert Spencer who gave the sphere of the knowable to science, of the unknowable to religion. This attempted division of labour failed because, as was so abundantly shown in James Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, science cannot advance without faith, and faith must be constantly confirmed by knowledge. The agnostic position, whilst not strictly atheism, is tantamount to it, for if there be a God it is incredible that He should not be manifested in the world of observation. For all that, agnosticism is returning to-day, not through the scientist or philosopher but through the theologian. The recent Theology of Crisis, with its insistence upon the transcendence of God, His nature as wholly-other, distant and irrational, is a revival of theological agnosticism. In the works of Otto, Karl Barth and Karl Heim, Kirkegaard and the like, the

remoteness of God from the world of men and things is stressed so much as to banish him from the sphere of knowability and to restore him only by a miracle. "Das Wunder ist des Glaubens liebstes Kind," as Goethe said.

Science requires Faith

As in the case of scepticism, agnosticism is usually directed against religious belief, not against belief in other selves or the external world. Yet there are as good reasons for maintaining the unknowability of our neighbours or the world about us as for denying the possibility of knowledge of God. Various explanations of our supposed social knowledge are possible, but there is no one that is generally accepted. There are theories of empathy, of imputation, of recognition and of analogy, yet they all assume that solipsism—which maintains the self-enclosedness of the individual—is untrue. Yet there seems to be no way of proving the existence of external selves which does not presuppose it. In short, in order to prove *your* existence, I must accept *mine;* yet I could not think *mine* unless I contrasted it with *yours*. Reversely, the denial of your self-hood involves the denial of my own; for if you are an unknowable, may not I also be at most a passing event and my continuity an illusion? Evidently faith is required to construct self-hood at all.[1] A similar remark must be made about our knowledge of the external world. Supposing solipsism overcome, yet that there exists an external world in the sense of an orderly cosmos is beyond a proof which makes no assumptions. The efforts of Bertrand Russell and others to avoid this verdict, do but show the more plainly that faith in naturalism is involved in the very attempt to conceive such a world.[2]

[1] Cp. Coe: *Psychology of Religion*, p. 197 and note, p. 255.
[2] Cp. Lovejoy: *The Revolt Against Dualism*, ch. viii.

Mystical Phenomena relevant

Reversely, belief in an external world and in other selves warrants an extension of our faith to a belief in God. This is especially so if the validity of mystical phenomena is admitted. Merely on empirical grounds there is great reason to believe in what is called the sense of the presence of God. Numerous instances quoted in the books upon the psychology of religion leave no doubt that the experient himself is convinced that by visions, auditions and similar presentations, he is brought into immediate contact with Deity. When all allowances have been made for self-deception and misunderstanding, just as in scientific description, there remains sufficient well-attested and verified experience to warrant certainty in this matter.[1] How this experience is to be interpreted theologically is another question, but the persistent tradition of gnosticism in the Greek Church is at least a counterpoise to modern agnosticism. Recently that tradition has been re-affirmed by eminent thinkers of that Church, who claim that the divinization of man is an attainable reality.[2] The degree to which this divinization can reach, short of absolute identification with Deity, is a delicate matter, but it amounts at least to direct insight into the nature of God. So far it is a refutation of the agnostic assertions of the unknowability of God. It is, furthermore, an interesting fact that a recent writer in the naturalistic tradition, Samuel Alexander, whilst avowing ignorance of God's character as deity yet repudiates the change of agnosticism. He has much to say about the nature of God as Space Time which is known by intuition.

(3) *Dogmatic Atheism*

If it is granted that in principle God is not unknow-

[1] Cp. Evelyn Underhill: *Mysticism*, Part II, ch. V.
[2] See the Works of Bulgakov, Berdyaev and Florovsky.

able it may yet be held that there is no proof of His existence or even that there is positive disproof. The latter position may be called dogmatic atheism, and is now more widespread than ever before in history. The campaign of militant godlessness is organized on a large scale, and is prevailing over large parts of Europe. The discussion of this dogmatic atheism may well confine itself in the present work to this special form, the most common to-day. Apart from social and moral causes, such as the corruption of state and church, the theoretical basis of this atheism purports to be philosophical and to be grounded in the teachings of Hegel. It is familiar knowledge that Hegel, over a century ago, taught that the universe was a spiritual unity and that this unity was maintained by an internal dialectic which is the very pulse of reality. The dialectic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis drove cosmic history from simpler to ever higher and more complete stages of reality, till it culminated in a vision, which was also a union of finite with absolute Spirit. However this theory was interpreted—whether theistically or pantheistically or even atheistically—it still remained a spiritualistic doctrine which nowise supported materialism.

It is possible, however, to stand any philosophy upon its head, and this is what happened to the Hegelian. The extreme left of that school turned its spiritualism into a materialism, by the simple device of dwelling upon its economic conditions in human history. Thus Feuerbach, in an oft-quoted passage remarks that "The doctrine of foods is of great ethical and political significance. Food becomes blood, blood becomes heart and brain, thoughts and mind-stuff. Human fare is the foundation of human culture and thought. Would you improve a nation? Give it instead of declamations against sin, better food; man is what he eats." Though

this is not Feuerbach's final position, it marks a tendency of thought towards materialism which had only to be followed up to become the economic determinism of Karl Marx and Lenin. Human history may still be driven along by a dialectic, but it will be a dialectic expressed in terms of economics. Hegel had applied his logic over vast fields of human life but had neglected the economic sphere. It remained for Karl Marx to explore this field, armed with Hegel's *Logic*, and to discover that man's life is principally determined by economic conditions and that his work and wages are of supreme importance to him. One has only to belittle other manifestations of spirit or to explain away their existence, in order to prove the unimportance of religion for modern life and the non-existence of a divine being. Thus atheism is established.

Its Theory

Its theoretical basis is thus expressed by Marx and Engels in their *German Ideology :* the vague images in the brains of men are also necessary sublimations of their material life-processes empirically established and related to material conditions. In this manner, morals, religion, metaphysics and other types of ideology, together with their corresponding forms of consciousness lose their apparent independence. They have no history at all, they have no development, they are only the developments of people in relation to their material production and their material relations ; as these activities change, so change also the products of their thought. Dr. Hecker further explains this position by saying " Religion thus is but a by-product of the basic factors of social life, which are economic. The classes which control the base are also naturally in control of its by-products, using them to their advantage. In the process of the

class-struggle, one ruling class is overthrown by a newly-rising class, as for example feudalism was overthrown by the town bourgeoisie and the proletariat."[1] Lenin developed these theses of Marx and Engels by his explanation that matter is to be understood realistically and in the light of recent science, but that in any case it is "some objective reality existing independently of the human mind and reflected by it." He concludes: "The scientific doctrine of the structure of substance, the chemical composition of food and the electron may become antiquated with time; but the truth that man is unable to subsist on thought and beget children on platonic love alone can never become antiquated. And a philosophy which denies the objectivity of time and space is just as absurd, just as essentially foul and false as one which denies these several truths."[2] He further developed dialectical materialism by emphasizing the law of the unity of opposites which is the general law of the material world and of knowledge. He thought that in a socialistic society there would be no antagonisms, but that immanent contradictions would remain, driving even a classless society to develop in an endless change of qualitative forms.[3] Finally, he held that an intelligent grasp of Hegel's *Logic* was imperative to the understanding of the philosophy of Marxism. He says: "The sum total and *resumé*, the last word and the sense of Hegel's *Logic* is the dialectical method . . . this is exceedingly remarkable. And still another thing—in this idealistic work of Hegel's there is very little of idealism, but more than anything else, materialism. This is contradictory, but a fact."[4] In Lenin's own view, of course, all idealism must vanish from philosophy,

[1] *Religion and Communism* by Julius F. Hecker, p. 175.
[2] Quoted in *Moscow Dialogues* by J. F. Hecker, p. 122.
[3] *Ib.* p. 187.
[4] *Ib.* p. 116. Cp. the summary on p. 134.

which according to this communist theory, means not only the denial of a personal God or gods in control of the universe, but also the rejection of everything supernatural, including every idealistic philosophy from Socrates to Bergson.

Present Position

The present position of dogmatic atheism is expounded by Dr. Hecker, who speaks (or spoke) with authority as a teacher of philosophy in Russia. The seed of religion is to be found in animal fear, " stupefying fear," which in human beings becomes a conscious appreciation of this fear and a reflection upon its *Wunderwesen.* Religion's chief attribute is worship and there is no religion without it. Reflection discovers the roots of religion to lie in social economic conditions, and with a change in those conditions it will be possible to discard religion altogether. A classless communist civilization will have no religion, but it will have a spiritual culture and an integral philosophy of life. Dialectical materialism knows but one substance or nature, which is in constant movement, but not in a mechanical motion. The movement which dialectical materialism emphasizes is one of opposites or contradictions. The attribute of mind or spirit was always potentially present in nature but appeared as consciousness only at the higher stage of the organization of matter. Religions are ideologies, and as such are part of the social-economic process. Ideologies are determined by the class-struggle, but when this is eliminated the true, the good and the beautiful will flower and bear abundant fruit. There is no absolute morality possible except in a classless society. Present-day morality is communistic and it rests upon an ability to make decisions based upon an intelligent knowledge of the situation. It is a conscious choice

and decision based upon the understanding of necessity. This liberates man's energies for the development of human creativeness which becomes an end in itself.

Results

The results of the foregoing atheistic teaching in Russia are noteworthy. Whilst there has been a vast extension of elementary education in that country and a removal of many superstitions it does not appear that Russia differs very greatly from the rest of Europe in its actual religiousness. The moral level has not been lowered by atheistic propaganda, but perhaps raised as a consequence of improved social and educational facilities. The chief failure has been found in the realm of the higher arts, for it has been so far impossible to produce atheistic drama and music in much abundance. Atheism is chiefly an intellectual product, whereas religion is chiefly emotional and music has been its most powerful artistic expression. Most musicians have been religious, whilst atheism does not seem to lend itself to musical expression. The great Russian novelists too have been religious, and the works of Gogol, Tolstoy and Dostoievski are still being published in myriads. So that Christianity is still being absorbed by the masses, though in solution rather than in dogmatic form. Indeed, it is suggested that whilst there is no future for the former established Russian Church, the ancient questions of the *Whence? Why?* and *Whither?* of life will remain, and may find an answer in a rediscovered and revalued Jesus, and in an institution which shall take the place of the Church in the promotion of a new spiritual culture.[1]

Criticism

In considering the foregoing atheistic views one may

[1] The above is a summary, based upon the works of Dr. Hecker, for which I alone am responsible. The experiences of the war have gone far to restore the position of religion in Russia and to weaken atheism.

notice first the curious attempt to represent Spinoza and Hegel as the sources of dialectical materialism. It is true that Spinoza sometimes spoke of God or Nature indifferently, but his ultimate substance, whatever it was, was more than matter or mind, or both. He could not have presented mind as the outcome of matter after the fashion of our new atheists. As for Hegel, he would have stared and gasped at the attempt to portray his philosophy as a misunderstood or incomplete materialism. Persons who, like Lenin, make this effort reveal that they do not realise that it is as difficult to conceive of mind arising from matter, as of matter springing from mind. True, there is no need to question that cosmic history before man was independent of human consciousness, but that does not touch the central position of the idealist that it is dependent upon an absolute or divine consciousness. Furthermore, the conception of matter as that which potentially contains mind raises all the old difficulties about the relations of potency to actuality, which were so thoroughly exposed by Bradley. Have our realistic-atheists become Aristotelians? If so, why not adopt the theory of the Prime Mover as that which incites the potential to become actual? Whilst it is hard to say which came first, the chicken or the egg, it seems impossible to believe that they both arose from the food which they consumed when they arrived.

The idea that matter is food for thought in the Feuerbachian sense, that man is what he eats, forgets that food does not feed till it is eaten. Before that it is only "potentially" food. Similarly with Marx and Engels' "brains of men" which contain "vague images." No eye has ever seen those images, which are unknown to physical science; on the other hand the brains of men are scientifically known only by the use of images (or other ideas). The belief that ideologies, religious and

other, are a by-product of the brains of men is itself equally a so-called by-product, and as false or true as the others. The theory of epi-phenomenalism is as old as Thomas Huxley and has been drastically criticized, notably by James Ward. There is therefore no need to dwell upon it. The further position that religions are a by-product of the class-struggle is one which it is difficult to maintain in the light of history. Whilst it is most likely that men's lives have been shaped principally by two things, economic and religious influences, it is altogether dubious that the economic have been the most formative. The great institutions of caste and the feudal system—two great examples of the class system—seem to be an inextricable fusion of the two influences, along with others; the supreme importance of one of these would be very questionably asserted.

(*c*) Need of Test of Truth

Again, if thought is causally determined by the class-struggle, in what sense is it true? It cannot be true for all or there would be no class-struggle, whilst if it is true for one class, say the proletariat, we have only relative and partisan truth. Universal and absolute truth must wait for the classless society, though why a classless society should not be divided by other antagonisms is hard to see. The progressively peaceful society of Marx and Lenin's ideal seems to be purely utopian. In any case it is not clear why material causes should have determined dialectical materialism to be the sole true theory, whilst others are materialistically determined to be false. On this showing it is quite arbitrary that atheism is true and theism otherwise. The mind itself has ultimately nothing to do with the choice and adoption of truth, for freedom is merely conscious determinism. So that atheism and theism are alike in being theses inevitably

accepted by those who hold them. They are not held on strictly rational grounds, but because of physiological causes. This is tantamount to saying that truth is what the new atheist makes it, he being organically what he is. Dialectical materialism itself is true because the new atheist asserts it to be so; his assertion is determined, however, ultimately by physical factors not by logical grounds. Yet he assumes that there is a rational plan of the universe and insists that there must be no compromise with truth![1]

These various puzzles, not to say contradictions, give point to the criticism that in accepting the true, the beautiful and the good as the goal of atheistic efforts, atheistic philosophy has in effect become religious. From the time of Plato these ideal ends have been treated as sacred, and so, according to our earlier argument, worshipped; whether they involve a personal or spiritual God or not is a further question, but so far as they go they fulfil the criteria required of a religion. Indeed, they may well be regarded as the underlying structure of all religion. It is, therefore, possible to say that an atheism which respects and reveres these values has its roots in religion without knowing it. It is not surprising that Russia can, therefore, be said to be religious in temper though it has shed much of its cult and dogma. It is indeed remarked by Dr. Hecker that Communists greatly dislike religious terminology and that they suffer from acute logophobia: a prejudice against unpleasant terminology.[2] This aversion may be understood and even respected by those who are acquainted with Russian history. But if the dogmatic atheist believes in the ancient trinity of values and in the perfectibility of human nature, we may hold that even he renders unwitting tribute to the unknown God.

