BR 100 .B5 1912
Blewett, George John, 1873-
1912.
The Christian view of the

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THE WORLD

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THE WORLD

Nathaniel William Taylor Lectures
for 1910-1911, delivered before
the Divinity School of
Yale University

OCT 14
THEOLOGICAL

By

GEORGE JOHN BLEWETT

Ryerson Professor of Moral Philosophy in
Victoria College, Toronto

New Haven: Yale University Press
London: Henry Frowde
Oxford University Press
MCMXII

COPYRIGHT, 1912
BY
YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Printed from type. 1250 copies.
March, 1912.

TO
GEORGE HERBERT PALMER
WITH REVERENCE AND DEEP AFFECTION

PREFACE

The œcumenical theology is old; and from the beginning was inevitable. The greatest of the Apostles could not be blind to the significance of the new life that was in them; in their Lord they read the eternal constitution of the world. And when Christianity became the world's religion, it was inevitable that theology should become a secular labour of mankind. Christian experience, maintaining its reality as the religion of a Hellenised world to which reason and the demand for rational insight were also realities, could not do other than set itself to interpret the Person of Christ; and in the interpretation it found, as had the Apostles, a view of God and man. It is the conviction of these lectures that the significance of that view, so far from being exhausted or outlived in the long movement of human history, is continuously unfolding itself; both for the science of man, seeking the intelligible unity of the strangely diverse facts of our life; and for the practice of man, seeking to bring itself deliberately, and from its own centres of affection and volition, into accord with that eternal truth and unity of the world.

But a significance continually unfolding means that an eternal life is in its own order manifesting itself; primarily in religion, secondarily in theology the intellectual reflex of religion. And if that be true, no secular step in the development of theology can be altogether final. The Greek has made himself indeed, in theology as in other things, the schoolmaster of all time. Yet the ultimate word cannot be that of the Greek. Behind Greek and Roman, behind man of thought and lawyer and priest, behind all the theologies, metaphysical or ethical, political or legal—behind the Apostles themselves—is an eternal life; our Lord, with His own consciousness of God, His own consciousness of the world. To make that consciousness determinative of our life and of civilisation is the business of Christianity; to bring Christianity to the intellectual apprehension of its own significance is the task of theology. It is a task fulfilled only there, where all human efforts after knowledge and all human beginnings of science are fulfilled; in the absolute intuition in which every fact is seen in the completeness of its relations—every fact in the completeness of its relations, and God as all in all. Such intuition is not the form of our understanding; but it is at once the real basis and the moving ideal of all our understanding; and toward it we must work as we can.

A significance continually unfolding means, however, a further thing. Such a progressive manifestation of an eternal life means also a principle of perpetual life in those to whom and in whom the manifestation is made. Hence it is that the task of theology cannot be confined to scholars, or to men of thought, or to races whose genius is thought. Directly or indirectly all men who have in them any breath of life are at work upon it; directly or indirectly every human affection and action touches it; and light at any point is light for theology. They contribute most to the development of theology who most have given their hearts to the enrichment of the perpetual and infinite movement of the spirit of man; and whose minds are by that devotion made open to all dawning of light that has been or now is upon the earth.

Theology, once more, is old; older far than Christianity; and bears onward a most manifold ethnic inheritance. But to make theology Christian; and to see Christianity in its essential greatness—capable on the one hand of taking into itself all that seems most revolutionary in the penetrating insight of modern science into the continuity of man's life with all the life of the earth—capable on the other hand of giving to our unsettled and fatefully changing civilisation that guidance and deep impulse of social ideals which it needs; such is the never-finished task that confronts the theologian. It is only in a narrow sense that such a work is the work of individuals; it is rather a work of collective mankind, and of the spiritual principle which is seeking to realise itself in that life of mankind in which action is with contemplation, and love is with thought, continually involved.

To Professor Curtis, Acting Dean of the Divinity School, and to other members of the Divinity School and of the University, I am indebted for generous and thoughtful kindness. It was a happiness to be allowed to discharge at Yale an office of piety and of remembrance; the happiness was doubled by all that considerate hospitality.

VICTORIA COLLEGE *in the* UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO.
January, 1912.

CONTENTS

I

THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE TASK OF THEOLOGY

Religion as the practical unity of life . . . 1–4
The task of the theologian is, (1) to bring to clear consciousness the view of the world implicit in religion, (2) to relate that view to our rational consciousness of the world 4–6
The view of the world implicit in the Christian consciousness 6–42
  Introductory: the Christian consciousness must be seen in its history . . . . . . [6–9]
  The Christian consciousness is primarily a consciousness of salvation, ultimately a communion with God in thought and affection and will . . . . [9–10]
  The chief positions of the view of the world involved in such a consciousness are:
    (1) Reality is a spiritual society; a society of persons, God and His children. The relations of our life are personal relations; and our life is religious when it is determined by a consciousness of God and of our relation to Him, and thus becomes communion with God . . . [11–14]
    In that communion of the Christian man with God, God is apprehended as the absolute principle of the world . . [14–17]
    This is confirmed rather than contradicted, by the nature of the Christian life as a life of faith . . . . . [17–20]

(2) But within that monism of the Christian mind, a dualism is included; included, however, as subordinate to the monism, and as overcome; though in certain stages of Christian experience (which have received frequent and important expression in theology and philosophy) the dualism seems irreconcilable and hopeless . . . . [20–37]

(3) The reconciliation is specifically effected in the ideas of the Incarnation and of Redemption; and this both in Christian experience, and in the greatest of the theological formulations of Christian experience . . . . [37–42]

The second task of the theologian: to relate that religious view of the world to our rational consciousness of the world . . 42–61

The nature of theology as the interpenetration of reason and religion . . . . . . [43–48]

The difficulties of such theology . . . . [48–55]

The topics of the remaining lectures . . . [55–61]

Conclusion 61–69

II

Human Experience and the Absolute Spirit

Introductory 70–74

The form of our experience that of development 74–77

What is involved in development; a priority of actuality to potentiality 78–79

The actuality implied as *prius* in the development which is our experience: the Absolute Spirit 80–88

To ask whether there may not be some other absolute than the absolute implied in our experience is to make imaginary difficulties [83–88]

What is the relation of that Spirit to our individuality? 88–89

The way to an answer lies (for reflective reason) in considering more fully the nature of the development which is the growth of our experience. That development is (1) of the implicit to the explicit, (2) a self-organising process 89–109

Such being the nature of our experience, the relation of the Absolute Spirit to it must be one of self-communication. Such a view makes intelligible to us the possibility of our experience, alike as the common life of man (pp. 109-131) and as the science, the morality, the religion, in which that common life fulfils itself (pp. 131-140) . 109-144

The historical development of this view . . 144–149

The unity of religion and reason in this view of the relation of our life to an Absolute Spirit, who seeks in us a fulfilment of Himself 149–165

III

Nature

The view of nature involved in religion . . 166–175

The scientific view of the continuity of man with nature, forces the religious mind all the more definitely to the view of nature just indicated . . . . [172–175]

The view of nature taken by reflective reason 175–192

The harmony of religion and reason in this . 192–195

Special points:

1. Nature not necessarily the whole of God's way of communicating Himself to man . [195–196]

2. Nature as greater and less than man . [196–198]

3. Nature "coming to consciousness of itself in man" . . . . [198–204]

The full significance of this formula does not appear, until we remember that nature, in coming to consciousness of itself in man, comes to be sin in man; and, coming to be sin in man, is taken up into man's redemption . . . . [202–204]

4. Summary: the place of nature in our life being what it is, we must say that the reality of nature (or some organic part of that reality) is the reality of a relation between man and God . . . . [204–214]

It is in that regard that the immature idealism which thinks of ideas and presentations rather than of spirit, most signally breaks down . . . . [209–214]

5. On this view religion is freed from the burden of a radical antagonism to nature; and theology from the burden of antagonism to natural science . . . . . [214–219]

6. The significance of the principle of the uniformity of nature. The bearing of that principle upon the question (1) of the possibility of miracle, (2) of the effectiveness of prayer . . . . [219–252]

Conclusion 252–253

IV

FREEDOM, SIN AND REDEMPTION

The view so far "holds together and holds the facts together" 254–257

But does it not break down before the problem of evil? 257–258

That problem has a practical solution, a solution for action and affection, in the experience of Christian men; it cannot, therefore, consistently be declared by the theologian either to be intrinsically insoluble, or to be irrelevant to theology . . . 258–263

Ideas which constitute at least the beginning and promise of a solution have long been, both practically and reflectively, a possession of the Christian mind 263–266

These stated in outline 266–308

- Introduction: As we have seen, creation is not external or indifferent to God; He seeks a fulfilment of Himself in it . . . . . . [266–268]
- A. Such fulfilment of God in creation, through communion between Him and His created spirits, involves a freedom of those spirits . . . . [268–272]
- B. But in the case of us men, both as individuals and as a race, before we have entered into our freedom we are already involved in sin . . . . [273–295]
- C. But the fact that the process of the world is one which involves man in sin is not the whole of the fact; that whole of the fact is that the process of the world is a process of

redemption. So that we apprehend God's creative work as it really is, only when we apprehend it as creation in and through a redemptive process . . . . [295–305]
Summary . . . . [305–308]
The inner reality of history being a process of redemption, we must now turn to the detailed study of the history which is thus the concrete course of redemption; must return, that is, to the historical disciplines of theology from which we began . . . 308–342
Redemption is the hidden wisdom of all nature and all history; but the central place and the central power are Christ's; He expresses and achieves the meaning of history, and in Him nature comes to the true consciousness of itself . . . . [308–313]
The relation of philosophy and history in theology . . . . [313–318]
Special remarks concerning:
The œcumenical Christology . . . . . [318–338]
The width of the redemptive process . . [338–342]
Conclusion 342

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THE WORLD

I

THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE TASK OF THEOLOGY

To-day I have to speak of religion in its highest form as the Christian consciousness; and of theology, as the perpetual vocation laid by the existence of that consciousness upon the reason of man.

Religion, as the Christian consciousness, is that in which the whole being of a man—in all his feeling and passion, all his intelligence and will—becomes one faith, one hope, one love. It is the life in which all the impulses and interests that set our nature upon work, have gathered themselves into the love of God, so that by the love of God the life of man is informed and inspired and raised continually to higher energies. In the love of God, the interests and impulses of our human nature do not lose themselves, nor lay aside their concrete and particular character, nor turn aside from their own special objects. Rather they enter upon their own deeper being as forms of man's highest devotion; with its ultimate sanctity they are all made sacred. Philosophy and science, art and morality, as they are "in themselves," are abstractions; expressions and activities of a spiritual nature, which in them is labouring to fulfil itself, but whose demand for fulfilment is met only when science and art, reflective thought and dutiful conduct, have all become the concrete filling and expression of the love of God. Until that has come to be in a man's life, his art and science and morality, his toil of hands and toil of mind, are not to him what they can be. It is only as they become the concrete elements and factors of the religious life, and the true forms of its devotion—only as they are offered to God as the works in which we serve Him, and in which He fulfils Himself in us—that they either truly fulfil themselves, or that human nature truly is fulfilled in them. As a highest and most concrete principle includes all those special principles, all those many and diverse centres of life, in which it manifests and fulfils itself, so with religion. Not in any abstract sense but in the most concrete sense possible, it is the whole of experience with everything in it raised to a new order of dimensions in height and intensity, and nothing lost; the whole of experience with all its particular interests and affections, labours and loyalties, determined by a consciousness at once emotional and intellectual of its own universal and eternal relations; the whole of life, that is to say, animated from within by the love of God, and by that inner inspiration rendered truly a unity through all the aspects and exercises of our many-sided nature. Hence it is that in religion the deep opposites of our nature find their harmony. That tragic division of our nature, the moral division of man against himself, is overcome, and in the love of God we enter upon a life which is at once most contemplative and most practical, most inward and most objective, most individual and most universal; most solitary, and yet in the Kingdom of God most united to all that is; most comprehensive of an infinitely varied content, yet most brought to simplicity and purity by the recognition that "one thing is needful"; most given to quietness, yet most devoted to all manner of mighty works—works in which nature is subdued, and the earth made fair, and the mind of man developed, and the order of his society made an order of clean and righteous life.

But in religion man thus overcomes the divisions of his nature and is made one with himself, only because all the passions, all the energies, all the loyalties of his nature have gone beyond himself and are fastened upon God. Religion, as it is in the Christian consciousness, is the true and concrete unity of our experience, precisely because it means our experience coming into unity with the absolute principle of the world. To the great world in which we have our daily being, our natures are bound by clinging and untwineable tendrils; the religion which should make us at one with a god who is not the god of the world, would but deepen the divisions of our life and intensify into hopelessness all our spiritual warfare. But the Christian consciousness, so far as it is able to do justice to its own idea and is not driven into one-sidedness by the very intensity of its inevitable strife, has no doubt at all that its communion is with the supreme and creative principle of the objective order of the world. When we speak of religion as that in which we come to unity within ourselves, and when we speak of it as that in which we come to unity with the absolute principle of the world, we speak of aspects correlative and inseparable. It is only in an all-mastering and all-inclusive devotion to the eternal principle of what we unthoughtfully call the "world without," that there is achieved the unity of the individual man's "world within"; the world of his thoughts and passions, hopes and fears, desires and ideals, struggles and achievements. And this unity in which, at one and the same time and by one and the same spiritual process—the process of a great affection—the appalling division of the human soul between good and evil is overcome, and the man becomes one within himself, one with nature, one with God:—this unity is realised in the conduct of the practical life, only gradually, in and through the long struggle of the new birth and regeneration of man; but in faith and in the love which is the other side of faith, it is realised instantaneously, eternally, timelessly—with a completeness as of achievement once and for all, a completeness as of eternal presence, the barriers being swept at one stroke away—so that Christian men are said to be "justified by faith."

But any practical attitude on the part of man has implicit in it a view or assumption about the nature of things; about the nature of the world and the significance of our life in it. And this is pre-eminently the case when the practical attitude in question is religion, such a gathering and concentration of the whole of life, through love and faith, into a unity of character and action, of impulse and affection. Our religion is, in fact, our real and total view of the world, put into action. This does not mean that first the intellect—"sounding on, a dim and perilous way"—achieves a view of the world, and then this view arouses the heart, and thus calls high and practical passions into the field. On the contrary, religion is at once intellect and emotion and will, fused into an indivisible and most masterful reality of practice. It is a view of the world which, with or without reflective thought, has its being in faith and in passion, in self-devotion and practical achievement. And Doctrinal Theology, however it proximately apprehend its task, and whatever professional order of *loci communes* it receive as its way of taking up that task, yet has essentially two things to do. First, it has to bring to clear consciousness—to such measure of clear consciousness as the case admits—the view of the world thus implicit in Christianity; the outlook upon life, the apprehension of the reality of things, which has built itself up as a practical power in the men and the races that have stood in the discipleship of Christ and in that discipleship have laboured to build up on the earth the Kingdom of God. Secondly, it has to consider the relation between this religious apprehension and judgment of the world of our life, and our rational apprehension of that world. To put it in a word, the theologian is the religious man making his reason the prophet of his religion: he seeks first to bring his religion to rational consciousness of itself; he seeks secondly to relate the religion which thus has entered into intellectual possession of itself, to his whole rational consciousness of the world.

Turning to the first of those two steps, the way in which it has just been stated will have conveyed the fact that while it is a study of our own consciousness, of our own experience as Christian men, in the effort to bring to clear apprehension the view of the world implicit therein, it is also an historical study. When it is said that the theologian is the religious man making reason the prophet and interpreter of his religion, "his religion" does not mean something merely individualistic. No man's life can be *merely* individual. By blood and speech; by usage and tradition and institution; by the continuity of interest from age to age in the great human causes; by the hopes and fears and beliefs that from generation to generation are the true schoolmasters and fashioners of the soul of man;—by these, and by all that these mean, the individual life is woven into the whole of history and the whole of history into the individual life. And preeminently is this true of religion, as the unifying and concentration of all our experience in a highest and all-inclusive affection. Whether we view the Christian consciousness in its profound conviction of eternal and objective relations; or in that intensity of subjective feeling which is the correlate of such conviction; or in its sense of the unity of the race in sin and in salvation, and its devotion to the long struggle for the race's welfare;—however we view it, it is a consciousness historically conditioned. The theologian, beginning at the task now in question as he must begin—namely, with religious experience as a present concrete fact—has to deal at one and the same time with a consciousness that now is in himself and in his society, and with a history in which the present content and colouring of that consciousness, its body of beliefs and its tone of emotion, have slowly gathered shape. In that history lawgivers and heroes, prophets and priests, teachers and founders, have played their part; and a literature has arisen which has defeated time, not only in the sense of enabling us intellectually and imaginatively to reconstruct the past, but in the deeper sense of mediating the religion of the past to us to be our religion. In both the history and the literature, the dominating and determinative fact is the apprehension and acceptance of Jesus, the founder of Christianity, as the λόγος of God; a revelation of God in a form of such catholic human simplicity that the receiving of it, so far from being a sophistication of our nature, becomes its elementary energy, its way to the true fulfilment of itself and of the purpose of God. Thus it is that the Christian consciousness has come to be. In certain of its elements, that consciousness arises in us directly and simply as the reproduction in us of the mind of Jesus. That is true, for instance, of the Christian apprehension of God as our Father; it is true of all those deep and simple pieties in which nature and its creatures are apprehended as in God's immediate care. But other elements of the Christian consciousness arise, or are intensified, in the contrast between the mind of Jesus and our own. The sense of sin already had bowed men before the word of the prophet, already had driven men to the altars of the priest; but as men have stood, generation after generation, in the presence of their sinless Lord, and in the presence of the Father whom He reveals, the sense of sin has become a heart-shaking and revolutionary power. And in the long process which lies between the Founder and ourselves the Son of Man has made His appeal to the whole of human nature; to reason, as to affection and will; with the result that in the church there has taken place the greatest and most continuous of all the intellectual histories to which the searching and speculative mind of man has given itself. So that the consciousness with which the theologian has to deal is a consciousness not merely individual, but also secular—one that has moved through the ages and has built up enduring institutions, enduring records, enduring interpretations of itself, and is in each Christian man of to-day as a universal in its particulars; a consciousness, therefore, for our acquaintance with which we need all the historical disciplines of theology. Christian theologians have to turn to immediacies of experience in themselves and in their society, and to the original Christian sources, as though there had been no intervening history; and at the same time they have to stand in their places in the succession of a long history, they have to pass onward an increasing light, they have to make an ancient faith to the men of their own day living and vivid. What has to take place in them, and in all the Christianity of their generation, is another step in the many-centuried process which at once separates them from, and connects them with, their Lord; the process of the widening power of His mind upon the consciousness and the civilisation of man; the process in which His consciousness made itself the determinative factor of our religious experience. As I attempt, then, to indicate the chief positions—the ground-lines—of the view of the world contained implicitly in the practical consciousness of Christian men, I must ask you to remember that that practical consciousness connotes the greatest of all human histories and the profoundest and most inclusive of all human experiences. Remembering that, you will understand that the utmost I could in any case bring would be outline and suggestion; doubly so, in these brief lectures.

The Christian consciousness is primarily a consciousness of salvation; a salvation of individuals, and therefore of society; of society, and therefore of individuals. Such a consciousness of salvation means at least three things. First, there is the consciousness of sin; a consciousness intensely personal, and yet not merely individualistic; for in knowing ourselves we know a world which stands in sin—in the sin of the world our sin had its preparation and its root, and in our sin that terrible history goes onward and is widened; goes onward and is widened, not only in the sinful deeds of individual men, but also in a social order in which against most men the ways of the humaner life of man are closed. Secondly, there is the consciousness of a power in the world able to save us from our sin, and able, in its own long order, to make our world a new world. Thirdly, there is the consciousness of the drawing near of that power to us, and of its search after us, so that it may find us and save us. Our sin; the saving grace of God; the manifestation of that saving grace to us, and in the history of our race upon the earth; these, not successive in time but all going on together, are the primary apprehensions of the Christian soul. And the fulfilment of these is the ultimate form of the Christian consciousness; our life in the love of God, the communion of man with God in thought and affection and will; a communion in the still and deep contemplation, the loss of which by modern men is the loss of a whole order of civilising powers; a communion still more in the great energies in which love and contemplation alike are fulfilled and there arises the structure of the Kingdom of God wherein salvation is positive rather than negative, and social as well as individual—the structure, seen and unseen, of new heavens and a new earth.

In attempting to indicate the view of reality implied and involved in such a consciousness of salvation and in such communion, I will set down what I have to say under three heads. For convenience of reference let me note them here; though to do so briefly, I shall have to use one or two technical names, taking these in their literal meaning, not in their historical associations. First, there is the spiritual monism involved in the very nature of Christian love and faith. Secondly, there is the fact that in that monism a profound and appalling dualism is taken up and, by the power of faith and love, overcome. Thirdly, there is the specific way in which the reconciliation of the two sides is effected; in the great ideas of the Incarnation and of Redemption. And of course it is understood that, in all these, I am to have in mind the developed Christian consciousness; not only its first movements of repentance, but its deep consummation as the experience of men whose hearts are confirmed in the love of God, and who know that love as the reality of all the realities of life.

In that apprehension of the world and of its order which is involved in such a consciousness and such experience, the first point is, then, that reality is taken to be a society of spiritual beings, and the laws of reality to be laws which express the relationships of those spiritual beings to one another in their activities of goodness and of sin; relationships not external nor merely juridical, but the most inward, the most intimate, and therefore the most profound that can exist. Whether he reflects upon it or no, the Christian man organises his life as though the universe were in its actual, its present, its eternal reality, such a society of persons; God and the children of God. The love of the Christian man to God is (to use a much-abused word in its deep, and not simply in its legal and conventional, meaning) the love of a person for a person[1]—of a spirit for a spirit; it is a love which

---

[1] By personality one properly means that which is suggested, but not fulfilled, in our developing human experience upon the earth; a principle which, in possessing itself and possessing a world, is self-distinguishing, self-objectifying, self-determining; a principle wherein many distinguishable elements of experience, many different facts and actions and kinds of facts and actions, are present in a unity not merely of consciousness but of self-consciousness.