[1] *Karl Marx* by I. Berlin, pp. 18 and 19. [2] *Religion and Communism*, p. 12

Summary

The upshot of the foregoing study of atheism in its various forms of scepticism, agnosticism and dogmatic assertion is that there is no argument which applies to the the existence (or non-existence) of God which does not also apply to the existence of a continuous self or of a permanent external world. If the inference from causality is invalid in the one case, it is so in the others. If we are left in doubt about God, so we are about the self and the world. If, finally, on grounds of determinism we are necessitated to deny God, why not also society and the external world? Partisan error need not be confined to the theological sphere, nor partisan truth to the economical and physical. There may be theological elect as well as political, and the arbitrary decrees of an omnipotent God may be as valid as those of political economy. Indeed, if truth is materialistically determined, the whole theory of atheism is undermined, since no criterion of truth remains except assertion. Reversely, if truth is accepted as independent of human assertion, even the truth of atheism, there is equal reason that the other great values should also be treated as regulative of human life. This is incipient religion, which by a spiritual dialectic will leave atheism behind. One can wish nothing better for dogmatic atheism than that it should make a close study of Hegel's *Logic*.

CHAPTER XII

DUALISM

(*a*) Historical Instances

The present condition of the world, torn by gigantic struggles between nations, classes and parties, may easily suggest the ancient and obvious solution of the

problem of existence, that there is a radical dualism in the constitution of reality. Historically such dualism has been held by many peoples and religions. In China it was exhibited in two contending principles, the Yang and the Yin, which stood respectively for active and passive, warm and cold, light and dark, good and evil, male and female. In ancient Persia it came to classic expression as the opposition between Light and Darkness, Good and Evil, Truth and Falsehood, conceived as two personalized figures—Ahura Mazda and Ahriman. The embodied evil, the Lie, became a real devil and thus the counterpart, if not the origin, of the Jewish Satan and the Christian Devil. This moral opposition was not developed in India or Greece, but was represented by the antithesis between spirit and matter, between the ethereal and the corporeal. This is the great dualism of Plato and Neo-Platonism, which has been repeated by mystics during the ages. With Descartes the division is between Thought and Extension, with Kant between noumena and phenomena: this last recurring in various forms such as the Conditioned and the Unconditioned, the Knowable and the Unknowable, Appearance and Reality. From an emotional standpoint, the dualism remains the fundamental one between Optimism and Pessimism.

It is evident that the division between the opposed principles may take place at different points according to the emphasis placed upon certain values, whether moral, metaphysical, hedonistic or the like. From a religious point of view it is most necessary to know whether beneficence or maleficence dominates the universe, or at least in which direction it tends. This question, the subject of so much concern to prophets like Carlyle and Wells, has received classic expression in J. S. Mill's famous essay on Theism. The modern Western mind is

still anxious to know whether the ills of the world are reconcilable with belief in some form of theism, and Mill's statement of the case may well furnish the essential points of the discussion. For him " the essence of religion is the strong and earnest direction of the emotions and desires towards an ideal object, recognized as of the highest excellence, and as rightfully paramount over all selfish objects of desire."[1]

Mill's Account

The usual omnipotent God of theism however furnishes Mill with no such object, for there is not sufficient evidence in nature of either his beneficence or his justice ; but only of a Being of great but limited power and perhaps limited intelligence, who desires and pays some regard to the happiness of his creatures but who seems to have other and more cherished motives of action. " Grant (however) that creative power was limited by conditions the nature and extent of which are wholly unknown to us, and the goodness and justice of the Creator may be all that the most pious believe ; and all in the work that conflicts with those moral attributes may be the fault of the conditions which left to the Creator only a choice of evils." There is no ground for attributing personality to the obstacles which particularly thwart what seem the purposes of the Creator, but only for suspecting either uncontrollable materials or defective workmanship on his part. " One only form of belief in the supernatural —one only theory respecting the origin and government of the universe—stands wholly clear both of intellectual contradiction and moral obliquity. It is that which resigning irrevocably the idea of an omnipotent creator, regards Nature and Life not as the expression throughout of the moral character and purpose of the Deity, but as

[1] *Three Essays on Religion*, 2nd ed. p. 109. Cp. pp. 194, 187, 186, 116, 256, 250, 35, 14, 256 and 152

the product of a struggle between contriving goodness and an intractable material, as was believed by Plato, or a Principle of Evil, as was the doctrine of the Manicheans." This belief may be held along with the Religion of Humanity, the purely human religion which induces us to cultivate a devotion without stint to the welfare of our fellow creatures. For it allows us to think that we may thereby be co-operating with God, helping him in his struggle against evil and contributing to ensure the victory of the Good. Such a view even permits "the hope that the art employed in improving and beautifying the soul itself may avail for good in some other life, even when seemingly useless for this. This hope may prevent the disastrous feeling of 'not worth while' and whilst it is true that good and evil naturally tend to fructify each in its own kind, good producing good, and evil, evil, yet good is gradually gaining ground from evil, gaining it so visibly at considerable intervals as to promise the very distant yet not uncertain victory of Good. For the tendency of all recent speculation is towards the opinion that the development of inferior orders of existence into superior, the substitution of greater elaboration and higher organization for lower, is the general rule of Nature."

(*b*) Chief Oppositions

In this summary we find concentrated the chief religious dualisms : those between Good and Evil, Order and Chaos, Spirit and Body, and in general between Hope and Despair. These have been made more precise by successors of Mill and may be considered in turn.

(1) *Between Good and Evil*

The clash of good and evil is conceived by Mill as that between two antagonistic, yet positive forces, for though

they are intermingled, and even at times provoke their opposite, yet the ultimate tendency of the one is to destroy the other. There is a hope—no more—that the good will prevail over the evil. In his successors T. H. Huxley and Bertrand Russell, however, we have not even that consolation. For both of them in famous essays[1] have argued that the force of the cosmos is against the triumph of at least human goodness, since both morality and civilization are doomed to be destroyed by blind forces of nature which will overwhelm them. There is nothing therefore to be done but to defy those forces so long as we can. This provides a religion of heroic despair which may indeed call forth the noblest powers of man, but assuredly must provoke a sense of futility in those who reflect upon the struggle. It may, however, induce the alternative attitude of those who say " Let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die." The present generation seems to be largely divided between these two classes of thought.

(2) *Between Order and Chaos*

As respects the World we find in Mill the strong suggestion that it consists in part of intractable materials, so that it is strictly a mixture of order and chaos. This condition can, however, be improved in part by the co-operation of man with the Creator ; for it is of the essence of religious duty that man should amend not only himself but also the order of physical nature.[2] No limits are assigned to this amendment and since it is hoped that good may ultimately eliminate evil—itself caused by intractable conditions—one may presume that comparative chaos will become order. Later on Herbert Spencer undertook to show that this must be so, and in

[1] *Evolution and Ethics*, ch. ii. *Mysticism and Logic*, ch. iii.
[2] Mill : *op. cit.* p. 26.

famous formulæ summed up a vast evolutionary process which moved from the (relatively) orderless to the (relatively) ordered. The appearance of a Providence without the reality—for God was strictly unknowable—was thus obtained, and a kind of religion of evolution made prevalent. This religion has probably been the faith of the majority of the scientifically minded since then until the first World War. Shattering historical events, however, have shown that revolution and anarchy are quite compatible with the ways of Providence, and Spencer himself was never able to demonstrate that dissolution would not succeed evolution.

The truth seems to be that there is no intrinsic tendency of the chaotic to become orderly. Disorder produces disorder, just as evil does evil, and though both are self-defeating this is only because their component bad tendencies neutralize each other, not because they have an inherent trend towards the Good. The irregular or assymmetrical has, of itself, no disposition to regularity or symmetry.[1] So one disease will fight another, and one mob may bring another to a standstill, yet these situations but give opportunity for health and sanity to prevail. Similarly, in the moral sphere, lies may cancel out lies, but do not produce truth, any more than two wrongs, though they may frustrate each other, positively make a right. Do men pluck figs from thistles or grapes from thorns? Furthermore, it is just the most advanced products of evolution which are the most delicate, and the most liable to revert to their primitive conditions. So that even though it be true that good is gaining ground from evil, and superior orders of existence developing generally from inferior, this process may in the absence of constant causes be reversed in the direction of the supposed primæval chaos. Since, upon the dualistic

[1] Cp. Hocking: *Types of Philosophy*, pp. 113–4.

hypothesis, there is no guarantee of constant causes directing the whole process, but only of opposed forces swaying to and fro, the truth of the world situation may be that it is likely to swing incessantly from order to chaos and back again.

(3) *Between Soul and Body*

There remains for consideration the dualism within man himself, between his soul and his body. This famous problem has received several answers, none of which is generally accepted. That the body is a prison of the soul, or merely its instrument, or again its constant but unresponsive counterpart, or finally its reciprocating partner : these theories have been and still are held. Recently the tendency has been to assert the integrity of the whole organism, and the fact of duality within unity. But such an assertion throws no light upon the *prima facie* difference between matter and mind, flesh and spirit, even if they are both reduced to one ultimate stuff such as energy.[1] From an emotional standpoint their interrelation appears to be close, and religion usually emphasizes this intimacy. Asceticism and indulgence have played a great part in religious cultus, so that it is hard to say whether the body should be treated as " brother ass " or as the temple of the Holy Ghost. What is certain is that there is a great tradition which stresses the need of some sort of embodiment for the soul, from the days of primitive man with his quasi-material ghosts, through (say) the Egyptian practice of mummification, to the Christian belief in the resurrection of the body. Yet equally it has been felt that these two, body and spirit, can be divorced, and that their coming together, as in the transmigration of souls, is capricious or else retributive, and so external.

[1] Cp. McDougall : *The Energies of Men*, pp. 9–10.

The religious interests of the dualism of body and soul are two-fold : first, as respects the need and possibility of worshipping disembodied spirit, and secondly as concerns the question of immortality. The tendency of religions to incorporate their objects of worship is familiar, and it is plain that the average believer adores the human Buddha or Christ rather than some purely spiritual presence, yet both religions gain by the remoteness and ideality of their Deities, which thereby satisfy J. S. Mill's definition of religion.[1] It is this contrast between concrete embodiment and spiritual significance which makes the Religion of Humanity seem plausible. Since that religion was promulgated by Comte the earth has seen humanity stumble into two world-wars, in which man has fallen spiritually lower than the beasts, and has shattered millions of the bodies of his fellow-men. Nevertheless the strife can be made to look excusable or even justifiable if it is a stage to a remote but not uncertain ideal goal. Whether that goal will be one in which the human body will be perfected along with the soul, or whether the soul will acquire independence of the body, or what other relation between the two will obtain, is left as undecided for the future as it is in the present. But some definite view about this problem is required if we are to worship an ideal humanity. A merely imaginary superman may be an impossibility or even a monstrosity.

Similarly questions arise concerning the subject of immortality. It is plain that the desire for immortality has been one of the mainsprings of religion, in which indeed the cult of immortality has been prominent. Chinese ancestor-worship and Indian belief in transmigration, Zoroastrian and Mohammedan visions of the future life, Greek (especially Orphic) ideas of the acquirement of immortality by heroic men, Christian

[1] Cp. above, p. 204.

beliefs in the resurrection : all these witness to the deep instinct for an imperishable life. But the dualism o body and mind has not thereby been resolved. For the most part the other life is pictured as embodied, though perhaps with an incorruptible body ; sometimes the spirit is held to be disembodied. With Plato and J. S Mill the discussion turns upon the immortality of the soul ; yet Plato's language about the future life is often pictorial, and Mill's devotion to his wife's memory sounds much like that of a catholic to his patron saint In certain recent discussions immortality is regarded a involving a transfiguration of the body, whilst much literature about psychical research seems to imply at leas non-physical agency in departed spirits. Evidently until greater light is thrown upon the question of the relations of mind and body theories of the future life wil remain perplexed and obscure. There is hardly a poin in philosophy or science which calls out for solution so urgently as this dualism of body and spirit.

(4) *Between Hope and Despair*

Religiously considered, the dualistic questions so fa discussed resolve themselves into that of the fate of value in the universe. The discussion whether life is worth while becomes the wider one whether the universe i worth the devotion of one's life effort. Clearly if the destiny of the great objects of value is doubtful, bu dependent upon the exertions of man, it may be the duty of mankind to strive to the utmost for their enhancement But if the dualisms are ineradicable and tend inevitably towards the triumph of evil, what can be the widson of essaying to accomplish the futile ? If again there i complete uncertainty as to the issue or a prospect o perpetual see-saw between good and bad values, an attitude of detachment and indifference seems appro

priate. Rationally, human action should turn upon estimates of the probable outcome of any line of action ; upon the degree of likelihood that the dualism will be resolved. This involves a theory about the constitution of reality, for only upon such a basis can estimates be made. Otherwise we are left to temperamental decisions, that policy seeming impracticable to some persons which appears easy to others. The sanguine will be optimistic, the melancholic pessimistic, whereas the facts of situation may call for strenuous effort to turn the scale. It is thus that dualisms are constantly led to seek theoretical bases for their conflicts, either by explaining them away, or by showing that they belong to a larger unity.