In this lecture we are concerned with matter of fact; with the way in which the Christian consciousness actually does apprehend the objective relations of our life; and specially with the way in which it takes the greatest of those relations—that in which all the others are contained and have their significance—as being in the sense just indicated a personal one. In what way we should use the idea of personality (as an idea suggested by our own experience), in the attempt at a rational or scientific apprehension of the nature of the supreme principle of the world, is a matter for the next lecture, not for this. But I will set down here two points which are to be more fully discussed there. (1) We enter only gradually into possession of our world and of ourselves; and that on all sides of our being, whether in perception or in discursive reasoning, whether in feeling and emotion or in the discipline of these, which is will. But God must possess Himself and the world in a single intuition; an intuition absolute, eternal (as including in one complete grasp all the concrete content of time) and creative. (2) Human personality (at any rate in ordinary experience) is an exclusive principle in this sense, that one human person does not include others, is not to others the creative and sustaining principle of their life; in one person others, with their individuality not broken down, do not live and move and have their being. But if it were solely and strictly in that sense that we applied the term personality to God—if, in other words, we viewed God as in His essential nature incapable of being a home of persons—then for one thing we could no longer account for the existence of ourselves and our experience; and for another thing we should have to rule out as heretical the greatest chapters in the history of œcumenical theology—the whole Trinitarian formulation for instance. Above all, we should have to rule out as heretical Saint Paul with his insight that in God we live and move and have our being; Saint Paul—and innumerable others, the gravest and profoundest minds in the development of the thought and faith of the church—to whom God was a spirit, our Father and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but not such an exclusive individuality as is a human, or a legal, person. And what would be left to us would be a sort of Deistic indimeets and answers to a love. In what to the Christian man is the world of his own soul—whether that includes the natural and physical order must be considered later—it is the will of God and the will of man that make all things to be what they are; and religion means that the will of man, not in any mechanical way but in the energy of a great affection, determines itself by reference to the will of God. For the Christian mind, the whole duty of man means that dutifulness of love which men, united to one another in a single social order, owe to their Father and to His purposes, as these, through individual hearts, make themselves felt in all the great ways of the Kingdom of God—in the institutions of society, in the gathering forces of history, in all amelioration of the life of the earth.

vidualism, in which a hard and effective morality could indeed survive, but religion fades away.

Let me add another remark to indicate how injurious it is in such a matter as this to employ, as criteria of truth and falsehood, words taken by themselves without reference to the experiences and the histories in which men learned to use them. The great technical terms of the œcumenical theology itself, when taken by themselves and without reference to the most remarkable history which led to their being taken over from Greek metaphysic into the Christian symbols, do not carry a single unequivocal and intelligible meaning. For instance, the use of terms in the Trinitarian formula as on the one hand denoting unity, on the other distinction or individuality within the unity, is almost reversed in the Christological formula; and thus, if the mere terms were all we had to go on, distinct meaning would be cancelled out. Or again, if a man took certain of the terms (*οὐσία*—in the West, *substantia*—or, in its different way, *ὑπόστασις*) and—throwing away all vision of the actual circumstances, struggles, necessities, of the time—insisted on developing the pure logic of the terms, he would in the end be driven away from any and every idea of personality as applied to God; the outcome would be either pantheistic or mystical—not theistic and Christian. To make theology a matter of technical terms and of the logic of technical terms is to enter upon a path whose end is on the one hand emptiness of vital and penetrating insight, on the other the spirit of the inquisitor.

And as the love of man to God is the love of a person for a person, so, too, the repentance which stands at the gateway of the Christian life—nay, which dwells with the Christian man all his life long, as in him the spirit of a sinful race continually judges itself before God—is a sorrow for the most concrete and personal of all wrongs, the wrong of a son against his Father, and against the people of his Father's house.

But to this something further must be added, which is of the very essence of the matter; a thing to be seen first and last and all the time in any attempt to apprehend the religious consciousness as it is in Christianity. In all that personal relationship, in all that faith and love, all that repentance and hope, the communion and unity are with a principle taken to be absolute. The religious man, in the passion and the achievement which are his concrete and daily life, apprehends himself as in essential relation with a principle which is absolute in the sense that it is the source of life to all things that live; apprehends himself as bound to that principle in love and faith and hope; apprehends himself, in all conquest of himself and in all betterment of the world, as fulfilling upon the earth the will of that principle. The communion of the Christian man reaches up as high as reality reaches, and understands itself to be an intercourse—a relationship of human devotion and of communicated grace—with the ultimate and highest principle of existence. In Christian experience the whole concrete personality of the man—

as we commonly say, "the will"—has so surrendered itself, that its effort comes to be to live its life and fashion its world from the point of view of the absolute and creative principle of all being. The man knows his reconciliation and union with that principle; united thus to God, he finds his true and natural fulfilment in working the works of God; finds his true will in doing the will of Him that sent him. So that the Christian consciousness, as it is for itself, is pre-eminently an objective consciousness; and an objective consciousness which apprehends its object as the absolute reality, the life of life. Furthermore, the Christian consciousness of which this is said is not some part or element within our total consciousness. It *is* our total consciousness; our total consciousness in its acutest and most intimate apprehension of being constituted, being put under obligation, being called to height beyond height, by objective and absolute relations. I say "most intimate apprehension," because the religious consciousness has this objectivity, not alone in worship, not alone in institution and usage, in common traditions and customs, but precisely there also where it is most subjective in the sense of consisting in feelings which each individual man must feel for himself; in religion, our hope and love, our remorse and shame, are what they are through reference to God. The Christian consciousness is not simply a reliance of men upon some forensic device or makeshift by which human beings, revolted subjects of an eternal king, may in his courts secure undeserved escape from punishment. It is what its Founder, by His words, but still more by being Himself, made it; the knowledge of God which is eternal life. It is an apprehension, I had almost said a sense, of God, and the inspiration and determining of all our life by that sense. God *is*—so runs the typical utterance and confession of the religious mind—God *is,* and we and nature from Him. He is the eternal and self-existent source and energy of the world; and our eternal life is our communion with Him, and with His ways which are the world's eternal order. Utterly we fail to apprehend the religious consciousness, as that consciousness is for itself, if we suppose that we exhaust its being and significance in viewing it as simply a combination and sequence of psychical elements; simply a series of sensations and feelings (and complexes of these) which are what they are by reason of the psychical causality or continuity in that total nexus and movement of states which on this view is an individual experience. From the point of view of such psychological individualism, the religious consciousness must be held to be illusory precisely in that which constitutes its religiousness—its sense of relation to an absolute principle, its sense of having all its significance in that relation. In fact, from that point of view, such illusoriness must be ascribed to all experience which has an objective character, all experience which is an apprehension of relations as objective; unless into our conception of a "psychical element" we introduce the whole idea of a consciousness at once subjective and objective. And in that case we are simply brought about again to the point from which we started; namely, to experience as it is, experience apprehending itself as at once subjective and objective, at once real consciousness and consciousness of the real; and to religion, as the highest, the most intense, the all-inclusive form of such experience.

This character of Christian experience as in its inmost fibre of passion and of will a consciousness of the Absolute, so far from being obscured, comes out still more clearly in the Christian life as a life of faith. Our union with God, in the love which makes us at one with Him and with all His creation, meets in itself not only with all the difficulties of our life, all the difficulties of the world of human experience, but also—just because it *is* union with God—with those difficulties raised to their greatest and most tragic intensity. All nature and all history stand for us mingled of light and darkness. By the will of man—by natural passions that are rooted back into the whole constitution and past history of the world, and have in the will of man their channel and expression—the causes of good continually are baffled. That they are finally defeated, the present circumstances do not indeed prove; but no more do the present circumstances prove that they are finally to be successful. That is just the crux of the matter; the experience which is now our life seems to reveal no absolute principle at all, but only an unsettled, only a cruel and most mysterious strife. And that not simply in the world without, so that even though we be troubled about the world, we can at any rate be secure within. On the contrary both principles are by nature intrinsic to our being; almost in one and the same breath we speak of original sin and of the *anima naturaliter Christiana,* and feel, though with deep perplexity, that both are true. But the faith of the Christian man means that precisely when the perplexity and the cruelty of those facts come upon him, his consciousness of an absolute principle, so far from breaking down, asserts itself more strongly than ever. Where he can *see* nothing absolute; where no decisive, no conclusive, overcoming and transformation of evil by good is evident; where there is no bringing of the whole history and struggle of man to clearness by the indisputable perception of a single supreme and supremely good principle realising its purpose in and through all the struggle;—precisely there it is, in the absence of such immediate apprehension and indisputable perception, that the Christian man asserts his confidence that there *is* an absolute principle at work—supremely and beyond all possibility of defeat at work—in the whole system of existence in which we live our life and have our fate. Such a confidence, animating the whole of the practical life and being in that practical life the correlate of love and hope, is the faith of the Christian man; upon such a confidence he builds his life. There *is* a God, he asserts to himself in face of the obscurities and confusions and cruelties of our life. There *is* a providence of God which "reaches from end to end, sweetly and strongly ordering all things," so that in it all things form "a wonderful order." There *is* a supremacy of God; so complete that His purpose is the ultimate law of the world, and all particular laws of nature and history expressions and fulfilments of it. There *is* a love of God—a love which is God Himself in action in all His creating, all His purpose, all His providence, all His justice; and that love is the original fountain and explanation of all created things; the very things that work evil somehow owe to that love their power of being or doing anything at all—apart from it all things would be nothingness. Upon no lower object than this are the love and the faith and the hope of the Christian man directed; by reference to no lower principle than this can such faith and hope and love either apprehend themselves or be apprehended by him who would know them. However much, at first sight, the Christian life that lives by faith may seem to be in nature and idea the very negation of a consciousness of an absolute principle, it is really a very high form of such a consciousness; is really such a consciousness victorious over its own difficulties and defining itself the more clearly in their presence. The theology which can admit no reference to an absolute principle, no reference to a unity of existence in and through the eternally creative activity of such a principle, may, indeed, work out in such a psychological individualism as was referred to a moment ago, an analytic description of the religious consciousness in terms of purely subjective feeling. But it is a description in which the religious consciousness could by no means recognise itself; could recognise only something from which the substance of religion had been withdrawn and nothing but its subjective shadow left.

So far, then, for the first point in the view of the world implicit in Christian experience; its apprehension of reality as a spiritual world; a spiritual world which is truly a unity—a single providential order of nature and history—by reason of the supremacy of that love of God which is its absolute and creative principle. But the very way in which that point has been stated indicates that there is a second point which calls for statement equally decided; a point the relation of which to the first is not merely one among the problems of the theologian, but is in all his problems the centre and nerve of difficulty. In the unity which is the first presupposition of the Christian consciousness, there is contained the deepest and most cruel of all dualisms. I have already spoken of the surrender of the will which is involved in Christian experience; a surrender which is made in repentance and love and faith, and passes over into and fulfils itself in still greater faith and love. For those who in Christian homes gently are confirmed from the beginning in the Christian way that surrender may be easy; for the adult soul, tenacious of its course, it can be a convulsive and revolutionary struggle. But for all alike, it is both the entrance upon Christian experience and its continuous path. Such surrender means to the Christian consciousness the reality of both the wills involved, the divine and the human; means, that is to say, that in the world which is God's world there are wills that can go their own way, whether it be God's way or no.

That in itself is a problem hard enough. But it is only the beginning of the problem that confronts and oppresses the Christian mind. Not merely do we apprehend ourselves as wills that can go our own way, even when it is not God's way; but before we truly possess ourselves—before we reach the place where we make deliberate decisions upon a situation clearly apprehended—we are already involved in sin. Both of ourselves as individuals, and of humanity as a whole, that sad ancient orthodoxy—confirmed so remarkably by the most penetrating insights of modern science—holds only too true. Made as our race is of the dust of the ground, struggling up as it does through the animal to the spiritual, before its individual members can consciously turn themselves to God, before they can devote to Him anything like the service of a mature and deliberate will, natural passions are already in possession of their spiritual being; so that the will, as it gradually comes to be, comes to be as a will already sinful. Thus sin is present in the world as a universal; in it—in Adam as the typical representative of its principle—we are all one. It is present in that collective and historical life of humanity, of whose character each individual man by continuities of nature and natural instinct is made inevitably the inheritor and partaker. Each man is born not merely *into*, but *in*, a sinful world-order. Its being is his being; its principle of sin, his principle—present like some incredible and monstrous inner fountain of his own nature; before he is born, it is assured that by actions which are his own actions, he will make its sin his own, so that the sin of the world will have in him its individual root afresh, and will live in him in deeds that have their origin in his own personal will.