(*c*) Attempts at Reconciliation

A favourite way, lately, of reconciling dualistic differences was to appeal to the idea of evolution. If the general rule of Nature is (in Mill's words) towards the development of inferior modes of existence into superior, the substitution of greater elaboration and higher organization for lower, it may be true that this process necessarily involves conflict. If evolution is mechanical in the Spencerian manner, it implies a certain amount of friction, as when cog fits into cog. If it is dialectical, in the Marxian style, there are inevitable actions and reactions—physical, economic or social—which involve struggle and strife. In the case of Creative Evolution, besides the constant tendency to bifurcation, as between Life and Matter, Instinct and Reason, there is the incessant downward pull towards inertia against the upward surge of vital impetus : which pull is unexplained. Even in Emergent Evolution, so far as it has religious bearings, the best that can be said for the evils it involves is that they are inevitable growing pains. But there is no accounting for their inevitability. Even

if evolution is so generously interpreted as to include revolutions, it is plain that " the general rule of Nature " is compatible with a great amount of misery, and so far from being a smooth and prosperous progress is beset with many perils. Apparently, then, the most that evolutionism can do to mitigate the severity of the process is to show that it leads to a satisfactory result, a happy ending. This, however, is not an explanation, even if it is a justification of dualism.

The idea that a happy ending can excuse or justify a largely unhappy history is an æsthetic one which finds its supreme expression in great tragedy. There is undoubtedly a heightened sense of success after failure, of sublimity after triviality, and the like, which is of the nature of a contrast-effect and which may be found even in the contemplation of cosmic process. But it has never been shown that such enhancement could not have come about in some other way, or indeed that the greatest works are not free from tragedy. Similarly, when a dualistic world-process is shown to end in unity, it by no means follows that the dualism was necessary. The so-called Theology of Crisis, which is associated with the names of Barth, Brunner and others seems to suffer from this inconsequence. It is easy to show how sin involves mischiefs of various sorts and to indefinitely great extents ; it is even possible to argue (paradoxically) that though sin abounds Grace may much more abound ; what is not explained is why sin should exist at all. If the responsibility is ultimately thrown back upon God, and the Devil becomes his agent,[1] it is still impossible to see how a good Deity should adopt such a method of achieving his ends. Divided councils within his own mind, conflicting purposes in his will, would account for the contrast

[1] As apparently in the Book of Job. Cp. Temple : *Nature, Man and God*, p. 369.

we find in reality, but they would afford no hope for future recovery and would destroy religious respect for the Deity himself.

Merits of Dualism

From the foregoing short study of dualism it is evident that its service to religion is to direct our attention to the unexplained imperfection of reality. There seems to be some element of hindrance to the presence of complete good in the universe or at least of its just distribution. The dualists disturb the complacency of the unthinking man who is content with animal faith in the friendliness of the universe. "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world" is the song of innocence or else of triumph over evil. The dualist exposes the facts which reveal the pathos of life, and perhaps he calls us to overcome them. In any case he sets before us problems of the meaning and end of existence, which we ignore at our peril. It is not possible for most of us, unfortunately, to put them by. For such reasons, doubtless, it is argued that religion really consists in the sense of the frustration or failure of merely human effort, together with the belief in such superhuman aid as will enable us to overcome our disability.[1] That this is not the whole explanation of religion does not detract from the large measure of truth which it contains, for the opposition between what is and what might be is an incessant spur to idealizing activity. And in such idealizing activity we have found an essential factor of religion.[2] The dualistic hypothesis at least raises the question why the factual and the ideal do not coincide and suggests that it may be because of an element of interference or contingency in reality. This easily leads on to a polytheistic theology.

[1] Mellone: *The Bearings of Psychology on Religion*, p. VI.
[2] Cp. above, pp. 52–54.

CHAPTER XIII

POLYTHEISM

(*a*) Characteristics

It has been said that polytheism is the universally popular religion of humanity. There can be no doubt about its prevalence at the middle stage of culture lying between primitive and philosophic thought. Whilst the thought of the former remains broadly at the sub-personal level, and that of the latter tends towards the super-personal, polytheism essentially involves personification. Hence early animism and totemism do not amount to a consistent polytheism, for "in so far as the mythology of primitive man gains a permanent influence and foothold it consists of a belief in magic and demons."[1] In the lowest strata of human society, as in the aborigines of Australasia, we do not find much that can be called definite polytheism, but in the higher native peoples of Africa and America it is to be observed. Especially remarkable is its development amongst the Indians of Peru, for besides worshipping the minor and major deities of nature they reached the idea of a supreme god whom they called the "Soul of the world" and worshipped in their hearts alone as an unknown God.[2] It was in India and Greece, however, that polytheism reached its richest developments. The art and poetry of these two peoples still furnish the choicest examples of the polytheistic imagination, especially the hymns of the Rigveda and the poems of Homer. The myths of the Slavs, Celts and Teutons are, however, claiming increasing attention.

[1] Wundt : *Elements of Folk Psychology*, p. 81.
[2] Menzies : *History of Religion*, pp. 85–6.

The motives impelling to polytheism are diverse. In the forefront must be placed the æsthetic impulse, which loves the concrete and sensuous, and so strives to express itself in definite individual forms. Imagination gives to the airy nothings of hope and fear a local habitation and a name in the form of heroes and gods, heavens and hells. This does not mean that polytheism is simply false, but that its truth is the truth of art rather than of science. "The best in this kind are but shadows" but they may be shadows of the real. The attempt to grasp reality emotionally is one of our strongest aspirations and is commonly reliable under normal conditions.[1] So that polytheism has behind it one justifiable motive. To this may be added the human love of variety in the world. There is a certain fascination to most minds about mere numbers of things, and the mathematically inclined may even say that the numbers themselves are divine. Where this is so, pluralism in religion is apt to follow, and we arrive at the star-worship of the wise men of the East and elsewhere, or the gap between man and the divine is filled in with angels and demi-gods. This pluralistic tendency is increased by the further preference for contingency, as against determinism, exhibited in daring and hardy natures, who feel something of claustrophobia in a world where there are no fresh openings to be made. They prefer living dangerously to finding security, and are apt to assume that the world is largely what they make it.

The blending of these various motives of human nature, together with the disposition to worship, results in the religious myth. Such myth is of great significance for human culture since it consists of an imaginary and supersensuous world lying beyond the immediately perceivable one, and filled with beings essentially like man himself.

[1] See *Modern Painters*, Part iii, Sec. ii, Ch. iii.

It thus tends to become an ideal world, filled with ideally humanized gods, since it is only by the exaltation of his own best characteristics that man is able to imagine the highest. Before this idealization man's myths are non-religious though they may be anthropomorphic. Perhaps this is what is meant when it is said that "whatever personality may be it is not synonymous with anthropomorphism.[1] Religious personalism is at any rate anthropormorphism criticized. And whilst polytheism has amongst its sources animism and hero-worship its æsthetic character helps to purge it of its grossness. Since, however, the gods correspond to various human needs and express them in individual form, they are apt like those motives to conflict with one another, and even to exhibit caprice. Thus the world of polytheism is one which is describable in James's phrase as "piecemeal supernaturalism." The worship of the gods in rotation, nevertheless, may lead to their grouping into a pantheon, from which again arise divergent tendencies. The gods may multiply indefinitely in a pluralistic universe, as upon the whole occurred in Greece, or they may melt away into a pantheism, as in India.

(*b*) The Gods

The history of the gods may be regarded as a major industry of the scholars in recent times. Zeus, Indra and the rest have had their life histories traced till they are as familiar as some earthly monarchs, yet their significance for human religion has been little appreciated until placed in a setting of world-history and world-culture. Then it is seen (as by Wundt) that the creation of the ideal hero-god marks the greatest turning point in the spiritual history of man.[2] For religion in the

[1] J. Adam : *The Religious Teachers of Greece*, p. 209.
[2] *Folk Psychology*, p. 451.

narrower sense as distinct from the worship of nature both inanimate and animate requires personal gods who are yet superhuman. These are the traditional gods of human cultus, and their natures are defined by their cults rather than *vice versa*. Now, in the heroic age man's homage is chiefly directed to the great and free individuality who by his achievements is lifted above the rest of his people, and who in historical perspective takes on ideal proportions. He is the prototype of the modern "superman" and takes up into himself both demoniacal and heroic traits. So far as demonic he is endowed with magical powers and is an object of fear, whilst so far as heroic he is worthy of love and admiration; the product of these two factors gives rise to the idea of god as personal. This is said to be "religion in the proper and ultimately only true sense of the word."[1]

(1) *Personification*

The personifying tendency it is then which fuses together the vaguer forms of nature-worship with the fear of demons and the love of the heroic. William James's description of his experience of an earthquake illustrates how he involuntarily ascribed to it, not merely physical power, but also malignity of intention and superhuman resource. Only the element of ideality was lacking to make it worshipful. When this is present we have the various aspects of the cosmos personified, and the great nature-gods arise. Gradually, as the sense of the unity of the cosmos increases, these gods become rulers of the various departments of nature, and thus appear the famous deities—mother Earth, Heaven, the Ocean, the Starry Host and the like. Not only so, but personal traits themselves become objects of worship and so the

[1] *Ib.* p. 372.

virtues, the passions and desires are deified. Courage, Hope, Love, the Muses and Graces, the Pities and the Fates representing different functions of personality, and so far abstractions, are themselves embodied in marble or myth and regarded as worthy of adoration. Even the functional gods of early Roman religion, though not fully personal have so much character as to be male or female, and the very acts of worship themselves—notably prayer and sacrifice—tend to become personifications, in which the worshipper is identified with the god. In human sacrifice this identification is conspicuous.

It is evident from the foregoing why there are many gods. For one thing the aspects of nature are many and they are not known at this stage to be intrinsically connected by permanent laws. Indeed, it is a possible philosophy of nature, at any stage of human culture, that natural events are relatively isolated. But further, since the personifying disposition in human nature also involves individualization, plurality is again stressed. Just as there is no one type of hero, so there is no one idea of God. To this day, the varieties of religious experience, even among members of the same faith in one God, are so great that for some purposes we can say they are worshipping different gods. Since the gods are in part the counterpart of human needs, and those needs are many and various, it will be inevitable that at a certain level of thought the divine splits up into a plurality of individuals. When there is a fusion of those different motives coming from nature and heroic man and human aspirations, there will appear gods many and lords many made concrete by poetic imagination. This is what is called the assimilative fusion of psychical elements of different origins[1] and even now it is difficult to say how much, for instance, the Greek god Helios or the Teuton

[1] Wundt : *op. cit.* p. 358.

god Thunder was conceived by the worshipper as physical, or the embodiment of psychical energies, or again as an imaginative ideal. But in any case it was a unity.

What are the distinguishing marks of the Gods? They appear to be three. They are, in the first place other-worldly. They have a dwelling place which is beyond the earth "eternal in the heavens." Occasionally they may visit this world, or live in an intermediate region of mountain, cloud, air and the like, but their proper seat is beyond earthly time and place, in Heaven, Valhallas and other Ideal Worlds. Consequently they live, secondly, the perfect life. Blessedness is the characteristic of that life and it consists above all in immortality and happiness. Freedom from sickness and sorrow is the general lot of the deities, though it may come to be overshadowed by the sense of fate or destiny which foretells the twilight of the gods. Above all, finally, we have seen that the gods are personal. They have human, yet also superhuman traits, and it is the refinement and purification of the merely human elements which leads to the spiritual beings. As Hegel remarks of the Greek gods, so far from being merely anthropomorphic, they are not anthropomorphic enough, that is, not ideally human. For as James Adam also puts it "anthropomorphism is also Theomorphism." The counterpart of the statement that the gods are made in the image of man is that man is made in the image of the gods, and therefore that ideal humanity and deity in some sense meet. Poetry and truth may interfuse and myth be more than mere fiction. Personality is the bridge between the human and the ideally divine.

It follows that the characters of the Gods react upon their makers (or discoverers). As is the god so becomes the worshipper. And similarly, like worshipper, like

God. There is a reciprocal play between the cult and the revelation so that they define each other. Thus it is supposed that the variety and changefulness of the Indian and Greek physical environments prompted man to a sense of the multiplicity of the divine nature, whereas the uniformity of the Arabian desert life fosters a belief in the unity of God. Whatever force there may be in such arguments, and the subject has been little studied, it is plain that social organization has suggested a corresponding arrangement amongst the gods. Hierarchy on earth is reflected in a heavenly hierarchy; a sort of celestial advisory council tallies with an earthly aristocracy; the variety of independent states has its parallel in the various departments ruled over by different gods. Especially the antithesis of the higher and lower departments is mirrored in the opposition between the celestial and the nether regions, between heaven and hell. It is to be remarked, however, that in polytheism gods and man tend to form one organized society; men, heroes, demi-gods and gods are not foreign to each other but exhibit gradations within one loosely knit assembly. It is also true that appearances of gods are frequent; the world is full of gods and the gods appear in human form.

(2) *Cosmogonies*

We have seen earlier[1] that primitive man conceives his universe to be full of energy which reveals itself in things and men. This *mana*, differentiated into numberless powers, take easily the form of spiritism or daemonism and peoples the world with sprites, goblins, fairies and the like. The motive which prompts such animism is no doubt predominantly fear, enhanced by such mysterious events as sickness and death, but friendly intercourse

[1] Supra, pp. 86–92.

with the spirits is not unfamiliar. They are, however, sub-personal, having little or nothing in the way of character or names, yet as such can preside over or dwell in the phenomena of nature, whilst demonic possession of persons has been familiar from ancient times. Let such things inhabit or fuse with great cosmic events like storm, fire and earthquake, and we begin to observe the genesis of gods, and of a world-order. At first, no doubt, the world was taken as it came and the gods of the weather were as capricious as the weather itself. Whilst they had not the moral qualities of gods proper, they had at least the divine characteristic of power. But gradually the rhythms of nature came to be observed and its sequences traced. Natural history and the story of the origins of man and of animals and eventually of the world began in the form of explanatory myth. Since the histories of both natural and divine events were traceable back to demonic power, the myths of the rise of the gods and of the evolution of the cosmos are two aspects of the same process of explanation.

Cosmogonic and theogonic myths are widespread in the world, and though they may be worked up into literary form like the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* of Hesiod, are nevertheless of primitive origin. The gods they invoke are demons rather than personal beings and as higher gods arrive their predecessors sink to the level of demons. Prominent among such stories are myths of creation, which require the notion of a precedent chaos. This may be an abyss or a cosmic sea or an indiscriminated void (as in the wonderful Hindu Song of Creation).[1] Out of this the gods arrive and then occur the battles of the gods, in which grotesque monsters are overcome by the demi-gods and a reign of order and peace is secured. It is as though a cosmic thunder-

[1] *Rigveda*, X. 129.

storm had ushered in a period of calm. In the Biblical account of creation the grosser features of the cosmogonic myths are suppressed, and the chaos made subject to the deity, whose omnipotence shows that the cosmological interest has given place to an advanced theological conception. God created out of nothing, and saw that his creation was good. But the usual poetic myth is not capable of rising to such heights and changes with kaleidoscopic rapidity, mingling the personalities of the Gods as well as their functions. Hegel indeed rightly speaks of the riotous imagination of the Hindu as exhibited in his fantastic art and poetry ; but polytheism, everywhere, tends to exuberance.

In addition to creation stories there are widespread myths of catastrophe, whether by flood or fire. These easily arise in tropical countries where rains, inundations and fires occur which destroy human beings and their productions. These stories being generalized become myths of world catastrophe, and being moralized become accounts of judgment, as in the story of Noah. When they are projected into the future they become prophecies of calamity, culminating in visions of world-destruction. The Biblical apocalypses of Daniel and John have become typical for the European representation of the end of the world. But in polytheism there is no consistent cosmology for it is compatible with Homer's innocence of the cosmic law, or with Hesiod's progress from anarchy to law ; with the cosmic cycles of Empedocles, or the many aspects of the flux of Heracleitus. Doubtless there is some unification in the idea of destiny which dogs the Greek thinkers, but even Plato does not get rid of that intractable element, necessity, nor of plurality in the godhead. His universe is a divine child, a " perceivable god " and he recognizes other " created gods." His famous Ideas are virtually deified, and it therefore remains a question

whether he ever quite shook off polytheism. In all he remained true to the Greek genius, which was persistently divided between the poetic and philosophic impulses, the one tending to pluralism and the other to unity. Both ended in that strange mixture of myth and speculation, neo-platonic mysticism.

(3) *Heroes*

The polytheistic age is the age of heroes. And the hero sets the ideal for the ordinary man. The group mentality of the previous age is passing away, and individual personality begins to dominate. Whilst the armies of the Iliad and the Mahabarata are still an undistinguished body of men there do stand out striking characters who sum up popular aspirations. Similarly the representations of men and women in the great tragedies of the Greek poets, and in the statues of her artists, remain for all time types of human perfection. The Greeks, we are told, delighted to represent their god in the form of perfected humanity, and though hero-worship is absent from the Iliad for certain reasons, it persisted down to democratic times.[1] The characteristics admired are not merely those of the military leader —courage, magnificence, liberality and the like—but also those of endurance, patience, skill and domestic faithfulness.[2]

In addition, the great culture-bringers, the discoverers and inventors, the founders of states, cities and religions are glorified and by a mixture of history and legend take on heroic proportions. In short, with the development of polytheism arises a new epoch of culture marked by stress upon powerful personality in any sphere. Crowd

[1] Lewis Campbell : *Religion in Greek Literature*, pp. 47 and 130–5.

[2] *Ib.* p. 75 where it is said " The relations of husband to wife, of brother to brother, and of friend to friend are nobly conceived (by Homer) but the laws of humanity and mercy are rudimentary."

mentality begins to dissolve, history is increasingly regarded as the product of personal deeds, and human individuality is more and more appreciated.

Going along with this assertion of the individual is the fact of conquest and the establishment of personal rule. So political society begins its career and with it the founding of cities. For the city is the stronghold of the ruler and his followers whose supremacy leads to the formation of classes and the differentiation of labour. City states arise, and often extend their bounds beyond the city, whose centre is the castle and the temple. For in this age each city has its guardian Deity and the laws have religious sanctions, since " at the beginning of the age of heroes and gods it is the creative power of the *religious* consciousness whose activities most accurately mirror the various spiritual achievements of the period."[1]

The Guardian Deity is also the supreme lawgiver, magistrate and priest are expressions of the same power, whilst cult is the counterpart of custom and law. This theocratic idea of government persists to-day in parts of the East, but in the West has led to a clash of interests between various cults and to a gradual divergence between church and state. In the age of the gods, however, the celestial state was modelled upon the earthly, and reflected its hierarchical character. The degrees of rank characteristic of the human city were projected into the heavenly and such loose organization as was found here was repeated there. Reversely, of course, the polity believed to be exhibited in the society of the gods served as a model for the earthly state. The ideal of a city of God on earth has haunted men down the ages because it was held to imitate a divine model.

Whilst it is true that heroic man partly satisfied his desire for immortality in the belief in the perpetuity of his

[1] Wundt : *op. cit.* p. 286.

city, yet his longing for personal continuance led him to enlarge his cosmology so as to define the abodes of departed souls. So arose before his imagination the isles of the blessed, the underworld and the celestial regions, heavens and hells, purgatories. Since immortality is attainable by the hero and especially by the saint, whose labours and struggles are inward and tragical, heroic sagas and legends of the saints abound. Salvation becomes the hope of man, and cults—notably of a mysterious sort—to attain immortal life flourish. Though deliverance from death is primarily a gift of the gods, a reward of devotion and not of ethical desert, with the quickening of conscience comes the idea of justice and so of retribution in the world beyond this. Such retribution comes to take degrees graduated according to merit, and so the ideas of rewards and punishments exactly measured for sins and acts of piety become customary. It is generally held that the blessed life, once attained, is not forfeited, but before that may occur a long period of purgation in the form of the transmigration of souls. This notion, familiarized to us by Hindu speculation, has proved itself very powerful in its effect on conduct and perhaps in the sense of poetic justice was entertained by Plato himself. It easily flourishes along with a pluralistic view of the world.

(*c*) Incoherent Cults

It is evident that there is no clear and consistent position to be found in polytheism. The very gods are frequently at variance, in a polity which hovers between anarchy and despotism. The cosmos itself is unstable and contains elements both of chance and of blind fate. Man possesses powers of raising himself to the position, ambiguous enough, of demi-god. At the best it can be said " Where there is no discord plurality is a form

of unity."[1] This, however, is a negative form of unity, always in danger of falling into the anarchy of contending powers. This is modified only by the one form of unity indispensible to an aristocratic society : degrees of rank. On the question of human responsibility polytheism speaks with an uncertain voice ; man may have free will but the consequences of his acts are inevitable—this appears to be the best answer of Greek thought. Consequently, the problems of sin, expiation and immortality are confused, restoration to holiness being sometimes a matter of human virtue, sometimes of divine favour. Similarly, man's temper towards the universe sways between hope and despair. The differences of temperament between the Greek poets are notorious. It is not surprising that among the populace superstition is rampant, and that there is worship of Luck and Fate, astrological prediction, religious mysteries and magical practices. Along with this, however, goes a sense of the intimacy of gods and man and the presence of a rich, exciting and eventful world. Such a world is tolerant of faiths, except of those which are intolerant, a fact which explains the fate of the Jews and perhaps of Socrates.

CHAPTER XIV

PANTHEISM

(*a*) General Characteristics

Pantheism is the counterpart of polytheism, often indeed, existing side by side with it. It is as easy to say that there is one God with many names as that the world is full of Gods. The Energism to which we have tracked back the earliest type of religion may have appeared at one time

[1] James Adam : *op. cit.* p. 177.

as diffused power and at another as locally concentrated ; to be indeed the prototype of that " piecemeal supernaturalism " which William James still finds to be the religion of the common man.[1] Pantheism proper does not arise till the need is felt for some organized unity of the divine world. Thus pantheons arise, some gods taking precedence of others or being arranged in groups corresponding to families or societies. The Homeric or Teutonic gods form a rough aristocracy but are so little organized that they have little unity. The gods of the later Vedic period are so much comprehended in the qualities of Varuna, the god both of physical law and moral justice, that we begin to perceive a change in the nature of the gods, a transition from polytheism towards monism.[2] Similarly, the exaltation of Jupiter to the supreme and all-controlling position in the time of the Cæsars prepared the way for the Stoic pantheism that was to follow. An inscription on a tablet found in the Roman wall in Northumbria bespeaks a cult in which all humanity joined, which used the Deity's favourite name—the Syrian Ceres—but was compatible with many others. The popularity of this religion is shown by the common ascription to various deities of the epithet *pantheus* and by the representations of one of them with attributes of others.[3]

These transitional forms of religion developed into pantheism proper—that is the assertion of the divinity of all being—in the guise of cosmotheism. Mythology becomes cosmology and cosmology theology, and these are found intermixed and confused both in later Vedic and Stoic religion.[4] But gradually the sense of the unity of all things dominated thought and the formula of religion

[1] *Varieties*, p. 520.
[2] Radhakrishnan : *Indian Philosophy*, vol. I, p. 80.
[3] *Conversion* by A. D. Nock, pp. 136–7.
[4] Cp. Moore : *History of Religions*, vol. I, pp. 271 and 519.

became God=All. Men had not yet, however, lost the lust of life characteristic of vigorous peoples. Another intention of the cosmotheism was not to supersede but to comprehend the popular religion. It consequently retained, so far as it became a public cult, the practical and sensuous character of such religion. In India sacrifice occupied the prominent place in worship and it was of the most economic and prudential kind. In Rome also sacrifice was the crucial test of belief, and nothing is more incongruous in the religion of Marcus Aurelius than his concessions to public rites in which he could have had scarcely any belief. In both cases society hardened down into a system of caste or rank which was the expression of belief in a fixed order of reality ;[1] no doubt a source of great stability but also of prolonged conservatism. Religious life at its lowest emphasized traditional custom, at its highest noble conduct, even when the spirit and meaning had departed from a wearied civilization. *The religion of action* so far as pantheistic had reached its point of exhaustion.

The sense of the futility of action led to the making of a distinction in importance within existence itself. Appearance is distinguished from reality, emphasis being thrown upon the aspect of unity over against that of plurality. This tendency is one to which the intellect is prone when action fails, abstraction being substituted for direct acquaintance with the world. Things are real so far as they are One, and oneness is what above all characterizes deity. The formula of religion now becomes : *God* is all. Religion now is an ascent of the soul to the One, a flight which may have gradations but is never content until it has reached absolute union. The utterances of the Upanishads and of Neo-Platonism are so much alike that the latter has been suspected, without

[1] *Ib.* pp. 271 and 521.

much reason, of borrowing from the other. The one says "That art thou," meaning that the soul is ultimately identical with pure being; the other speaks of "a flight of the alone to the Alone," meaning apparently the same thing. The former uses of the lower degrees of reality the metaphor of Maya or illusion, the latter speaks of ectypes or copies of the highest. Both stress knowledge in the form of direct vision, the identity of Knower and Known as the mode by which unity with the One is attained, and in both cases the type of religion exhibited is one of *salvation by escape.*

The human spirit cannot perpetually breathe at such attitudes, however, and a return movement to the concrete is required. Mere Oneness is too closely akin to emptiness to be satisfying, so that an attempt is made to see how the fullness of the world is compatible with its unity. The new formula for religion becomes: *All* is God; and in this form the stress is thrown upon the wholeness of things. In recent words the maxim of life is "Be a whole or join a whole." Thus we arrive at what has lately been called Holism. It is true that the whole may have various degrees of organization, from mere collective unity to complete integration, but the ideal of religion is to plunge into the thick of experience with the intention of finding or making it a unity. This venture may be highly æsthetic, and is commonly found to yield a high degree of emotional satisfaction. The richness of experience which it yields may be held to be truly religious; "more life and fuller" the goal of ideal striving. Deliverance comes by absorption in the whole, and in the form of feeling rather than of intellectual union, however far dialectic may pioneer the way. The exposition of such religious aspirations may be found in such writers as Radhakrishnan and Bradley, for East and West arrive at much the same monism or Absolute

Idealism in which religion is conceived as *salvation by self-surrender.*[1]

Such a monism, however, presents another aspect, the counterpart of the foregoing exalted idealism. For since All is God why should we not worship God as most realistically revealed? Now Nature, if not the whole of reality is its most easily verifiable aspect, and it is natural science which proposes to tell us what nature consists of. The universe as manifested to scientific enquiry, though perhaps contemplated with specific emotions like Wordsworth's "natural piety" may become our deity, and the way is opened to materialism, positivism and evolutionary naturalism. This is what occurred by reaction against an overstrained idealism in the latter half of the nineteenth century, reaching, perhaps, its highest pitch in the glorification of Space-time in our own day. By throwing the religious emphasis upon the future, rather than upon the past or present, by thinking of indefinite progress as the hope of endeavour, it is possible to give a theistic flavour to such naturalistic conceptions, but their ultimate agnosticism reveals their pantheistic background, for Deity itself turns out to be of the nature of time and so in ceaseless flux, pure process. Such an elusive Deity seems to become a will-o'-the-wisp leading us nowhere unless it be to Nirvana; or else it is an endless circular movement which is the shadow of a reality, itself beyond our knowledge. It is significant that one of the chief enquiries of our day concerns the relations between Process and Reality, but the answer, though apparently monistic, remains very obscure. It seems to involve, however, what occurs in most such systems—the surrender of personal immortality.[2]

[1] The foregoing is an attempted generalization of Tiele's treatment of Indian Monism: *Kompendium der Religionsgeschichte*, 5. Abschnitt.