This, then, is the fearful dilemma of the Christian mind. It believes to the uttermost—it is of its very essence so to believe—in the supremacy of God. But here is the order of God's world so constituted that men, in the process in which they come to be themselves, come to be sinful. And sin is all that God hates. The more intense is the Christian experience, the more acute is the sense alike of the reality and of the hideousness of sin. Sin is that loathsome thing, that hateful thing; there is no such thing as splendid sin, no such thing as magnificent vice; it is all littleness and cruelty and deformity and meanness; utterly it is alien from God. And consider what things come to be upon the earth as, one after another, the generations of men are born into, and take up for themselves, the sin of their race; consider what the sinful will of man has made of the world. It is God's world, the Christian man says to his heart; in God's goodness, good must be its end—its end, and everywhere in it a divinely victorious power; a good as concrete and many-sided as is the practical and passionate and contemplative spirit of man. But as the Christian man stands in it, and its blood is his blood, its life his life, and every deed done upon the earth a part of his own soul—as he stands there, through what fearful media he has to look upon God. These strange defeats of good men and good causes; these unspeakable and devilish cruelties which from strong and self-indulgent men come upon the helpless, upon the weak, upon the easily tempted; this turning awry of the great enginery of the social order by masterful hands, until it drags on together in one seemingly inevitable course, the oppressors and the oppressed; those multitudes and nations to whom, through the whole of life, no opportunity is given for any refinement of the spirit or any touch of the sweet humanities, or any vision, whether of heaven or of earth, that goes beyond the sordid streets, the foul companions, the dull and jaded labour;—what can a man—a man with the moral sensitiveness of high religion in his soul—think of the supremacy of God in a world in whose order and constitution such things are both possible and actual? Nay, think of the worst case of all; these innumerable children defiled in body and spirit from before their birth, and knowing only evil all their life long—conscience itself to them only the source of some further wickedness as its dim irritation stirs to greater restlessness their undisciplined nature. Poor children—and presently upon them, as upon all the confused and undetermined moral struggle of the world, there falls the dark; and what manner of spirit is it that they carry with them to meet whatever life and whatever God there may be after death? And, as if these things were not enough, the poor animal earth must suffer too, preparing the way for our sinful humanity; behind our human history there rises, like a receding but menacing shadow, another history in which it is probable that some of our natural instincts slowly gathered their shape; a history filled with the sufferings of animal life, filled with the cruelties of animal war. Through these things—things not external to him, but through his unity with his race a part of himself, in that original sin which of all realities of experience is one of the most terribly real—through these things the Christian man has to look upon God. In the presence of such things, what can his faith do? What it ultimately can do, and in innumerable men and women has done, I must try presently to tell. But here what we have to consider is that only too often that faith breaks down; breaks down and becomes little better than a compromise of hope with blindness and with doubt. And that not always in mere weakness or in dishonourable treason; but often through that in which Christian men are most Christian. I do not mean that slighter and shallower—though still beautiful—purity of heart which shrinks from the least contact with the world. There is a greater purity of heart which knows that our human nature has come up out of a great deep; and even while it seeks to keep itself unspotted from the world, it pities the world with the pity of a great affection and a great hope—the hope which sees "every heart awaiting" it,

> —another
> Friend in the blameless family of God.

I mean rather that anger of Christian men against the innocent suffering of which the world is full; above all, against that intelligent and effective selfishness of strong men, which is now one of the most masterful forces of our civilisation and compared with whose deliberate and self-centred cruelty the earthly and bestial vileness of the slums seems almost clean. In such a world as ours, we are in our faith as was the impetuous disciple upon the Galilæan lake. His Lord was there; visible, clear before his eyes. But he knew—alas, how well he knew—the resistless and invariable cruelty of the tempest-driven sea; and the very utterance of his faith became a cry for the help of his unbelief.

Often this breaking down of faith becomes determinative—I will not say in the Christian consciousness (that is impossible)—but in the theological systems in which that consciousness seeks to make itself intellectually explicit. Specially does this take place in stern ages of the church, when it has to struggle desperately against the organised and masterful sin of the world; or in those great men who enter upon religion only through such a struggle with the evil in the world and the evil in themselves that to the end of life they instinctively look upon this world and this human nature of ours as forming an order of final and intrinsic evil, alien from God and hostile to God. The dualism between sin and righteousness, between good and evil as deliberate principles of will, becomes something other than a tragic and only too terribly real dualism within one order of existence; it becomes the last word in a Manichæan view of the world. In the world which is *our* world—the world in which the Christian man does and must live, and from whose eternal and fundamental order there is for ever and for ever no escape either for him or for any spirit that lives—there is a hopeless dualism of ultimate powers. Sin becomes an absolute principle; as absolute (though this is never expressed in set words) as God. We, involved in sin, or having enacted it, are in our natural being altogether foreign to God and to His family; the whole being and nature of our world is summed up in this, that it lies in sin and is lost, alien from God. Grace, coming from above, mysteriously may save some. But nature and grace stand intrinsically and eternally apart; the triumph of one meaning to the other not fulfilment but subjection or extinction. The principle of evil has its own natural sphere of dominion; a sphere of reality whose existence is to be explained without reference to the creative love of God; a sphere of reality where, eternally and in the nature of things, the love of God has no supremacy.

This is not only a theology held with deep and painful conviction by a few specially powerful and troubled minds. It is a point of view widely, though unclearly prevalent—along with quite different points of view—in what may be called the popular mind of the church. There, as in all its occurrences, the root and suggestion of it lies in those searching, those agonising, experiences to which reference has just been made. But other and weaker elements enter. For instance, there is in our humanity, and therefore in the mind of the church, no slight touch of that hard and rather earthly common-sense which manifests itself in Deism. This is the shrinking from that source of man's intolerable pain, and of his still more intolerable enthusiasm—the thought of God as intimately in relation with the world. Not too closely should the world be drawn to those consuming fires, the perfection and the love of God. Let the world with good sense and enlightened judgment go on its common way; it is enough that God has been its Creator and will be its judge. To this mind—which, on its intellectual side, Hegel was wont to describe with immense contempt as the abstract understanding—religion is scarcely a living communion with God. It is morality; though morality enlarged by looking backward to the God who has created, forward to the God who will judge. Even in the great days of the œcumenical formulation, this temper secured its expression; in the Arianism, which, as Dr. Hastings Rashdall almost too bluntly puts it, is the notion of a God who creates a demi-god and then delegates to him the government of the universe. Then, too, there is in popular thought what may be described as the habit of holding things together by letting them stand apart. Different positions, not easily reconciled, are felt, acutely and deeply, to be true; and are simply held side by side; a method at once honourable and inevitable in popular thought; not so honourable in deliberate theology when systems are built up in separate compartments, and a conclusion in one is not felt to stand in the way of the opposite conclusion in another. This popular mind of Christianity has in our own day received perhaps the most remarkable formulation ever given to it. That great and admirable man who has just been taken from us[1] expressed it, with his lightning-like penetration of mind, as the dualistic Theism whose God is one member of a pluralistic system, an essentially finite being within the cosmos, working in an external environment.[2]

Professor James was concerned to bring to expression the popular mind of Christianity just as it stands; as though upon some unreflective bearer of that mind he were conferring his own gift of vivid speech. And his very success in that forces upon the theologian, intent on another task, a problem of method. How shall the theologian do justice to the Christian consciousness? In particular, how shall he deal with that popular mind of Christianity so as to do justice, on the one hand, to the Christianity operative in that mind, and, on the other hand, to that mind as possessed, though not with intellectual clearness, by Christianity? Manifestly, not alone by making himself its literal spokesman; not alone by translating into some language of science its ideas exactly as they now stand; but rather by penetrating to the deep and organising principles which really are its life, but which it cannot always bring to adequate and consistent expression, cannot always set free from alien and limiting ideas such as only too often are gathered from experience or inherited like a fateful second nature. Let us turn once more, then, to the present Christian consciousness as the life of faith and love; the life in which, through love and faith, sin is overcome, goodness achieved, the will of God fulfilled in the world of our life. The dualistic Theism which has just been in question, however widely it may appear in the popular thought of the church, however strikingly it may express itself in great theologies, is not the full mind, is not the final word of Christianity as that life of faith and love. It is not the ultimate and central, though in times of desperate struggle it may well be the immediate and most urgent, point of view of the Christian consciousness. That consciousness, in its deep and inner life—a life without which there could not be enduringly a church and the popular mind of a church—is a love that recognises no ultimate barriers, a hope that consents to no thought of final defeat. This is true, even when we take the Christian consciousness before it is aware of the full width of its own love and hope; when we take it in that least developed form where it is simply a consciousness of individual salvation. To the true Christian, salvation, even in this individualistic apprehension of it, is at any rate real salvation; no merely forensic procedure, but a coming into likeness to the character of God. And such salvation implies a unity in which the dualism is eternally overcome, a supremacy of God working in love and grace through all that system of nature and history in which man's being is imparted to him. For in order that a man may be merely capable of salvation, the order of nature and history, in which he receives his being, can neither exist apart from the God who saves, nor contain any power able effectively to resist God; except in so far as such a power is God's own gift—and God's gifts cannot be out of relation to His purpose and to that nature of love and righteousness of which His purpose is the expression. And when from that lowest and most individualistic form of the Christian consciousness we pass to the form in which it more adequately realises its own idea, the form in which the Christian man casts himself in faith upon God for the salvation of the world—a salvation in which his own individual salvation appears as a single element in a greater system, apart from which it would be devoid of its own deepest reality and significance—there we see the Christian consciousness with no doubt at all about the supremacy of God, and about the unity of nature and of history in and through that supremacy. The idea of a power able to defeat God, able to take possession of God's world or of part of it, and, like another God over against God, to hold God and His grace far from it; the idea of a sphere of reality with whose coming into being, and with whose continued existence, the love of God has intrinsically nothing to do; the idea, in a word, of an essentially dualistic universe;—that, to the developed Christian consciousness, the Christian consciousness in clear possession of itself, is the absurdity of absurdities; is the fall from Christian faith and love into a non-Christian mind. There may indeed be a stage in Christian experience—that struggling and well-nigh desperate stage of which Professor James had so vividly sympathetic an understanding—in which all things are seen under the aspect of war, and God is taken, not as the source of all life, the absolute spirit from and in whom we have our being, but as a dualistic God, a finite and limited Deity who maintains as best He can the war with His great enemy. And there may indeed be servants of God who never pass beyond that stage of experience, and in whom the religious mind never rises above that militant form. They have no relief from the struggle with a vicious nature, or with evil men; and the hope which sustains them is that at last God will arise and His enemies be scattered. Yet we should very radically fail to apprehend the Christian consciousness if we took that to be the conception of

---

[1] Professor William James died on August 26, 1910.

[2] *A Pluralistic Universe,* pp. 111, 124, 240.—It is most interesting to compare the emergence in another intellectual atmosphere and upon a different level of thought, of this same idea of a God who is not absolute, a reason which is not co-extensive with reality: namely, in the idea of Contingency which perpetually breaks the unity of the Platonic and Aristotelian Idealism; the belief that there is something in the nature of reality which cannot be an object for science—not because it is above reason, but because it escapes law and is below reason.