[2] Whitehead: *Process and Reality*, p. 492.

(*b*) Idea of God

Analysing the conception of God in pantheism more closely we observe that within the pantheons which lead up to it the various gods stand for different features of reality. Each of these has its own justification as a partial expression of the complete truth; Indra, Agni and Soma personify certain powers of nature, Apollo and Athena certain more spiritual qualities. Such characteristics being gradually unified they form systems of which Triads and Enneads are the most conspicuous. It has been supposed that Triadic thinking is somewhat of a curiosity in the history of human thought, but it is surely evident that it rests upon a certain logic inherent in reason itself.[1] The idea of God as self-contained, as self-expressed and yet as self-maintained in his unity is one which rests upon human psychology. Otherwise put, the idea of the implicit, the explicit and the complicit; of that which is one and also many and yet many-in-one; of creator, destroyer and restorer, is an idea which seems to be rooted and grounded in the nature of thought itself. The serious question which remains is whether the various aspects of deity which are exhibited in the triads are simply transformed into one another, like the patterns in a kaleidoscope, or whether they express abiding functions. This becomes equivalent to the question of the impersonality or personality of God.

(1) *Functionalism*

There can be little doubt about the answer if we compare two great hymns, admittedly the high water mark of Vedaism and Stoicism respectively—the Song of Creation and the Hymn of Cleanthes.[2] We find the gods referred

[1] Cp. Schlegel, quoted by Macculloch: *Comparative Theology*, p. 88.

[2] See *Hindu Scriptures*, ed. by Macnicol, p. xvi and *Hymn* xxvii, and J. Adam's trans. of the *Hymn of Cleanthes* in *The Vitality of Platonism*, ch. iv.

to, undoubtedly, but seen upon a background of " mighty forces " or of " universal law." These express the One and All, which for the Indian is an Absolute transcending consciousness, a timeless whole ever breaking out in a series of becoming till the self reaffirms itself absolutely ; whilst for the Greek it is rational and righteous, no doubt, but unaccountably harmonizing chaos with order, things evil with things good. In each case a self of some sort is referred to but it is a universal self of which gods and men are fragments, and in the one case it is nameless and in the other " called by many a name." It is well said that the Vedic hymn might properly have been addressed to the " Unknown God," and also that the logos of the Stoic was impersonal whilst human immortality was left an open question. It is not surprising, therefore, that this cosmotheism tended to harden down into a performance of the duties of this known world ; that in India the caste system became more and more rigid and minute whilst in the West Stoicism became the cement of the Roman Empire with all its legal order and justice till at last it ended as a soulless machine. Pantheism of this kind fails to supply the plain man with motive power necessary to enhance his lot, or even to answer his deepest questionings.

(2) *Speculation*

Desire and speculation once awakened, however, can not be put to sleep by practical exertions. They foster aspirations beyond the cosmos, and seek by stripping it of all vestiges of materialism or anthropomorphism, to reach pure reality. God is the last product of abstraction, without parts or passions or indeed without any positive qualities at all. He is the indeterminate, of which it is as true to say that it is not as that it is, the nothing which is as good as something, indeed the *X*

which is above both aught and naught. Rhetorically it may be described as the Abyss, Darkness, Silence, though it is an abyss that is full of possibilities, dark with excess of light, a silence that is eloquent. Language is strained to express the ineffable, to utter paradoxes and reconcile contradictions. The attempt to preserve unity is still made, but it is a unity beyond description, "the One above the One." It can be attained only by purgation of the body, cleansing of the soul, and an abandonment of the spirit to ecstasy, which is beyond rational utterance. The process reminds us of Hegel's remark about the method of trying to reach the real onion by stripping off its coats. Evidently it involves a turning of one's back upon the cosmos, a flight from the world of ordered sense-experience and uniform law to a region which is preternatural. This is not merely extraordinary or miraculous, but is transcendent of the opposition between the usual and the rare. The position may fairly be called acosmism.

A comparison of Eastern with Western speculative pantheism will show their essential identity. The Upanishads teach the Brahma-doctrine, which is that thou art one with the unity in the All, thou art the Atman, the self both in man and in the universe, the world principle. This knowledge is deliverance from the deception of the sensuous-world, is blessedness and peace. It is comparable to dreamless sleep, which is yet clairvoyance. It is a gift, a grace, a deliverance through knowledge. The art of life is to know, not to do, yet it consists not in research but in deliverance from illusion, in a freedom which ends only in the great void.[1] Similarly with Plotinus in the West: "The One is all things and is none of these things." "It is not any of the things of which it is the principle; it is such that

[1] Tiele: *Kompendium*, pp. 86–7.

one cannot affirm of it anything, neither being, nor essence, nor life, for it is superior to all those." "It is an eternal supra-intellection, a simple intuition of itself by itself"; whilst it is not a mere nothing it is above being in the sense that it is the source, the principle of all being.[1] This thought is continued throughout the mystic theology of the Middle Ages and reaches its climax in the teaching of Eckhart, who connects the ideas of Alexandria with those of modern Germany. God is above being, He is the identity of being and non-being; the word Being can be said only of Him, but He is not separable from thought and in Him being and thought are identical. Yet one must distinguish between God and the Godhead, which is His obscure depth. This can be reached only by ecstasy, which is not only self-sacrifice, but the sacrifice of God to Himself.[2] Thus the pantheism of the Middle Ages ends in the sacrifice of philosophy to mysticism as the Upanishads sacrifice finite to infinite being. Both end in agnosticism.

(3) *Devotion*

Inability of the human mind to remain in the rarefied air of mysticism leads to a return movement to the concrete. This is seen in Hinduism, which involves both an acceptance and a transformation of popular religion. The great epics teach how to live the common life in the light of great ideals. Bhakti, the democratized religion of faithful devotion, of giving oneself up in loving trust to an all-embracing godhead, shows how worship of many gods in the right spirit is true religion, however incorrect in form; whilst the later spiritual monisms of the great theologians and reformers try to adjust themselves to modern science and history. Similarly, in the West, mysticism at the Renascence allies itself

[1] Janet et Séailles: *Histoire de la Philosophie*, p. 992.
[2] Tiele: *Kompendium*, pp. 836 and 1005.

with the New Learning and becomes a comprehensive though loose system of thought in Bruno, the pioneer of a new world-view. In Spinoza we find the attempt to construct a vast synthesis of Hebraic and Christian thought upon a modern speculative basis which, if not pantheistic has pronouncedly pantheistic features.[1] Certainly it greatly moulded the German romantic-movement which in Schleiermacher, Schelling and Hegel took shape in theories, both expressive and formative of the religions of the day. These spiritual monisms, like their counterparts in the English Lake poets, largely tended both to absorb and to modify popular religion till they joined hands with Eastern faiths in our own time. The attempt to discover a world-religion which shall comprehend many different types of faith is a movement tending to become a sort of pantheosophy.

(*c*) The World

We have seen previously that for pantheism the real deity is the universe contemplated as One. The oneness may, however, be regarded in its sheer abstractness, which merely indicates that beyond the unity there is nothing. Such an empty unity does not account for the apparent diversity of things, for the observed facts—of which one can at any rate say that they are all there.[2] And hence some account of the way in which the unity expresses itself into variety is required, even if the expression be somehow misleading. The empirical facts again cannot be left in their looseness and separateness; they call out for relation. So the attempt has to be made to show their inter-connection and consistency, which involves a theory of their combination in some form of unity. The possible forms may be variously described,

[1] Cp. Huan in *Le Dieu de Spinoza*, p. 303, who thinks it can be called only Spinozism.

[2] Cp. William James: *A Pluralistic Universe*, pp. 317–321.

but some coherence there must be.[1] Otherwise we cannot speak of a universe at all, but of a pluriverse—which seems to be self-contradictory. Membership within a whole, however loosely held together, is the minimum requirement for existence at all. In pantheism the membership is described as issuing forth from the underlying unity and returning into it again. This process may be symbolized by the cosmic egg which reproduces its kind or by the serpent which swallows its own tail ; or it may be described as springing from an infinite and eternal source to which it returns by a two-fold movement of differentiation and integration ; but the intention is to explain how the one becomes the many, the potential the actual, the eternal temporal, and *vice versa*.

Recurrences

A favourite mode of explanation is the use of the analogy of respiration. The One remains constant whilst it breathes in and out : a well-known Indian picture. The supposed congruity of the soul with universal air gives meaning to this idea, which even to-day has not lost all its point. The limits of any being, over against its environment are indefinite and only arbitrarily fixed.[2] Hence influx and efflux between all finite things of one ultimate ether, soul or spirit, is comprehensible. In Neo-Platonic thought the familiar metaphor is that of the effulgence of the sun, from which other things are cast-off sparks. More precisely, the idea is that of the emanation of the world from an original ground and the absorption of all finite and temporal things back into that ground. The procession occurs, however, with logical or mathematical necessity. There is nothing really originative or creative about it. In

[1] *Ib. Pragmatism*, ch. 4.
[2] See J. S. Haldane : *The Sciences and Philosophy*, Sect. v.

modern thought the attempt to allow for the problem of evil has produced theories of a lapse of the universe from pristine unity into plurality, from agreement into division and of a corresponding recovery. The method by which this occurs is, however, so obscure as to present few advantages against the theistic theories of a fall and redemption, freely willed. It seems itself to involve a lapse from monism into dualism.[1] But since it is necessary it opens a prospect of an endless recurrence of the process, for unless the universe affords infinite combination of causes, cycles are bound to occur.

The theoretical attempt to provide both for necessary repetitions and for possible deviations from them, has let to a curious combination of determinism and caprice. Both in East and West theories of illusion have arisen which try to show that chance, novelty and freedom are mistaken views of reality, though the mistakes themselves are necessary ! Inevitable errors are to be removed by inevitable corrections. In the East they are the result of Divine play or sport, "lila," which makes the veil of illusion in order to remove it. Man is exposed to this illusion in a world of phenomena, of particular things, until he learns to rise above it and be united with the One. Though why the deity should engage in this kind of sport is not clear. In the West Hegel speaks of the world-spirit evermore creating the illusion in finite beings that its purpose is not accomplished, and evermore removing that illusion. The process, which moves with triple rhythm, though not in mere cycles, is ostensibly logically necessary. But there are passages in Hegel's writings which show that he recognized an irrational or capricious element in the world-movement. He passes lightly over them, however, by treating them as excrescences or waste-products and so irrelevant to the

[1] Cp. Janet et Séailles : *op. cit.* p. 876.

march of the world's logic.[1] The real is the rational, truly, but the real turns out to be the universal, the "truth" of the particular, and so far the particular is not explained, but rather explained away. There still remains the question why the whole, both in whole and in part, is not transparent to reason.

Degrees of Reality

The answer to this question is attempted in the theory of degrees of reality. This asserts that though only the whole is wholly real, nothing is completely unreal. Even error contains truth, though the truth may be misleading ; and the fullest truth contains the most contradictions, though these be transmuted and harmonized. There are therefore degrees of truth and reality. The highest degree is that of the absolute which is therefore transcendent of all finite things, and to which human experience, of course, cannot attain. The lowest degree is still permeated in some measure with the presence of the whole and to that extent is real and true. There is no mere illusion, though all finite things are more or less illusory. And there is no mere truth, since truth always embraces some amount of falsity. It is not correct, therefore, to say that the universe is as perfect in a hair as in a heart, for the one contains a higher degree of perfection than the other. Thus we are told that "the Upanishads are not pantheistic in the bad sense of the term. Things are not thrown together into a heap called God, without unity, purpose or distinction of values." "Everything on earth is finite and infinite, perfect and imperfect. Everything seeks a good beyond itself, tries to rid itself of its finiteness and become perfect. The finite seeks self-transcendence."[2] Indeed, the transcendence may become so complete that it goes

[1] Nicolai Hartmann : *Aristoteles und Hegel*, p. 23.
[2] Radhakrishnan : *History of Indian Philosophy*, vol. I, p. 203.

beyond truth and reality, till we arrive at the unutterable, even the unthinkable. Similar language is to be found in Western monistic thinkers like Eriugena, Eckhart and Bradley, whose final resort in religion is an appeal to feeling.

Hidden Harmony

Feeling, as we have seen before[1] is a notoriously elusive term, which may cover what is meant by faith or insight or emotion or by combinations of these.[2] In pantheism its predominant usage seems to be intuitional in the sense that in feeling a vision or synopsis of the whole is afforded. Then everything falls into place as an aspect of the divine unity; discord is resolved in harmony, partial evil is universal good, the universe both produces and overcomes its own oppositions. This attractive solution—perhaps best called panentheism—is found in the great religious philosopher Ramanuja[3] in mediæval India and is still perhaps the real theology of Hinduism; and again in Schleiermacher, who is the successor of a line of mystical thinkers in Europe. The merits are obvious, for if evil can be shown to be somehow bound up with good there is so far provided a justification of the world's existence and of God. Such a theodicy is commonly of the æsthetic type, herein showing the affinities between pantheism and polytheism once more. But appeal is made to direct vision or contemplation rather than to constructive imagination, and it is there that difficulties arise. For it is not evident that discords must rush in so that harmonies may be prized; that falsity is unguarded truth, that evil is good in the making. Ruskin in one place remarks that degrees of sheer beauty would serve the purpose supposedly achieved by the

[1] Cp. Brandt: *Philosophy of Schleiermacher*, pp. 142, 160 and 295.
[2] Cp. Hocking: *Types of Philosophy*, ch. xi.
[3] Radhakrishnan: *op. cit.*, vol. I, ch. 9, Sec. 17.

introduction of some ugliness into a picture—that of enhancing the effect of the whole. And a similar remark might be made about pantheistic defences of reality.

(*d*) Man

Concerning man's condition the chief question which arises for pantheism has to do with the value of life. Shortly put, it is the old problem : is life worth living? The answer may be as ambiguous as we have found others to be in pantheism but it is certainly closely connected with the subject of immortality. For though mankind has for the greater part of its history not claimed to possess personal immortality, yet the desire for it and the belief in it have steadily grown with advancing civilization. Where life is thought to be good, its continuation and enrichment are to be desired. Conditions which make it durable are therefore of the highest concern for man, and of those conditions the metaphysical may be the greatest. The general structure of reality may thwart or further our expectations of future life, and so react upon our estimates of its present value. Our life becomes strenuous or slack, gloomy or gay, in part according to its prospects of duration ; and other things being equal, durability is taken as a sign of worth. Evanescence is a mark of triviality, permanence of importance. Doubtless questions of quality complicate our judgments of values, and a fleeting thing may be more precious in kind than another which is abiding.[1] Hence it is sometimes remarked that life's very shortness enhances its value, doubtless by comparison with the supposed endlessness of death. But, intrinsically, a life already enjoyable is surely the sweeter for being a link in an indefinitely long chain. The question of immortality is therefore of

[1] Cp. Meredith's apostrophe to dawn :

> Thy fleetingness is bigger in the ghost
> Than Time with all his host !—*Hymn to Colour.*

much importance in a discussion of the bearings of pantheism upon valuations of human life.

Optimism ?

It is said by Max Müller that " the sense that life is a dream or a burden is a notion which the Buddha shares with every Hindu philosopher." And Sully remarks that in the metaphysico-religious ideas of India we find a remarkable groundwork for pessimism. The Brahman's philosophy, however, turns this fundamental pessimism into an optimism by the absorption of the human soul into the universal spirit or Brahma, the true source of being, thought and happiness. In Buddhism, on the other hand, true wisdom consists in the perception of the nothingness of all things, and in a desire to become nothing, to be blown out, to enter into Nirvana, that is to say, extinction.[1] The question remains, nevertheless, whether the optimism of absorption is any better than the pessimism of extinction. The burden of Dr. Urquahart's criticism is that Indian thought, so far as pantheistic, is pessimistic in tendency, and inevitably so.[2] We have seen previously that the Aryans, whilst originally full of vigour and lust of life, gradually became " sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought " and eventually settled down into conservatism and inertia. All this is admitted by such a thinker as Radhakrishnan, who yet holds that Indian thought is not essentially pessimistic. It is noteworthy, however, that in his view Hinduism is not pantheism " in the bad sense " but rather a monism which is more akin to speculative theism than anything else. Evidently much depends upon the use of terms, but what the East calls peace—symbolized by the Buddha—the West may regard as *ennui.*

[1] Sully : *Pessimism*, pp. 37–8.
[2] Urquahart : *Pantheism and the Value of Life*, passim.

Or Pessimism?

The reasons for the apparent weariness of the East, so far as pantheistic (for most of China must be excluded from this description) are not far to seek. The physical conditions of India are generally exhausting and produce a dreamlike condition of mind. Then the extreme poverty of the great bulk of her population enfeebles them and makes them a prey to wasting diseases. Certain social and sexual habits may increase this weakness and the caste system doubtless tends to inertia and apathy. Physical subordination to foreign conquests adds its weight to the general depression. All this goes far to explain the despairing strain in the Hindu temper. But to it must be added the popular and religious belief in metempsychosis, the prospect of an indefinite series of lives of the most weird description, until the cycle is ended by the extinction of desire. This extinction has been variously interpreted as total annihilation, as tranquil resignation to the ills of the present age, and as the attainment of the highest bliss. Doubtless, if life is inherently evil, annihilation is a negative good; if it is only temporarily bad it may be better to endure the evils we do know than otherwise, but if it is positively good on the whole we may hope for its indefinitely great enhancement. It appears that the last is the teaching of the best Hinduism to-day.[1] It still remains to be asked, however, whether the bliss theoretically obtainable in the higher pantheism is open to all believers, and whether when it is attained it can be said to justify the frame of existence and to make life worth living.

A similar question may be asked respecting Western pantheism. Springing from the vitality of the "healthy-minded" races of Europe, religion in its higher reaches

[1] Cp. Radhakrishnan: *The Hindu View of Life*, pp. 125–6.

gradually developed into the pantheism of the Stoics and thus became as wide as Western civilization. The sad and resigned tone of that religion, in spite of its cult of indifference, is well known. Duty for duty's sake cannot be called a cheerful creed, and it failed to sustain the Roman Empire. When this was superseded by the Christian Church, pantheism, taking a mystic strain, became mostly other-worldliness which offered little comfort to the masses of men, though it afforded solace and even raptures to the few. Thomas àKempis's *Imitation of Christ* is in fact really a pathetic book, a guide to the mediæval mystical life, yet inadequate to a robust life on earth. When we reach the modern period, it is significant that pantheism can be divided into two classes —optimistic and pessimistic.[1] "It begins with Spinoza and ends with Schopenhauer."[2] But the intermediate systems of the Romanticists are marked by a joyous acceptance of the contradictions of life[3] and as such are obscure and confusing. They are not truly either tragic or comic, but melodramatic, for they lack a clear *dénouement.* It cannot be said, either, that our contemporary period has overcome the uncertainties involved in unresolved contradictions. The cult of paradoxy, which is prevalent nowadays, accompanies a love of extremes and of solutions by violence which is quite in the vein of the *Sturm und Drang* epoch. Pantheistic irrationalism exhibits its explosive character especially in Germany to-day.

Or Indifference?

The fact is that modern European thought, which has mainly followed the lead of German monism, has never overcome the scepticism of Hume. It has reeled to and

[1] Cp. Guyau: *L'Irréligion de l'Avenir*, Part III, ch. IV.
[2] *Ib.* p. 402.
[3] Brandt: *op. cit.* p. 63.

fro from the optimism of the early nineteenth century, with its belief in illimitable progress, to the pessimism of the believers in blind forces at its close. The twentieth century has seen increasing cynicism and despair till Nihilism has become, not merely a theoretical belief but a popular temper. The revolution of destruction is upon us in the form of a world at war. The negative outcome of recent monism can perhaps be best seen in Aegidius Jahn's *The Silver World*, in which he concludes that life is misery but that this may be alleviated by compassion for our fellow-sufferers. This is the coming Silver World which may be improved indefinitely, but there is no Golden World ; there is not yet one even made of iron. " We shall soon be dead. *Vanitas vanitatum.* But meanwhile we are not yet dead and we rejoice with the Teucros of Horace that there is still a bright and cheerful To-day and that the sad, gloomy morning is yet far off. The enormous cosmic inertia compels us to love this silver life. There is no golden one." To gaze into the profound black abyss of the ultimate, however, amounts to a glance into the *grave*, into the only place at which we arrive for eternity and infinity. Such speculations not only enhance our thoughts but fill us with pity for suffering creatures like ourselves. So it appears to Mr. Jahn.[1] But one may wonder why they do not lead us to the most callous indifference, as we should expect from a perception that all is vanity.

Summary

From the foregoing account of pantheism it is evident that it speaks with a very ambiguous voice upon the chief questions of human interest. Abstract unity, transcendent of human knowledge, and plurality each detail of which reveals the presence of God ; self-

[1] Cp. *The Silver World*, pp. 360, 368, 375–6.

assertion and self-surrender ; determinism and caprice ; idealism and positivism ; optimism and pessimism ; other-worldliness and this-worldliness ; indeterminateness and richness which holds contradictions in solution ; activity and inertia : these are some of the paradoxes which pantheism entertains and even delights in. Through the coming together of East and West in recent times these oppositions have produced a certain eclecticism which is well seen in the World's Congresses of Faiths, which meet under predominantly monistic auspices. At present there seems to be no unification of such beliefs in sight though interpenetration is fast occurring. The outcome cannot be foreseen, but the principles of assimilation are being laid down.[1] Perhaps in time it will be seen, not that each religion represents a different degree of truth and reality, but that in each religion there are various levels of insight which are quite true (or false) as far as they go. Also that these correspond to levels in other religions, which say the same things in different terms, so that there is really an agreement amongst the faiths so far as they are true at all. This means that in time the false and the true will be winnowed out of the various beliefs and that they will converge upon a common body of doctrines. For the present there seems to be only an approximation to this result.

Perhaps the greatest problem of pantheism is that concerning the relation between process and progress. If time has any meaning at all for pantheism it can be but that of a flux of events ; it is a subordinate feature of that which as a whole is timeless. For as a whole it includes time, but is not composed of time. Such is the usual pantheistic view, which therefore does not admit the ultimate reality of progress, for progress presupposes

[1] Cp. Hocking : *Living Religions and a World Faith*, Sec. iii.

time. Even if, as in Alexander's view (which has at least strong pantheistic tendencies), time is of the very stuff of reality which therefore is entirely process, there is no assurance that progress is more than an incident in a flux from the unknown past to the unknowable future, since for pantheism the whole is divine, and therefore as perfect as it can be. There is no real improvement of the whole possible though there may be changes of function in the parts. For this reason there may occur individual ascents or descents, which is what is commonly meant in pantheism by progress. The Saint may rise or fall, one epoch may be great whilst another is base, dissolution may follow integration, but these occurrences are like the play of the waves of the sea whose average level is constant. As with progress so with purpose: individual purposes may be realised, but the whole, as a whole, is above purpose. If it is static it clearly admits of no purpose; if in motion it has no goal, for goal-seeking belongs to desirous beings and the whole can desire nothing beyond itself. Though it includes purposes it is not itself purposive.

The most satisfying case for pantheism, in the light of human aspirations, is the argument that it ensures the conservation of values. The whole, though it does not itself improve, may preserve all the good within it, so that though individuals perish, truth and beauty and righteousness together with any other possible valuable entities remain constant. This, it is thought, may gratify all reasonable human desires, giving persons a right to cry "excelsior" yet not fostering the idea of personal immortality.[1] This notion easily fits in with the idea of perpetual cycles of events, which cycles, though they involve movement, do not spell advance. The cosmic energy is exercised in maintaining conditions

[1] Cp. Höffding: *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 384.

as they are, at least in respect of the proportions of values to disvalues. Spiritual life thus consists in an effort to preserve the level of cosmic values, to keep a moving equilibrium of goods and evils. This effort has the merit of spiritual gymnastics and may produce characters of great moral vigour and purity. No only ascetics but athletes of idealism, concerned like Goethe to build the pyramid of their existence as high as it will go, may be found amongst its devotees. Yet the sense of making no increase to the sum of values, or of merely keeping one's self in training—like Epictetus with his metaphor of a ball-game—has surely some smack of futility about it. One of the chief objections to the treadmill was that though it provided exercise for the benefit of the culprit's health, it was merely repetitive and fruitless.

The sense of futility so often found in pantheism, is not properly to be ascribed to its determinism but to the nature of that which is determined. The mere fact of being destined to perform certain acts does not appear to detract from the efficiency of a Calvin or a Cromwell. Indeed it fills a Napoleon or a Hitler with ruthless vigour to feel that he is a man of destiny. But that evil is inevitable and persistent fills the mind with sadness, since it banishes the solace of hope for the world.[1] So far as the human race is concerned, sin and pain and death seem to be its lot under any foreseeable conditions until extinction occurs. Acceptance of this fate may produce a certain peace of mind, exhibited in the face of Buddha in the East, rising superior to the fact of mortality and loss of personality. Indeed, if life of any kind is inevitably all evil then extinction is a negative boon;

[1] Cp. Matthew Arnold: I say, Fear not, life still
Leaves human effort scope,
Yet since life teems with ill
Nurse no extravagant hope.
Because thou canst not dream
Thou needst not then despair.

if it shows only a surplus of evil, it is still not worth living; and since in personality consciousness is most acute, the loss of personality will be most to be desired. Impersonal existence may be better or worse than personal but at least it will be either above or below ordinary consciousness. If it approaches unconsciousness that is what we commonly mean by extinction; if it is some form of super-consciousness it may become ecstasy, which is beyond description. Pantheism tends to either of these extremes which are strictly unknowable to ordinary consciousness, and therefore for the plain man sources of depression, like all inevitable ignorance concerning ends.

Recently attempts have been made to overcome this depression by combining pantheistic determinism with a sort of teleology. In Eduard von Hartmann and his followers, whilst the world-process issues from the unconscious and returns to it again, it does so by way of consciousness. This conscious existence is painful and therefore evil, but it admits of indefinite improvement in time, and so is compatible with an evolutionary scheme. Though it ends in unconsciousness, and its course involves immorality as an unavoidable evil,[1] yet the end is forgotten in the process and we attain the unity of optimism and pessimism.[2] This unity is necessity become conscious as freedom, and consists in the devotion of the complete personality to the goal of the world-process, which is general world-redemption from pain in ultimate unconsciousness. True blessedness consists in peace, but before and after the world-process, which there is good reason to believe will not occur again. So Hartmann arrives at a kind of inverted theism,[3] liable to the difficulties of that view in addition

[1] Hartmann: *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, Vol. III, p. 365.
[2] *Ib.* pp. 134–5.
[3] Höffding's *History of Modern Philosophy*, Vol. ii, p. 539.

to those of pessimism. For it must be evident that the Unconscious, the source and goal of the process, is a sheer speculation, and cannot serve the purpose for thought or for cheer of the theistic God. The different strands of thought—unconsciousness and teleology, optimism and pessimism, freedom and necessity—do not form a unity which is the one thing upon which monism insists. But indeed, it is not demonstrable that reality is above all a unity, or that there is not something arbitrary about the attempt to see it in such a light.[1]

CHAPTER XV

MONOTHEISM

(*a*) Characteristics

There remains to be considered monotheism in its various forms. Its distinguishing mark is its insistence upon the personality of God, but this personality may be variously conceived. In its Semitic forms it tends to stress the sternness and exclusiveness of God, though in their higher developments the religions of Jehovah and Allah certainly emphasize the compassion and mercy of the Holy One. In mediæval India and in Greece the Deity is of a milder and more reflective type, engaged in the contemplation of His own perfections and tending to mingle with the world beneath Him. In the system of St. Thomas, the idea of creation is carried through rigorously, the world having a genuine though dependent reality. In the modern era in the West, where monotheism has been most progressive, three forms of it have been conspicuous: the Deistic, which is a markedly English product, springing from the desire to simplify theology and to keep in touch with the new scientific

[1] Guyau: *op. cit.* p. 401.

and humanistic tendencies of the Renascence; the panentheistic, which is mainly German and which endeavours to preserve the personality of God, along with strong leanings towards pantheism; and the more purely theistic, which tries to keep in balanced unity the two foregoing strains of thought, in a manner highly characteristic of the French genius. It is these forms of theism which it is most profitable for modern men to discuss.