God upon which it really proceeds, and which it comes explicitly to hold as it grows able to enter into itself with reflective clearness, and to do itself intellectual justice; to do itself intellectual justice, not by becoming something new, but by discerning what really it always was. A monism must be deep as eternity, must be altogether concrete, must be courageous to the last degree, if it is to contain within itself the dualism that in many a strong man the Christian consciousness knows; knows in the agony of repentance which searches but the deeper, the more liberal and magnanimous the heart becomes; knows in the appalling vision of that creation of God, the world of our natural humanity, as infected everywhere by sin. Yet such is the monism of the Christian consciousness, when, as the highest and all-inclusive consciousness of our life, it apprehends its own meaning and its own principle. It is in good truth a first work of Christianity to make the sense of sin a searching and commanding power. Yet there could be no Christian consciousness at all, but only some madness of despair, unless to sinful man there were open in his faith a triumph both of practice and of vision, over sin. So that the Christian mind cannot regard sin as a final or eternal thing, co-ordinate with God. Even where it can get no solution of the problem such as satisfies the intellect, it still has no doubt that there is a supremacy of good; no doubt that God veritably is God. In presence of the hard facts of the world—its incompleteness, its cruelties, its evil, its sin, souls that are shut out of good and souls that trample it under foot—the Christian man declares in his heart, that in spite of all these things God *is* supreme in His world; supreme and supremely good; and this not in any easy supremacy and goodness of remote and empty Sabbaths, but here in the actual creation and government of His world. In the whole of His creative work—so the man whose mind is fashioned upon the love of God comes late or soon to believe—God has a purpose of good; a purpose which not only will be, but is being, realised; so that even though we seem to stand amid the continual wreck of good causes, yet all things are working together for that good which eternally is the purpose of creation, and here upon the earth more and more is dawning upon the hearts of good men, more and more is apprehending them and being apprehended by them, more and more is being chosen by them as the purpose of their life.

And as for death, and all its seal upon us of a struggle arrested, of love defeated at last, of light kindled to perish—to the faith in God which maintains itself in the presence of evil and of sin, I had almost said that death is a little thing. It lays its heavy burden upon our human affections; it is scarcely a burden to our faith. Our forefathers, struggling titanically, after the rule of the Cæsars was gone, with nature and natural passions, with a world of violence and its immeasurably difficult political and social problems, saw the fulfilment hereafter of our life as a city wherein the souls of men at last were safe; a tranquil city, seen from afar, the very thought of which roused in the exile the longing for his home, in the *viator* the yearning to become *comprehensor.* To-day our imagination has no picture of the city; we know not the song which the joyful mother sings with her children. But the Christian heart looks forward as truly as ever to a fulfilment of the essential objects and purposes of the Christian life; the unity of man with God, and of men with one another, in a progressive or perfected social order in which men come to be all that they have it in them to be, and none serves selfish purposes but each serves the good of all; and so God Himself is fulfilled. Such a hope is part of the inner conviction with which the Christian consciousness faces the tragic fragmentariness and incompleteness of our life, even as it faces its evil and its sin; the conviction that God is supreme, that nothing in the order of the world is out of relation to Him, and that, in His supremacy, His creative beginnings, whether in the universal system of the world, or in the communication of life to individual spirits, cannot fail, but must have their appropriate fulfilments.

To do justice to the Christian mind we must insist, then, upon its acute sense of those characters of our experience which seem most to oppose any monistic or unitary view of the world: its sense of the frailty of our nature, the pitiable incompleteness of our life; its sense of the evil and imperfection of the world; above all, its sense of sin—the appalling contrast as our nature stands over against high God. There is no apprehension of the Christian consciousness at all, as it must be in any such soul as that of man, without insisting to the uttermost upon the sense of sin. To the uttermost; but not wrongly. And it is insisting upon it wrongly to make it the last word; the last word, so that the Christian view of the world is with finality a dualistic view. Most truly it is the business of Christianity to make the sense of sin an imperious thing. Yet, so long as it is not driven beyond Christianity by the very agony of the struggle with sin, the Christian consciousness never, as a consciousness of despair, makes sin the final thing. Such a sense of sin, so far from being Christian, would lead to the opposite of Christianity. The Christian consciousness of sin is part of—has its intensity and searching power as part of—a larger consciousness; a consciousness of God and of salvation. The sense of sin would grow dull indeed, if it were part of the consciousness of a world in which God is only half supreme, and His power to open to us a way of salvation problematical. Would grow dull; nay, would flame up into the sense of an inextinguishable and irremediable wrong, only to burn down into the grim endurance of men who undergo a hopeless fate.

To put this in another way, it is the moral dualism of the world that constitutes our need of salvation; but what makes the salvation possible is only the fact that there is a still profounder monism through the supremacy and in the love of God. What we must say, to be true to the facts of the Christian consciousness, is that the Christian life has one inner and central principle. As devotion to God, as the shaping energy of disposition and of action, it is love. As refusing to be overcome by the appalling moral problem of the world's order, or by any of the discouraging facts of the world and of our own human nature, it is faith and hope. As the unity of all these, the unity of love and hope and faith, it is that practical Christian mind, which is the power of God in the world for the overcoming of evil; for the transforming of evil men into good men, and evil societies into good societies, in that salvation in which "all things are transformed but love."[1]

While, then, we say that the view of the world contained implicitly in the Christian consciousness is at once a unitary and a divided view; while we say that it has in it at once a monism and a dualism, and each of these in the intensest possible form; while we recognise as the two great voices of the Christian confession in all ages, on the one hand the faith and love and hope in which a man apprehends himself as given to a God who is absolutely supreme in His universe, but on the other hand the starting back in horror from any thought of connecting organically with God a world which lies in sin, a nature that is to be repented of and overcome:—while we say all this, we must also say that in the Christian consciousness the two attitudes do not stand side by side, simply equal and unreconciled. Whenever the Christian consciousness has entered clearly into possession of itself, and has become explicitly what implicitly it always and essentially is, its intense and passionate dualism is taken up into a still more intense and passionate monism, triumphant in faith; a monism which we may express by turning a famous saying of Hegel's into language still higher and more confident than Hegel's own: there is nothing in the nature of things that permanently and finally can give the lie to the desire and hope of the Christian man; his desire and hope not for his own individual salvation alone, but for the race in which he counts for one and no more than one; the race with which all his being is organically connected, in whose life he lives, and whose fate—down to that of the last forgotten and degraded child of the brute earth—is his own fate, and is felt as his own.

---

[1] For this total Christian mind which is at once love and confidence, hope and belief, great masters of inner experience like Augustine and Luther commonly (and with New Testament warrant) use the term "faith"; making faith the essential and all-inclusive principle of the Christian man's response to the grace of God. And this is reasonable enough: for on the one hand the principle of the Christian mind is so truly a single principle that any one of its aspects or manifestations includes all the others; while, on the other hand, the whole action of the Christian mind in asserting, in this dim and imperfect life, a relation with the absolute principle of the universe, is a rising above sight, a rising above present particular facts, so remarkable as to make it no wonder that the name appropriate to it should be given to the whole Christian consciousness.

So far, then, for that second point: how the Christian consciousness, in its monism of faith—its confidence in a supreme, an absolute, a loving God—meets and overcomes a dualism the deepest and most terrible that reality can contain. Now I come to the third point; not as something to be added externally to the former two, but rather as something which at once is implied in them and implies them in itself; implies and contains them in itself, as a synthesis or a universal implies and contains the diverse elements and factors, to which it gives the meaning that they really have, and in which it expresses the fulness of its own meaning. To put it in another way, what we now come to is what one may call the specific centre of gravity of the Christian mind; its centre of gravity in the sense that here its two great sides are found, not held together solely by that kind of faith which is a mere desperate venture, but held together in a great idea which is their intelligible reconciliation. As we saw at the beginning, the Christian consciousness, in its apprehension of our life, is primarily a consciousness of salvation. It is in the thought of salvation—of a redemption of man from evil conditions and evil will—that it really holds together, unifies, reconciles, these two great sides of itself which seem so hopelessly irreconcilable: its conception of God as righteous and loving, and as absolutely supreme in the world; and its conception of the world as nevertheless not merely a world of imperfection, but a world which stands in sin. In the ordinary Christian consciousness that reconciliation is scarcely brought to intellectual clearness. To most of us Christian men, in our life of affairs and of daily labour, the vision that penetrates the mystery of this world is one almost entirely of affection and of conscience. We do but know that we are sinful men, and that in all the glory of the world a strange evil is intermingled; but that in God, who is the Lord of all things, we have our salvation. To the full significance of our idea of redemption—the deep philosophy in it that enlightens the world—we cannot do justice; cannot set it in its place in the vision which is to the theology, to the philosophy, to the poetry of man, a common goal—the clear and secure consciousness in which feeling goes hand in hand with systematic intelligence, passion is with reason made one, and the spirit of man, compact of affection and of contemplation, sees into the life of things. Rather in our thought—the popular thought of the church which, as we saw, Professor James so penetratingly grasped and expressed—the Christian idea of redemption has place along with other weaker and discordant elements. But to enter into the deep meaning of it, to see in it the solution of the last and most desperate problems of our life—this has been precisely the work of Christian theology in its great and central line, its œcumenical movement.[1] In that movement there may not seldom have been in the human agents fear and hate, not seldom panic and the cruel follies of panic; but the theology itself looks with large and penetrating and speculative mind upon its own great objects. Its own great objects: the self-communicating love of God in which a world of free

---

[1] Without offending against generosity and courtesy, one may perhaps say that the œcumenical theology is to the popular mind of the church what science and philosophy are to the popular mind as a secular consciousness. The popular mind, as a secular consciousness of the world, is not science and philosophy; but it is the possibility of science and philosophy, and only in science and philosophy do we do justice to its content. So with œcumenical theology and the popular mind of Christianity. But by this is not meant that the present Christian consciousness is to be enslaved even to its own great past; as though Christian men of to-day could settle no problems for themselves except by summoning from the dead an ancient and tremendous people of theologians. Science and philosophy maintain their place in our life only by making their truth still wider, still deeper, still more living,

for each successive generation of men. So, too, it must be with theology. Unless, age by age, it has in its nostrils the breath of life, no authority can save it.

This relation of œcumenical theology to the popular thought of Christianity has, of course, a most important bearing upon the question which came forward earlier (see pp. 28-29 above) in the lecture; the question how we are to deal with that popular Christian mind so as really to do justice to it—to do justice to it not alone by finding for its immediate declarations a more telling and incisive voice, but still more by penetrating to the organising principles which are its deep and inner life.

To call the theology which finds its unifying centre in the idea of the Incarnation, œcumenical, is to make for it an immense claim to objective significance, with regard both to historical position and to permanent scientific value. The feeling which animates these lectures is that that immense claim is essentially just. But in such a connexion one thing should always be remembered. He alone has the right to the conception of an œcumenical theology, as one of the working conceptions of his life, who sees in that conception the largest, the kindliest, the most magnanimous of all human ideas. And furthermore, there is a sense in which the background of the Councils is more important than the Councils themselves. The negotiations and majority votes of councils, while late or soon they may bring peace to a great society and thus may determine the course of human history, yet are fearfully unreliable instruments for getting at pure truth. And to suppose that theological truth—the knowledge of the ways of God with man—can be adequately expressed in precise conciliar canons, is to misapprehend the very nature of theological truth. When the apostolic age was once gone, the most vital growth of theology necessarily took place in the passionate thought of innumerable devout men who, in the freedom of individual and consecrated spirits, entered into reflective possession of the Christian tradition, and handed on a continually deepening insight; a continually deepening insight which here and there, in some great Father, secured for itself world-compelling expression. The church which has in it no place for such freedom of devout thought, no place for such growing light, may be a great and effective institution; it is no true home of theology.

spirits is created; the further energies of that love, by which, when in the long process of creation sin arises, it is met and overcome by redemption; the setting forth in the midst of man's years upon the earth, of the eternal Word in whom that redemption is made manifest, and men's hearts are drawn to Him, and being drawn to Him are drawn to their salvation. In the œcumenical theology, there is no doubt that the human world stands in sin; there is also no doubt that God is good and is the absolute principle of the world—not a greater finite being along with us in the world, but the absolute spirit in whom we live and move and have our being. And these two positions are not left merely standing side by side. The thought of redemption is their reconciliation. The vital nerve of history is the movement and process of the redemption of the world from its sin. And the point in history where that redemptive process at once comes most clearly to light, and is in a sense eternally accomplished—the point, that is to say, where the true nature of the world, the true nature of its whole order and constitution, is most fully revealed—is the Incarnation. In the Incarnation, the Son of God, who is also the Son of man, reveals in Himself the union of the divine and the human natures; and by that revelation he shows oneness with God to be within the possibilities of the human nature which is in all sons of men; so that in Christ—the head of the race in its possibilities toward God, as, in Saint Paul's way of putting it, Adam had been in its possibilities of sin—the unity, in affection and in will, of human nature with God, is made at once the vision and the vocation of all men. Through the Incarnation man is revealed to himself and God is revealed to man:—man is revealed to himself, alike in the horror of his sin, and in the possibilities of righteousness which lie within his divinely created nature; and God is revealed to man in the reality of His love, and of His search for man; and thus for all men salvation is brought near.

That, then, must serve to remind us of the view of the world which is contained implicitly in our religion, and as thus contained is a practically effective power, the chief of the creative forces that work in history. But when the theologian has brought, so far as he can, his religion to rational consciousness of itself, by making explicit the fundamental view of things involved in its faith and practice, he finds before him—not, without injustice to religion, to be avoided—the second of his tasks; the task of relating the religion, which thus has entered into conscious possession of itself, to our whole rational consciousness of the world. In this I am not asserting that theology is either a good thing or a bad thing—it has been both; I am saying that if it is to exist, this is what it must do before it can say that it has dealt adequately with its own object. The theologian, having attempted to bring the principles operative practically in Christian experience to reflective expression of themselves, has next to ask whether, in holding and practising such principles, our nature as at once religious and rational is at unity with itself.

Let me emphasise that way of putting it. The nature of man demands a unity of itself through all its essential interests and activities; such unity as is possible in a continually developing experience. That is what is meant by the integrity of human nature; the integrity in the radical absence of which man can be satisfied neither with his rational nor with his religious consciousness. Theology, as the arising and operation of this demand in religious men, is that in which, so far as it can be achieved, religion receives its rational interpretation and reason finds its rest. It is, in the true form of its idea, the interpenetration, at the highest level, of thought and life; the interpenetration of the life which is religion, with the systematic, the critical, the philosophical reason; an interpenetration in which each is an object to the other, each interprets and enlightens the other, each leads the other toward its fulfilment, and in thus fulfilling the other fulfils itself; and so, in a mutual understanding and organic synthesis between the religious consciousness of man and his rational consciousness, there arises a true unity of human experience—or such promise and beginning of unity as is possible in an experience which, upon the earth, is itself only a beginning.

The question about religion and reason is really, then, the question whether our whole nature, as at once religious and rational, comes in Christian experience to its unity and its rest; the rest of a nature whose fundamental demands have in their integrity been satisfied, or are in course of being satisfied. Such a question is not at all one about the merely external reconciliation of religion and reason, so that each can recognise tolerantly the existence of the other, or can even go farther and supply to the other an artificial and alien reinforcement. We thoroughly misapprehend the nature of human experience, if we take it that there is reason on the one side and religion on the other; and that the total man, who is the sum of the two, desires as a matter of the integrity of his being to establish some *modus vivendi,* some terms of mutual understanding and agreement, between the two mutually exclusive powers; arguing, for instance, that since religion is an objective consciousness—an apprehension of God, and the animation and government of our life by that apprehension—religion does well to gain from reason all the enlightenment that reason has to give concerning the objective order of the world. Rather, the total man *is* religion; and religion, as thus the total man, must, to do itself justice, take reason up into it, and give to reason, in a life that walks with reality, all the fulfilment of which reason is capable. Religion means a man throwing himself (including the intellect and all its search for truth) into a life organised by the love of God. Religion and reason are such that, so far as man fulfils the demands of his nature, he seeks at once to be rational in his religion and religious in his reason. As in a growing experience he realises and possesses his nature in the integrity of its interests, he more and more feels the demand for that unity of reason and religion which is, in its lowest terms, a unity of view; a unity, a reflexion into each other, of the view of the world held implicitly in religious faith and practice, and the view of the world reached explicitly by reason following its own interest of making intelligible the facts of experience. So that when religion is just to itself, its attitude to reason is far more generous and constructive than is involved in any mere demand for confirmation or refutation. As was pointed out at the beginning of the lecture, and as is involved in what has just been said, religion is not an abstraction from the common and normal interests of the spirit of man. It means all those interests brought at once to unity and to fulfilment in a single supreme devotion. It means that the common consciousness of man—the consciousness which expresses itself and has its being in the daily tasks and activities, the daily enterprises and adventures, of the ordinary life, and which in science and literature and the arts does but more completely fulfil its native capabilities—brings all these activities and interests to their concentration and inner organic unity, their greatest breadth and depth and height, their greatest intension and at the same time their greatest extension, in the love of God. So that the religious consciousness, *as religious,* cannot be satisfied with itself unless it fulfil and realise the whole nature of man; unless, that is to say, among other things, it realise and fulfil reason. Religion, as religion, desires to be that in which reason can have its true rest; the rest of complete development, the rest of coming to its full stature, the rest of unity with its object.

And if the demand now in question is not one for the merely outward relating and reconciling of religion and reason to each other, still less is it that demand in the one-sided form too often met with; the form in which primacy is ascribed to reason—reason taken as essentially a non-religious principle—and it is required that in the eyes of such reason, religion vindicate itself. As against any such position, it must be urged that the theologian is unfaithful to experience, alike as in the individual and as in the history of the race, if he admits any way of stating his task which suggests, either that religion has no deep foundations of life in itself and thus is not self-vindicatory; or that it depends on speculative reason for its vindication; or that its great value lies in this, that the religious consciousness contains implicitly (in some unscientific picturate form) scientific and philosophic truth, by which, when it is brought properly to light, reason can profit—so that "the truth of religion" is something which comes out only through the interpretation of religion into terms of intellect. Such a view misapprehends not only the nature of religion; it misapprehends just as seriously the general place and function of speculative reason in our life and in the whole development of our consciousness. No man could devise a more radically inadequate account of the genesis and growth of religion than this: that, first, man made to himself a theology or philosophy—came by reflective reasoning to a belief in God; then set himself to fashion his life, in worship and in conduct generally, into accordance with that belief. On the contrary, man, being what he is, lives his life with a wide variety of activities and interests; the practical arts from the most rudimentary to the most elaborate, the moralities, the religions arise; and not until all this practical organisation of experience has gone far, not until man has created for himself some sort of civilisation with a moral and religious order, does he, as a speculative consciousness, turn back upon himself to examine these the elements and activities of his life. But when that return upon himself is made, its effect may indeed be profound; sometimes in radical and searching revolution, in destructive ferment of mind, in reversal of ancient ways; but more usually in the gradual introduction of a deeper soul of rational insight, rational hope, rational patience, into those perpetual practical activities of our life. Hitherto principles have operated implicitly; with a power like that of nature, but often confusedly, inconsistently, with injustice to themselves and perpetual unreconciled conflict with one another. But now they are brought out into clear light; are enabled on the one hand to possess and fulfil themselves more adequately, on the other hand to reconcile and unify themselves with one another. And more; are enabled in some measure to judge themselves, by considering their universal and eternal relations; their relation to the fundamental order of the cosmos, of which man's experience is itself in some way a part, and of whose supreme principle the organising and operative ideals of man's spirit are in some way a manifestation. This reflective return of the spirit of man upon itself, with the conscious interpenetration of life and reason which thus comes to be, is commonly called philosophy; but when the spirit which thus returns upon itself is religious—when life means to it the heart's apprehension of the supreme principle of all existence and the organisation of every activity in and through that apprehension—the return is theology.

It is true that upon philosophy, still more upon theology, in this conception of them, there are the gravest of limitations. In our incomplete but developing life, our theology must have in it something provisional. Even in receiving the Logos of God, we receive Him as men and not as gods; receive Him not simply into frail understandings, but into spirits, potentially infinite it may be, but having here upon the earth only the beginnings of the realisation of that potentiality. So that, in the life upon the earth, the spirit that would see, the spirit that would apprehend reality as it is, must always be criticising and reconstituting its view of the world. In feeling, and in the faith which is feeling, man has that which can be to him at once his deepest spring of life and his greatest practical danger; a sort of immediate grasp upon the infinite and the eternal, prophetic of a rational apprehension of them yet to be realised. But all that we can here hope to do, in the way of such rational apprehension, is to form an hypothesis, or reach a point of view from which the main factors of our experience, the main features and characters of our experienced world, are seen to go together in a single system;—to form such an hypothesis, and then leave to the departmental sciences the work of carrying as far as they can, from their own special and abstract points of view, the rationalisation of particular facts and events. A view of the world in which each empirical event and fact would be seen completely rationalised—seen in the total or eternal system of its relations, seen in its complete "divine interpretation"—is not now open to us men; it is not given in revelation, is not now possible to our reason. To demand such a view is to demand what cannot be had; to condemn theology or philosophy for not affording it, is to disdain all nightly help of lamps and candles because we cannot bring the sun and moon bodily into our houses. This limitation upon the power of the spirit of man to fulfil its own demand, is a far-reaching one. It makes theology and philosophy to be as much prophetic as they are scientific. But it does not make them valueless.

Upon this matter of the difficulties of theology I dwell for a special reason. Doctrinal Theology, as a systematic discipline, is in our generation very distinctly at a turning point in its course. On the one hand the method is gone, by which, a generation or two ago, systems of Doctrinal Theology were still built up; the method of *loci communes*. The systems thus built up were by no means without power. They had in them an immense strength; the strength of traditionary wisdom and gathered insight. And to many of those who took that method as a thing of course—no more to be doubted than the ways of nature—the *loci communes* were heads of genuine insight and no mere professional formulæ. Such men really undertook no other task than the one just indicated. They were seeking the interpenetration of thought and life, of religion and reason. Under whatever burdens of mechanical order and arrangement, they were really trying to relate their religious experience, and the religious experience of mankind, to their total consciousness of the world. But upon that method Doctrinal Theology stood in a twofold danger. With its established and conventional order of topics, it ran the risk of becoming professional and mechanical; devitalised by loss of contact with actual experience, and yet going on with its regular motions after the life had departed. Secondly, the method made at least possible a fatally easy way of escaping just the difficulties that were in question a moment ago. The particular doctrines could be taken—often were taken—one by one, with no concern for a genuine and organic unity of them. Each could receive its own separate discussion—nay, its own separate proof; a conclusion in one of the separate compartments laying no obligation upon the procedure and argument in any other. But in this a change has come. I do not mean that we have got above the theological weakness of human nature; above the temptation to build our theology in separate pieces. I mean that we are coming—already have come—to a different drawing of the boundaries within theology; to a different alignment of the theological disciplines from that which the older Doctrinal Theologians had before them. On the one hand, and first in the order of study, we have a vast and continually increasing array of exegetical and historical sciences, which, without dogmatic bias, seek simply for truth of grammatical meaning and of historical fact. On the other hand, and coming later in the order of study, we have what we were wont to call Doctrinal Theology, and what we were wont to call Apologetic, fusing themselves together as a philosophy of Christian experience. This new arrangement of boundaries—boundaries, not barriers—is altogether for the better. It is better because it gives us the true and concrete unity and differentiation of our field, instead of a series of conventional distinctions. And it is better because it brings the doctrinal theologian inevitably face to face with the genuine problems and genuine difficulties of that field. That, then, is one side of the new situation. The doctrinal theologian who would make his theology a systematic discipline has been brought where he cannot evade the intrinsic difficulties of his subject: he must face life as it actually is—life, and all its modern scientific account of itself. But the other side of the situation is this: just as doctrinal theology was being brought to this point, there has come upon it the impact of another tendency; a tendency, which is rooted deep in the whole modern movement of life and science, and is closely connected with the greatest recent advances in theology. This is the heroic surgery which would deliver the theologian at one stroke from the oppression of the very difficulties here in question, by cutting off systematic theology and constructive philosophy altogether, and confining theology to the special historical and literary disciplines. To this tendency one sweeping concession must be made from the outset. Its whole positive programme is sound. To theology the departmental studies are altogether indispensable. The modern specialised and critical pursuit of them has been to theology a veritable new birth; the neglect of them by theology spells ruin, and discreditable ruin. But the negative side cannot be so easily admitted. As for the difficulties that beset philosophy of religion and systematic theology, every interest both of truth and of religion requires us to see that the difficulties are there, and that they make such theology and philosophy to be more prophetic than scientific. But that is not enough. We should also see why the difficulties are there; and to see that, is to recognise that we must face them, no matter how our patience be tried, and do the best we can with them. The difficulties are there just because theology is what it is; the intellectual correlate of religion. Religion, as was earlier pointed out, is the whole of life brought to unity in the love of God;