(*b*) God

(1) *The Deistic View*

It is broadly true that Deism was a naturalistic, but not an historically-minded movement, which tended to reduce religion to its elements by getting rid of supposed superstitions. In so doing it doubtless discarded much that was deepest in Christianity, but it also purified that faith by making it more rational. It is not correct to regard it chiefly as the forerunner of Unitarianism, for many of its exponents were strong believers in a special revelation, from which the operations of the critical intellect were excluded, yet in spite of its mixed and varied forms, there runs a tendency to a noble simplicity, a breadth of view and loftiness of aim which make it a remarkable development of modern religion. From Lord Herbert of Cherbury through Milton, Locke and Newton flowed influences which, culminating in Voltaire and Rousseau, greatly extended the range of religious liberty in Europe. It is only now that, seeing so great extinction of religious thought in the world by ruthless ideologies, we can fully appreciate the toleration which Deism did so much to promote. The work was not finished at the French Revolution, for its spirit reappears in Renouvier, perhaps the chief thinker of France in the last century, and in his attempts to lead France towards Protestantism. Indeed, it is in Renouvier that we shall see the logic of

Deism most clearly defined, for though the Deists generally did not hold to a sharp separation between God, Man and the World, they certainly tended in that direction.[1]

The character usually attributed to the Deistic God is transcendence, meaning primarily His remoteness from the world, and ultimately His complete inaccessibility to human knowledge. In this sense he is the Absentee God of Carlyle's complaint. His first function is to create the world which then pursues its own course according to its own laws. The classical expression of this idea is given in Goethe's famous lines :

> " Was wär ein Gott, der nur von aussen stiesse,
> In Kreis das All am Finger laufen liesse."

Man himself being conceived as immortal he is beyond and above nature, so that there are finally left three realities—God, Nature and Man—exhibiting mutual exclusiveness. Stress is thus thrown upon the discontinuity of beings, upon their external limitation, which stress goes so far in Renouvier and other recent personalists as to attribute finiteness to God. To be real at all, it is thought a thing must be definite, which means to be limited and so to exhibit finitude. God's personality is more strictly a hard individuality, which allows no interpenetration of, or by, other beings and tends to make of God a solitary. As such He is Creator but not Father and Lover of His creatures. Hence the coldness and hardness often ascribed to Deism ; it is rational and dry in temper, but lacking in enthusiasm and romance, respectable and judicious but defective in that sociability which goes with the familiar and near.[2]

[1] Cp. Dr. Mackintosh's Article on *Theism* in Ency. Brit., XI Edition, Vol. xxvi.

[2] The above is a simplified picture. Cp. on the whole subject
Lechler : *Geschichte des Englischen Deismus.*
Renouvier : *Le Personnalisme.*
Pünjer : *History of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, Bk. I, Secs. 5 and 7.

All the same, the deistic God, being spiritual, is not a mere unit, but reveals distinctions within His own nature. These distinctions are psychological functions like conation, feeling and cognition, and so it is possible to find a certain triplicity within the divine being, even amongst Unitarians. St. Augustine's play upon the human characteristics of being, knowing and doing, as an illustration of the divine activities, has been imitated many times by theologians of the left and may even claim to be orthodox. Thus Dr. Rashdall says "That God is Power, Wisdom and Love is simply the essence of Christian Theism—not the less true because few Unitarians would repudiate it."[1] The favourite triad of the true, the good and the beautiful, again may serve to express the intimate nature of God, and is susceptible of both a deistic and a theistic interpretation. Unless the Deist treats God as a blank indifference of being he is bound to give some psychological functions and contents to the Divine Mind, and these readily fall into groups of three. As Lotze says, theology thus receives a fateful gift from philosophy, a gift which it is easy to use psychologically to interpret the nature of God, but which becomes increasingly difficult to employ in an historical or dialectical manner such as is required in panentheism, to which we now turn.

(2) *The God of Panentheism*

In panentheism, God is conceived as at once personal and all-embracing. All is in God, who is the whole of reality, yet the parts of the whole may or may not be personal. The term seems to have been made current by Krause, but probably a very large part of modern speculative idealism should be called by the name. Thus there are those who think that many kinds of mystical theism—from the time of Nicholas of Cusa at

[1] Rashdall: *Philosophy and Religion*, p. 185.

least, through Spinoza and the Romantic philosophers of Germany, together with the idealistic poets of Britain, up to recent thinkers like Royce and Tagore—should be properly described as panentheisms. Even the systems of Eckhart, Böhme and Bruno might perhaps be brought within the scope of the term and with them much popular mysticism, pietism and enthusiasm. The intention of such movements is doubtless to make explicit the thought of Saints Paul and John that " in Him we live and move and have our being." Whether or not their interpretation is correct depends upon the degree to which the personalistic note is emphasized, for there can be little doubt that Christian theism centres in personality. The most sustained recent attempts to maintain the thesis that all things have their existence within a whole, which is a person or more exactly a self—for a person may be regarded as limited—is to be found in such systems as those of Royce and Hocking and Sir Henry Jones.

It is evidently easier to hold that all things are within a whole which is personal than that the whole is composed of personal parts. For space, time and things are not obviously personal, yet they may be infected by the nature of the whole. Thus we often say that a room betrays the personality of its occupant, and so far has a character stamped upon it. It may be that personality is pervasive of the non-personal and therefore that the universe is a personal unity in that loose sense. It is apparently this idea which some thinkers have in mind when they use religious language to describe the greatness of the whole, personality being the highest category they can use. Reality is considered as being most intelligibly revealed in the guise of the personal, though it may be also other than personal. Religion then sways between personalistic and impersonal terms, according as more theological or more philosophical ideas are used. It is

this which makes Schleiermacher so baffling. When he uses the language of poetry and imagination he is as anthropomorphic as the Bible, but when he consorts with the abstract thinkers, he is as abstruse as to seem almost agnostic : God may be glorified man or He may be impersonal spirit. And such rhythm of thought is inevitable and even salutary, until at least some higher category of thought is evolved to express the nature of deity.

Very much of modern Absolute Idealism—which has served as a belief for many of " the cultivated despisers of (popular) religion " for more than a century—exhibits the foregoing ambiguous character. For who is to say whether the impersonal contents of the whole do not gain the upper hand, and that personality is but an unimportant feature within the whole ? Characteristic of the Absolute are its all-inclusiveness, whereby its contents are liable to be lumped together indiscriminately ; secondly, its immanence, according to which each part indwells every other, and so is apt to transmute the whole beyond recognition ; and thirdly its internal limitations, for it is usually conceived as self-contained and incapable of increasing or decreasing its own resources. It is a self-conservative system, capable perhaps of internal changes but not of new beginnings. Reality may unfold itself in phases, which may be called the Kingdoms of the Father, Son and Spirit respectively, and so a trinity of expression may be obtained which bears a certain resemblance to the orthodox Christian trinity. The unfolding is, however, logically necessary and the phases apparently those of an impersonal spirit.[1] Or again, as in Royce, we may be given an absolute Self which is eternally engaged in a task of self-interpretation involving three levels of experience, and which is composed of innumerable spiritual beings ; but it is doubtful

[1] McTaggart : *Hegelian Cosmology*, Ch. VII.

whether the whole can be called personal and so whether the system is strictly a theism. Panentheism seems to be its most near description.[1]

(3) *The God of Theism*

From the foregoing difficulties theism endeavours to escape. Deity is here distinguished by its purely spiritual nature, which does not lapse into matter nor consist of time and space, but as absolute Ground is above and beyond them all. "God is spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." But He is a personal spirit, which implies self-consciousness and therewith a consciousness of the other-than-self. This other is the world, regarded as the object of creation, which creation may be constant, without beginning or end. And the meaning of creation lies in the manifestation of the glory of God, Perfect Being. Such was, in brief outline, the outcome of the theology of Descartes, the first great independent Theist of modern times. His thought, the first to take personality as the primary philosophical concept, strongly influenced such thinkers as Pascal, Bossuet and Fenelon, Berkeley and Leibniz, and is still a fertile source of spiritual theism. Of this theism the main point is that the universe is God's, not God. It is His possession, dependent upon Him and subject to His control. This thought easily lends itself to an evolutionary scheme, for purposiveness seems to be self-explanatory, as contrasted with the accomplished fact of creation in Deism and the endless dialectical movement of Panentheism. It is significant that Descartes was a pioneer in the theory of evolution though he suppressed the book in which it appeared, as being too daring. But he thought it a hypothesis consistent with his theism.[2]

[1] Cp. *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, p. 477, and *The Problem of Christianity*, pp. 421–432.

[2] Cp. A. B. Gibson: *The Philosophy of Descartes*, Chs. 3, 4 and 8.

It is easy to see that theism is a complex system which strives to do justice to the richness of reality, without either confounding its components or simply holding them apart. God, the world and man are complementary facts of existence, having distinctive relations to each other —say of creation and dependence—yet conspiring to make a unity. As Windelband puts it, unity in addition to "oneness" and "simplicity" now acquires the idea of "unifiedness" which means that we must conceive the universe as a unity in plurality.[1] This cannot, however, mean that the great components simply lie alongside each other, after the manner of Occasionalist theory, but that they interact with each other, though in diverse ways. In particular the theistic world is conceived as requiring the compresence of God in all its occurrences, just as man's actions require His sustaining power; this involves a certain self-restraint on the part of Deity, such that He does not act arbitrarily or capriciously, but respects the creature He has made. Being himself Perfection, self-consistency requires that His universe be perfect, and such consistency is not identical with mere changelessness, which might spell inertia or indifference. God's immutability and impassibility do not mean apathy, but self-controlled activity steadfastly directed towards the maintenance of the highest and fullest values. In this sense there is a limitation upon divine activity but it is a self-imposed limitation.

The God of Theism is thus the Living God who produces the world of space and time and who yet remains beyond and above it. This may be regarded as an anthropomorphic conception, yet as Dr. James Adam says, such personification is also theomorphic[2] for it implies interpreting man through his God. His God is

[1] *Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 85.
[2] *The Vitality of Platonism*, p. 124 ff.

known by what He does and man is believed to be made in His image, not God merely in man's. Now there are features in man's experience which point to a centre beyond space and time of which indeed these are the utterance. And so it may be that the created world is the expression of the innermost nature of God, infinite and eternal. God being at least perfect personality may require certain conditions of personality which are familiar to us, namely inter-personal or social relationships. Such is the suggestion of the " high " trinitarian doctrine though doubtless the formula " three persons in one substance " should be re-interpreted as " three persons in one subject or spirit." What those divine inter-relations are is a matter of theological speculation, never made entirely clear or unanimous, yet it may be suggested that the notions of infinity and eternity are in theism positive ideas, implying not mere indefiniteness but complete perfection.[1] The word " transfinite" may convey the fullness and richness of the nature of God and imply that He is the totality of all excellences which can exist together in one being.

(*c*) The World

(1) *According to Deism*

The general character of the Deistic cosmology may be summed up in the words of Lecky, who says that according to the great philosophers of the seventeenth century the world is a vast and complicated mechanism called into existence and elaborated instantaneously in all its parts by the creative fiat of the Deity.[2] The trend towards a view of the world as " finished and finite " is plain, though not all the philosophers were Deists, nor all the Deists philosophers. Milton had left

[1] Cp. Royce : *World and Individual*, pp. 568–9, Vol. I.
[2] *History of Rationalism*, Vol. I, p. 287.

his cosmology doubtful and though he speaks of the world as "won from the vague and formless infinite" and appears to suspend time and space in God's infinity and immensity, he remarks that the latter attributes are used partly in an affirmative and partly in a negative sense.[1] Hobbes was clear that they are pseudo-ideas, and Locke regarded them as negative though inevitable. It was Newton who gave classical expression to the thought of his day, by making the cosmos a vast machine working in the infinitudes of space and time, which are organs of God's knowledge and action. It is not clear whether the cosmic clock was for Newton finite or infinite, and it certainly needed occasional correction, but Laplace by improving the account of the mechanism found that he had no need of the hypothesis of a God. Infinite space and time remained till Kant questioned their infinity, and though the theory of evolution gave great amplitude to the cosmos it still remained, for most scientists, a vast machine set in motion, perhaps, by a remote God but shrinking into the finitude of space and time. Recent theories confirm the nineteenth century finitism of Renouvier, who has strong affinities with Deism.[2]

It is, of course, evident that Deism with its love of hard and sharp distinctions, tends to sever the great ultimates of reality, so that God, the World and Man, come to limit each other externally. This implies their discontinuity and finitude and favours doctrines of sudden creation rather than of gradual evolution. Further, the world springing direct from the will of God must be perfect, or as perfect as possible, evil being explained as but deprivation of certain goods for the sake of greater good on the whole. The order and harmony generally prevailing in the cosmos bespeak a fundamentally

[1] *Christian Doctrine*, Ch. 2, p. 28 (Bohn's edition).