is the all-inclusive interest, of which all particular interests and objects are organic parts; something which cannot be defined, but by reference to which all particular values are defined. Hence any theology that could attain to the true form of its idea, would be a thoroughly articulated view of the system of things in which man has his being and experience; a thoroughly articulated view of the complete or eternal order of the world, in which all souls have their being, all events their significance, and God His realisation of Himself if He realise Himself at all; the eternal order whose temporal course, as the church in its œcumenical faith believes, is gathered to its centre in that revelation of God which is the Incarnation of His Son. Any theology, I say, that could fulfil the idea of theology, would be such a completely articulated view; and must be, in whatever beginnings of it are possible upon the earth, the promise and dawning of such a view and of such vision. That is the reason why all the difficulties which besiege us, as we try to make our experience intelligible to ourselves, come to their culmination in theology. Theology faces all those difficulties, and faces them in their intensest possible form, because theology deals with the very realities of life, the things that no man can renounce without laying aside the nature of humanity and the hopes which "make us men." And that being the case, the theologian is scarcely true to his task as the interpreter of religion, if he insist upon confining theology to special investigations of history and literature; thus leaving to the non-religious intelligence the attempt to gain light upon those questions which experience forces upon us, and which, just because they are questions about the eternal order of the world, and our place and function in it, are questions for our common life and for the religion of which, even in its highest forms, our common life is still the scene. And great as the difficulties are, to accept the task rather than to deny or evade it, is surely the true modesty. It is the nobility of the mind to recognise how weak it is as it stands in its infinite field. It is its ignobility to try to persuade itself that the greater part of that field is not its field at all. The true modesty of the intellect is magnanimous and high; it comes by no renunciation of the labour of thought, by no self-chosen penury of intelligence, by no finality of submission to ghostly counsellors. It lies in taking the situation as it is, and in recognising that though our whole accomplishment is slight, compared with the task, yet the little we can accomplish is great in promise; in the scanty intellectual achievement of our short lives and partly unfolded minds, there is implied an eternal whole of truth; as, in our practical achievement, a society which is the eternal whole of good. Indeed, the formal unity itself of our mind, as a consciousness at once religious and rational, at once practical and scientific, stands as the prophecy of a concrete and material unity; an absolute or eternal spiritual unity in which is gathered into one, and reconciled, all the strange and splendid and common-place and tragic content of the world; and in which the material and concrete unity of the warring factors of our experience is progressively possible. Nay, there is a sense in which theology, as the interpenetration of religion and reason just spoken of, is already actual among all Christian men; for theology, upon the highest conception of it that any man can form, is still only the systematising and clarifying of what to some extent goes on in every thoughtful religious man, and is to him his light of life. In our attempt at theology and philosophy we are like children who stand on the shore of the infinite sea, and endeavour, with eyes that can look only a little way, to penetrate the mysteries of the central and untravelled deep; yet who have, in the very nature of their limitations, the promise of the overcoming of them. The waves and the tides that with their beauty and their strange tragedies break upon the shore, have had their birth in the fundamental laws of the sea; and the spirit that has its dwelling there, where the waves and the tides are—even though it be where they find their limit in the shore—already has in it kinship, and the promise of kinship, with what seems the incommunicable deep.

The difficulties of theology, in a word, are to be striven with, not yielded to. To recognise their existence and their weight, is honesty; to be made hopeless by them is cowardice. Coming back, then, to the main matter of the discussion, we must say once more that the goal of theology is a unity of religion and reason. The belief that either such unity itself, or, what is more likely, a perpetual movement toward it, lies within the possibilities of the spirit of man, is what sets the theologian at work and keeps him at work. And in allowing himself to be impelled by such a faith, he does well; for he sees—not to mention here considerations which belong to a later discussion—that some measure of the realisation of that unity already has taken place in the spiritual history of man upon the earth. We must, then, turn to the question immediately before us: the view of the world with which we have just been concerned as contained implicitly in Christian experience—in that view does reason also find rest? Not that reason is to still its unquiet, by analysing the Christian consciousness, finding a view of the world therein, and accepting that view as a dogma is accepted. Rather what I shall argue is this, that so far as reason in its imperfect development in the human soul can satisfy its own demand—so far as it can make intelligible to itself the many-sided experience of labour and of struggle which is the history of mankind and which comes to its highest concentration and expression in our consciousness of God, of sin, and of salvation—it does so in a view of the world essentially the same as that which, in however unrationalised and undeveloped a form, is implicit in the practical life of Christianity, being gained in advance of clearly conscious reason by the religious consciousness in its swifter ascent of affection and of faith.

I need not remind you that in attempting to deal with this in the remaining three lectures, I shall be confined to the briefest of outlines, necessarily omitting many things, and having little scope for argument of attack or argument of defence. Rather let me dwell upon this, that in this region the best that any man, or any succession of men, can hope to do must still be tentative. To the end of our earthly day, all our theology and philosophy must have much in them that is prophetic; the promise of science, but not yet science. So that the view of which I have just spoken we must think of as one upon which religion and reason converge; as one, in the practical and intellectual holding of which, the soul of man moves with hope—I think, with good hope—toward a far-off goal of unity with itself and with the whole of existence.

The order of the discussion is as follows. It has to set out from experience; and experience means not some abstract conceptual order, nor yet abstract sensations and feelings supposed in their complexes to constitute individual minds. It means our life as it now actually is; what we have, what we are, and what we may know of the history in time by which we have come to be what we are. It means the sights and sounds, colours and odours, that constitute a natural world; the passions and the reason that in the unity of self-consciousness are the natural soul; and all the activity of that soul in the common labour of life, in the fine and the practical arts, in science and morality and religion, in the building up of social and political order; in a word, all that process of the development of spiritual capabilities which is the history of civilisation and of its institutions. I shall first have to lay before you the general thesis that we can best make intelligible to ourselves the experience which is thus our life, by viewing it as an activity of reproduction and self-communication on the part of an absolute spirit. That is to say, a spirit which is so organically, so creatively, related to the whole system of reality—to the whole world to which it gives origin and in which it continually energises—that its consciousness of itself is a consciousness of the whole (i.e. the eternal) order of the world in nature and history. Or rather, let me say, his consciousness of himself; for, while all the pronouns have misleading associations, personal ones certainly mislead less than impersonal, in referring to an absolute spirit; a spirit whose self-determination is the source of the whole order of our experienced universe, so that "all our springs are in him"; a spirit who fulfils himself by imparting himself, and in the impartation communicates to the created spirits that thus come to be, ideals of truth, of beauty, of goodness, which in the absolute spirit are eternally realised, but in the created spirits operate as the inner springs of a development which only gradually and through many struggles and crises becomes clear to itself. That thesis—

no new one—I must set before you to-morrow, as a general account of the making of man and the making possible of his experience; and then must attempt in the remaining two lectures, further to articulate that thesis by special discussion of the chief factors in the structure and movement of our experience; factors which set for theology its real *loci communes*. The large factors of our experience—the great *momenta* of the spiritual process which, with all its steady growth, all its long dialectic of opposed forces, all its revolutions and new births of time, is our life and history upon the earth—fall into two broad classes; classes distinguishable for discussion, inseparable in experience. On the one hand, there is "nature." Nature, under the aspect of necessity, surrounds us; not only surrounds us, but is so in us, that its breath of life is in some sense our breath of life, and the revelation of its being given by the special sciences a revelation to us of our own being. On the other hand, there is our assertion of ourselves, not merely in the presence of those necessities of nature, but also upon the basis of them; an assertion by which the soul of man, receiving through nature and its necessities the communication of spiritual being, comes late or soon to distinguish itself from nature and from those necessities. This assertion and realisation of ourselves we may call Freedom, if by that word we understand no merely abstract and indifferent power of volition, but the concrete realisation by the spirit of man of its own capabilities, as it acts out its own inner energies and ideals in that history which is the growth of art and science, of morality and religion, of the industrial and social and political order of civilisation. But in the very heart of the activity by which man thus distinguishes himself from nature there arises the fact which fills all this assertion and growth of ourselves with tragedy: the fact that the spirit which has life in itself can turn to its own way, regarding not the purpose and vocation of God, but its own private will and pleasure; so that freedom becomes sin, and in sin nature is so taken up that, in the impulses and instincts of man, nature appears as a power over against its maker, God. But freedom, and sin, and nature in man's soul rising to sin:—these are not the ultimate word. The world—this very world of nature and freedom and sin—is God's world; in it, world of freedom and of sin though it is, He has to fulfil Himself. And so there is something more than nature and freedom and sin; and in the experience and history of mankind that something more is the central and essential thing apart from which neither nature, nor freedom, nor sin, nor the life of man in which all these appear, can be seen in its true being. That something more is that the whole order and constitution of the world, in which nature and freedom, as they are in man, come to be sin, is also an order of redemption; an order constituted for the overcoming of sin; not through external compulsions as such, but through the winning of man's heart by the grace of God, so that man, in communion with

God, in dependence upon God, dying to himself in order that he may live unto God, overcomes sin and makes himself in the activities of a divinely organised civilisation—his City of God—more and more at one with God. But with this idea of the whole divinely constituted order of the world as an order of redemption, we are brought to the actual movement of that redemptive process in human history; a movement culminating in the Incarnation. And with that we come again to what was presupposed in setting out; the historical disciplines of theology. We began with the Christian consciousness as present fact; those studies deal with the historical sources from which, the historical process through which, we became the subjects and bearers of that consciousness. But as we are brought back at the end to those studies, it will be, I trust, to see them in some wider light, through having considered the universal relations in which stand the experience of man and the concentration and summing up of that experience in a consciousness of sin and of salvation.

In outlining thus the task and the problems of the theologian, I am anxious to avoid a double wrong; the wrong of seeming to suggest that even upon the highest view of it the theologian's work is a spiritual finality; and the opposite wrong of underestimating the importance of theology for the present life, the present thoughts, the present civilisation of men. On the one hand, there are times when theology should be silent; times when love and faith become one indistinguishable energy of the soul, and reason is fulfilled in intuition. Then the inquiring, the weighing, the searching—the minute and painful wringing out for ourselves of hints and glimpses of the heavenly light—have no more place. Not that they were without value; but their work is done; in a higher than themselves they are fulfilled. On the other hand, though there are times when theology thus passes away in light; and though these are certainly prophecies in us of a mind toward which our own is called for ever to approach, a mind for which eternally theology is done away in light; yet in such a life as ours now is—a life in which a thousand infinite forces are struggling within us, and scarcely by our utmost efforts of thought and will can we reconcile them and bring them to the unity of a well-guided life—theology has a great and splendid function. In interpreting religion to itself, it is the interpreter of our whole life to itself. And such interpretation means not only the overcoming of the civil war which perpetually is breaking out in our nature between the practical consciousness—the moral and religious mind—on the one side, and on the other that outlook upon the whole of our life to which the scientific mind of the age by the very completeness of its success continually is impelled. It means in general the making clear to us alike of the mutual harmony, and of the essential soundness, of all the great rational and practical factors that make up our life; and thus it helps to lead us to that desired unity of experience only in which—as a unity that through all its infinity of details is centred upon God—does either religion or reason do justice to its own principle and come fully to be itself.