[2] Cp. on the above, Burtt: *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*, esp. pp. 293–300.

nathematical constitution, and if there is a lapse from gravitation (Newton) or into gravitation (Renouvier) it s one that is of the nature of an accidental disequilibrium. For exceptions must be admitted, whether as miracles or as permitted chance, in the most law-abiding system, o long as the divine will is allowed to control events. Evidently, both Biblical and scientific motives enter into such a view of the world, which is still common. Indeed, some foreign observers say that the religion of Englishmen is still deistic. In so far as the meaning of Deism ies in the statement that it is the rational and pure belief in God, in opposition to Atheism on the one hand and superstition on the other[1] it may well express the national character, but it is capable of wide generalization and might provide the framework of a universal religion.

(2) *The Panentheistic World*

There is no certainty, however, that the world is limited in extent: space and time may be infinite. This has been the usual assertion of mystical theism, but, as we have seen, such infinitism is apt to be taken in the negative sense of having no assignable limits. Space and time may partake of the nature of God; indeed for such thinkers as Henry More, they were attributes of God himself. Thus Nature becomes at least the expression of God, who is discovered by imagination rather than by reason. For such artistic minds as Goethe, Wordsworth and Schleiermacher, nature was the "other side," the garment and manifestation of divinity, distinguishable as the overt from the hidden, the sensuous from the spiritual. For more logical minds ultimate reality expressing itself is nature in its creative aspect; expressed, it is nature considered as inert; whilst as

[1] Lechler: *op. cit.* p. 459.

fulfilling its ends it is nature regarded as conative, striving or aspiring. Efficient, transmissive and final causes are thus disclosed as various aspects of that which Spinoza called alternately Substance, God or Nature, which is infinite and may be super-personal. It is significant that after his death various mystical sects sprang up in the Netherlands, which combined in different degrees Christianity and Spinozism, and that good judges have regarded the latter as a speculative theism. At any rate the word panentheism seems to be an allowable description of it.[1]

The place of Nature is more clearly seen in such systems as those of Böhme and Hegel, where it is the second phase in the unfolding of Absolute Spirit. Spirit lapses into Nature which returns to its origin through Man. The stages by which it does so are dialectical, and the dialectics are often obscure and the world of space and time exhibits the bad or negative infinite which reaches out for completion, perhaps for final transformation in final reality. Nature is thus evidently contained in the divine spirit, though in some manner "beyond this bourne of time and space" and so, perhaps, beyond the limitations of personality which yet remains our closest representation of deity. In modern developments of this mode of thought by Royce and his friends, space and time become the plastic material of Nature out of which is made the cosmic order, which, incomplete and fragmentary as temporal and finite, is as eternal and infinite complete and perfect. They are the warp and woof of the tissue which, here and now exhibiting a confused design, at infinity reveals an accomplished world-plan. This world-purpose is broken into innumer-

[1] Cp. on this vexed question, Höffding: *History of Modern Philosophy*, Vol. I, Bk. iii, ch. v.
Also Fairbairn: *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 110,
and Huan: *Le Dieu de Spinoza*, pp. 303–4.

able minor plans and purposes, which are thus contained in and repeat in their own way, the major. In short, the entire universe is a self-representative system, like a hall of mirrors in which every mirror reflects every other mirror, plus itself. As such a system, it is a self composed of selves, inclusive of those which appear as physical and so as Nature, which is, however, fundamentally a medium of communication between finite selves. Here we have space-time as the social counterpart of Newton's space and time considered as God's Sensoria.[1]

(3) *The Theistic World*

Evidently the Panentheistic world is apt to get lost in God and the reconciliation of " this " world and the " next," of nature with spirit, by reunion " at infinity " is apt to savour somewhat of sleight of hand. Broken lights may be beams of the eternal light, but we do not clearly see how they divide, nor how they merge again. For this reason Panentheism is liable to be accused of acosmic tendencies, and certain it is that the philosophy of nature is apt to be the weakest part of such systems. In particular the question of evolution becomes a critical one. For it is not clear what can be the point of an evolution which is already realised " in eternity " whereas the realization of an unfinished purpose is an essential clue to our interpretation of the world. It has often been remarked that the idea of evolution sprang up on theistic soil and seems to flourish nowhere else. The reason is that there we have a world genuinely in the making—neither ready-made (as in Deism) nor duplicated in time from an eternal model (as in Panentheism) —but really developing. The idea of continuous creation of the world by God is reinforced by that of

[1] Cp. on this subject Hocking : *Types of Philosophy*, Ch. 25, and *The Meaning of God*, Chs. 17–20.

creative evolution which implies that God gives something of His own nature to dependent being, even to the extent of creating minor creators, whom He influences and with whom He communicates.

Such evolution, though controlled, is not predestined but may admit various ways of realization. It becomes indeed equivalent to the idea of Providence which overrules events without coercing its agents and thus allows of both "general" and "special" providences. The divine end, so far as we can discover it, being the perfection of the universe, may have as its condition the free consent of some of its members. These are the highest products of evolution known to us, and hence there is a presumption that perfect personality is the supreme end of progress. Imperfect personality is immersed in the space-time world which may have been created along with finite spirits, or may even be just their empirical aspect. Such a world is not known to be either finite or infinite, but for us may be simply indefinitely great. Theism is not bound to either a finite or an infinite cosmos, but it is committed to the idea that evil is a thing that ought not to exist but to be abolished; and hence the world as known to us may continue till evil is overcome and body be transfigured into pure spirit. Such is the modicum of truth in the idea of a new heaven and a new earth when space and time shall be no more. Essential however to theism is the idea that the world is God's and that everything that happens occurs with his concourse or permission. In short, it emphasizes not only the superiority of God to His creation and His interpenetration of it, but His constant co-operation with it so far as free.[1]

[1] Cp. on the above the treatments of cosmology by Renouvier, Ward and Galloway.

(*d*) MAN

(1) *According to Deism*

The Deistic view of man partakes of its generally optimistic outlook. Man is by nature good, and only by some perversion has become evil. The evil may be attributed to some foreign agency : to the drag of matter or the temptation of an evil spirit, itself mysteriously fallen, or to some chance cosmical disequilibrium ; but man's proper nature is good, or at least innocent. Evidently, here come into play certain ancient ideas of a golden age largely derived from Platonic or Biblical sources. Particularly influential were the Republic of Plato and the Miltonic account of Paradise Lost, for they gave a certain philosophical or religious authority to the Utopias of the Renascence period in which Deism was born. Milton, who inherited both classical and biblical traditions makes Raphael say to Adam

> "God made thee perfect, not immutable."

and hints that had Adam not sinned he would not have died,[1] just as

> "Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit
> Improv'd by tract of time . . ."

These suggestions fell in with the humanism of the Renascence in which the natural man with his individual and emotional life became an object of intrinsic interest for the first time : "a discovery of no less importance than the discovery of a new continent on our globe and of new worlds in the heavens."[2]

The result of this was the rise of a naturalistic psychology tending to the assertion of freedom and immortality. Freedom is here to be understood, however, as the

[1] *Christian Doctrine*, Vol. IV, p. 210 (Bohn's edition).
[2] Höffding : *History of Modern Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 11.

spontaneity of "natural" unspoilt impulses. Thus Lord Herbert holds that everything in the world seeks by instinct the thing which suits it best; man instead of being depraved—which is a godless notion—tends by native faculties and impulses towards the infinite, eternal and perfect. These impulses also tend towards self-preservation, peace and morality, and justify a simplified form of religion consisting of belief in God and the duty of worshipping him in virtue and piety, the need of repentance for blasphemy and crime and the expectation of rewards and punishments in a future life. The Deists generally followed this lead, though with many variations. Lord Shaftesbury made human life a matter of good taste and Voltaire one of good sense. But it is in Rousseau that Deism simplifies itself to an affair of the heart. In feeling he discovers God, Freedom and Immortality, by the contemplation of the natural world and by consulting the promptings of unspoilt human life. All else is superfluous when it is not vicious. The Christian religion itself is reducible for him to the religion of Christ, who demanded belief only in that which was necessary to make men good. And the great doctrines of Deism, for Hume a matter of convenience, for Kant of faith, and for Renouvier of personal choice, have remained as the essentials of monotheism, in the guise of the catholic beliefs of Common Sense.

(2) *Man according to Panentheism*

The cheerful view of human nature involved in Deism is counterbalanced by the more sombre one in Panentheism. Whilst, for the one, evil is a kind of cosmic accident, for the other it is part and parcel of the lapse of nature and of its recovery. For Eckhart, Böhme and Hegel the fall from Spirit into Nature is explicitly a necessary one, just as the rise from Nature to God is also

necessary. In these leaders of mystical religion, the idea of contrast and development represent essential phases in the activity of the universe. Such phases involve, therefore, a warfare between the natural and the ideal man, the Flesh and the Spirit, to use language reminiscent of much in the Christian tradition. Indeed, a great deal of this way of thought may be traced back to St. Augustine, not to say Saints John and Paul. In the mouths of the mystical theists of the Middle Ages, and the pietists and romantic idealists of modern times, the thought of the life in God goes near to become identity with God. Even modern Unitarians can sometimes speak in the same way: Martineau possessed a strong mystical strain. What prevents such persons from becoming full-blown pantheists? The answer seems to be, primarily, the verdict of self-consciousness. The self is aware of its difference from other beings and of a certain independence over against them, even against God. Otherwise it reaches a total blank or at most the state of the lowliest organism, the very antithesis of the Divine.[1]

But how can a self-conscious being at once be necessitated and free? How be involved in the natural and yet somehow detached from it? The answer here is that in man necessity is conscious of itself. Conscious determinism is freedom. Pascal says that man is superior to the mountain which crushes him, in that he is aware of the fact. And Spinoza argues that by knowing the law of his fate man rises superior to it. Bacon's aphorism that man conquers nature by obeying her is applied to psychological law, and man becomes master of his destiny by accepting it. So, the panentheist may argue, by understanding the inevitable will of God I become free, and similarly by recognizing my unity with the divine plan I partake of its nature as permanent. Thus

[1] Cp. Pringle Pattison: *Scottish Philosophy*, pp. 191–2.

I realize my own true character as above change and chance, whilst God achieves His purposes through me. This blending of the finite and the infinite, of the temporal and the eternal, is held to confer a certain immortality upon the individual, though it does not guarantee personal continuance. It is indeed rather eternality than immortality, and has all the difficulties of the former conception. In the case both of freedom taken as conscious necessity and of immortality as eternality, the boon obtained is more like the timelessness of truth than the overcoming of time. But many people are like Schleiermacher to whom religion is the discovery of the order, nature and perfection of the infinite embodied in the finite, rather than any concern for personal assertion or persistence.

(3) *Man according to Theism*

The Theistic view of man combines features of both the preceding positions. It is neither optimistic nor pessimistic, but melioristic. Man is not born perfect, but he is not doomed to failure along with the lapses of the cosmos. Beginning innocent he is yet undeveloped whilst capable of indefinitely great improvement. The mere expenditure of time to reach a high degree of attainment is not to be considered a fault, but rather a perfection which enhances the richness of the universe. The spectator of all time and all existence may well perceive a magnificence which comes from the struggle to go on "from glory unto glory," which would be denied by static perfection or inevitable rise and fall. The struggle involves temptation and possible fall, with an evil entail upon future generations, but the lapse is not mere disaster : it affords an opportunity for the calling out of fresh powers. This is accomplished by the exercise of free will, here understood as self-determination. Such

determination admits of degrees and implies the putting forth on occasion of energies hitherto unused. How this is possible is an unsolved psychological problem and perhaps involves the idea of a deliberate slackening of the will's tension, so that fresh divine energy may be received. However the case is to be understood, theism implies co-operation between man and God so that progress to an unknown degree is possible. It may be that advance beyond the peculiarly human life is practicable, so that the superhuman or even angelic being may arrive partly through man's agency.

This thought suggests the further idea that immortality may be not simply a gift of Deity, nor a by-product of cosmic dialectic, but a prize to be won. It may have to be deserved, the condition being increased spirituality till a stage arrives when relapse is incredible. This progress may involve severe purification in ways only symbolized by Dante. But it may well be true that by the contemplation of Deity in a future mode of life, man's spirit learns to participate in eternality. In some measure he can in this life see things in the light of eternity, and perhaps in another he may wholly do so. Thus he may combine immortality with eternal life, which is the life of God. This would be the true realm of ends, the kindom of God, and it would come about not through the efforts of supermen nor through inevitable progress but by the establishment of a divine polity of spirits whose watchword is Emmanuel: God with us. How this union of time and eternity, finitude and infinity is to be achieved Theism does not fully declare. It remains a problem largely unsolved, but Theism, unlike its chief rivals neither minimizes the problem nor gives it up in despair. If it does not know the answer to the riddle of the universe, it firmly believes that there is one. And hence its atmosphere of hope.

Summary

The foregoing account has not done justice to the varieties of monotheistic theories, of course. There are combinations of them, both historical and logical, which cut across the preceding divisions. But we have not professed to deal with more than the chief types. Otherwise we should have had to attempt to classify William James's "piecemeal supernaturalism" and Carlyle's "natural supernaturalism," for instance, and others whose outline is greatly uncertain. But it may be fairly claimed that Deism shows a profile which is clear and consistent and a temper which is optimistic but mechânical. Its original intention of being a critical movement distinguishing between pure and impure, genuine and false religion, whether in or out of orthodoxy, has been departed from, and it has hardened down into a kind of scientific dogmatism itself.[1] Panentheism is organic, æsthetic, and though consolatory is compatible with deep tragedy; its love of the infinities makes an appeal both to the romanticist, the mystic and the mathematical irrationalist. Theism may claim to be complex and critical, striving to do justice to the various aspects of the monotheistic position. For this reason it is tentative and corrigible in its assertions, but is more likely to be progressive than its neighbours. Its temperament is hopeful, for it holds out a prospect of indefinite social and spiritual improvement, and has its eye upon the realization of a divine purpose. What this would involve we can but dimly foreshadow by analogy, for it implies an attempt to understand the nature of divine experience, and an effort to attain eternal life in the midst of time.

[1] Cp. Lechler: *op. cit.* p. 460.

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