That is really the question of the bearing of theology upon the movement of civilisation; for the true unity of life is not merely individual and abstract, but is social and historical. And I sometimes think that in this the œcumenical theology has still before it the greatest of its secular labours. By multitudes outside the church there is desired, with a passion and a sense of wrong of which we within the church have little idea, a change in the present form of our civilisation; a change in which the political order of our life would be absorbed into the social and industrial, and the social and industrial order itself so transformed as to be made one great endeavour to realise the demands of the "religion of humanity." The important question is not whether that change will take place or no. The forces that we commonly group together under the name of social evolution; forces which consist, as in the determination of great classes not to sink below a reasonable way of living, so also in the public spirit, the good sense, the temper of righteousness, which know themselves defeated so long as any part of society endures wrong;—these have never in the past, in any civilisation such as ours, left society in one stay; nor will they in the future. The important question is not whether there will be change or no, but in what spirit it will be effected. To individuals and to single generations, the forces of social evolution present themselves as impersonal and fatal. It is a little thing that they render forecast difficult, and continually set aside our paper constitutions. *Nolentem trahunt;* they make of the individual what he would not be. Yet they are not really impersonal, nor altogether fatal; even in the movement of its social order the race can "half control its doom." And the truly important question—the question of a standing or falling civilisation—is how in the shaping of industrial and social order that control will be exercised; whether the men and women who do the world's task-work will so take the matter into their own hands as to work out, independently of Christianity and with indifference to it, their own social salvation; or whether, as they work out that salvation—for none but themselves can work it out—Christianity will be in the midst of the movement, making that religion of humanity and the civilisation based upon it, deep enough to be true to reality and true to the nature of man; doing that by bringing it home to men's hearts that all human relations are relations to God, so that wrong against any man is wrong against God, and the true religion of humanity is the social union of mankind in the love of God; the social union of mankind in a Kingdom of God which includes the whole life and work of humanity on the earth, and in which, as there is no uncleanness of individual life, so is there no public wrong, no social cruelty, no industrial oppression, but an open way for each into the best that is known by all. That vast function of being the inspiration of humanity in its evolution of its social and industrial order, is, indeed, a matter of religion rather than of theology. Yet theology has a place in it; for in theology is an appeal of religion to the whole rational spirit of man. Certainly to the life of the men who are to follow us, whatever the form of it may prove to be, those men contribute who to-day do what they can to apprehend the life which the œcumenical theology sought to express, and the person whom it sought to interpret; and who thus bring home to the heart and to the mind of the age, not ancient symbols alone, but an intelligible, a vital, an enduring and deepening gospel of inner devotion and of social life.

The value of theology, then, lies in this, that when life and understanding go hand in hand, understanding, if it have any soul of wisdom, can help greatly in clarifying and deepening life. Sometimes it can help in what properly is the task of the plain good sense of the working day; in removing particular obstacles from before our feet. But its greater help is to give vision to our eyes, and to summon up for us the wider horizons that really determine the meaning of the point at which we now stand. And in this function—this function of interpreting to us our own experience and helping us toward the true organisation and unity of the manifold and apparently conflicting forces that are for ever at work in it—broadly and ultimately theology must succeed. For life and thought flow together—flow as one—from the same divine fountain. But completely it can never succeed; in the spirit of man, developed as it is by the gradual self-communication of a divine principle, life always outruns thought; no man can ever bring for himself his complete being—the race of men can never bring for itself its complete being—to consciousness.

Yet is is more important to dwell upon the nature of theology than upon its limitations; for once its nature as interpreting and therefore as presupposing religion is apprehended, its power and its limitations, its use and its danger, follow at a glance. Its fabric rises in the outer court, the court of the understanding; yet, so far as it is faithful to its task, it is from the inner court that it is organised and built. Or rather, that inner court has no boundary. Wherever, through all the troubled ways of this world, God dawns on men, and men "come to themselves";—there is the inner court, and in it as in a place of light all who have chosen God are together; the saints, the prophets, the mystics, all the pure in heart; all who, however dimly, through whatever cloud of mind or under whatever oppression of labour, have apprehended a love that moves "the sun and the other stars," and upon it as upon an only and yet an all-sufficient hope, have cast themselves. There, where all things are in light, and the light is God, and knowledge is with life, and life with knowledge, made one—there is the fulfilment and the inspiration of every true human labour or attempt at labour; and unless theology is rooted there, it has no living root at all. And when it is not rooted there; when it becomes mere learning, forgetful that religion is life—a life which takes in all the hopes and energies of mankind—and theology the attempt of that life to understand itself; then it loses the one character that makes any human work worth doing, the character of helping the world toward a unity of all its forces in the love of God. In theology, indeed, the highest and the lowest that are in man come to light. The highest; for theology is the interpretation of the highest of all things—the faith in God which, just because it knows and loves God, welcomes all truth. But also the lowest; the issues are great, and our human nature can be small, and so it is that faith breaks down into fear; and with fear comes hate; and fear and hate issue in cruelty—even though it be the cruelty that imagines it does God service. And alike in the theology which is mere learning, and in that which is fear grown articulate, there arises a mortal wrong of man, the tyranny which, if it has oppressed science, has oppressed religion still more; the tyranny of creeds that are external to religion and have in them nothing of its free breath of life. So that those who have no escape from the questions of theology and from the attempt to gain light upon them, have had often enough to bear in their hearts the echo of the ancient lament: *Multum incola fuit* *anima mea.* But that is a possibility which has to be faced in every great work of the spirit of man. There is no vocation of man, but it may be made an evil to humanity; and it is as we draw near to the throne itself of God that the best things are by our human unworthiness made the worst. Nor is that an ancient story; every age learns it anew. Few things, for instance, have been better in our day than the historical and critical study which has made the Old Testament to our consciences a vivid, a searching, a commandingly practical book. But often that open way to a great companionship in the better and braver things of life is turned into evil, when the haste of our age is upon us, and from our pulpits we lay our unmastered shreds of criticism, or our undiscriminating anger against it, upon a simple and hard-working people whose one need is to be brought near to the love and the perpetual consolation of God. From such preaching, still more from all that spirit of the age of which such preaching is the symbol—the haste of life, the confusion, the failure to live with deep and elementary things—one passes with relief to the older worship which depends on no man's gifts, but is of itself august in majesty, august in comfort; Psalm, and the immemorial common prayer bringing before God the need and the hope of us all; and at last, when the day and its work are ours no longer, the plainsong of *Te lucis ante,* binding together in the associations of its austere and secular music the ages in which the church kept her watch, while our stubborn fathers, half in obedience to the heavenly vision, half in the natural forces of their life, laid the foundations of the mingled and tragic structure which is now our civilisation.

It is good to rest there with memory and with peace. Yet with such memory and such peace no man may continually abide. Presently where the voice of confession was, and that solemn music, there is silence; and from the temple one must pass to the city and the fields. There it is—in the place where men labour for their bread, the place where their critical and revolutionary sciences rise, the place where slowly they shape their civilisation—that the theologian, himself one of them and doing all he does as part of the common task, must do his own day's work; seeking as he can for a unity of those many thoughts and many insights; and keeping alive in the place of man's science a prophecy of the intuition and the love in which all effort after science and after goodness is to be fulfilled; the intuition wherein, in the knowledge of God, all things are known; the love in which every man's deed is in its measure a fulfilment of all men, and as a fulfilment of all men a fulfilment of God. And unless God is there, in that common field where we do our daily work of hands and of mind—unless He is there, seeking men and of men to be found—neither was He in the temple.

II

HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND THE ABSOLUTE SPIRIT

Yesterday I attempted to indicate the task of the theologian; a task rooted in the common consciousness of religious men, in the sense that it is the endeavour to perform more systematically and thoroughly that work of reflexion to which they inevitably, and by the inner nature of religion itself, are forced, but which ordinarily they can accompish only in ways unsystematic, fragmentary, prophetic. First, the theologian—remembering once more that that name properly signifies not this or that particular man, but the Christian consciousness grown reflective and undertaking through long histories and in countless individual minds a task which in this world can at the best be accomplished only in part—the theologian has to bring to explicit form the beliefs that in the affections and energies of Christian experience act as the organising powers of our life and of all that is best in our civilisation; so that in his work the Christian consciousness enters somewhat more systematically into the intellectual possession of its own nature and content. Secondly, he has to contribute what he can to the ancient and enormously difficult task of attempting to set the religious consciousness, thus made explicit, in relation to our whole rational consciousness of reality. And in both stages of his task he has to deal with a consciousness which is more than merely individual. He has to deal with the religious consciousness, not only as an individual Christian man entering into his own heart and considering its controlling devotions, but also as the student of a history and a literature which stand central to the world's life, and by which his own individual experience has been rendered possible. And the rational consciousness of reality with which he is concerned, is not simply his own private thought about the world, but (in whatever extent he can enter upon it) the whole human consciousness of reality as thus far registered in our inherited common sense of things, in science, and in philosophy. The object of thus trying to set the religious consciousness in relation to our whole rational consciousness of reality, was not to "prove" religion by travelling beyond it to some external confirming power; for there is nothing external to it; but rather to do justice to both religion and reason by asking whether human nature is at one with itself as the bearer of both. It is true that in such a life as ours—an experience still in course of development—theology can, in such an attempt, take only the first steps of a long journey; in such a life, neither on the one hand can any practical attitude bring its operative principles wholly to clear consciousness; nor on the other hand has the rational consciousness done itself more than the beginnings of justice. But that is no ground for refusing to be theological at all; no ground for refusing to attempt the satisfaction of a demand which human nature keenly feels; no ground for refusing to look at all for a unity of religion and reason. We have a vision of the goal; and some steps have already been taken toward it. As was indicated yesterday, such theology has to some extent long been actual among men; in the men who most completely fulfil human nature in Christianity, there has been at least a convergence of religion and reason upon a common view of the world; reason itself finding rest—so far as in our life such a thing is possible—in the view, which as implicit in Christian love and faith has already been in outline before us, but which, as an hypothesis of reason for making intelligible to ourselves the main characters of our experience, may be roughly summed up in some such way as this. (1) The experience which is our life and history upon the earth is a process—or part of a process—in which a supreme God, an absolute spirit, realises Himself by reproducing Himself, under limitations, in and as lesser spirits. (2) The lesser spirits who have their origin and their being through such a self-communication on the part of God, must late or soon come to be free, if God is to have in them any worthy fulfilment of Himself; however gradually, through whatever media of physical and natural histories, and in whatever empirical content of practice, that freedom be realised. (3) In such freedom of man sin is at least an abstract possibility. (4) When the desperate problem arises that sin is not merely such an abstract possibility; that on the contrary the order of our life, in which the individual will of man is developed is such that the adult will is not merely capable of sin, but has a positive bent toward sin, a natural or original sin:—when this desperate problem arises, it is met by what, both for Christian faith and for reason, is the great reconciling and solving idea, the idea that the whole order of the world is in its inner nature a process of redemption, a process of the overcoming of sin; a redemption which is brought to light for us men in the incarnation of the Son of God, in whom all things are created and in whom the universe holds together. So that the reason of man finds the solution of its ultimate problem in a religious—a Christian—idea. By means of that idea it is able, I will not say to achieve, but to move with good hope toward, its goal: an apprehension of the meaning of our life, through an insight into the order of the world and into the place and function of man in that order.

With that view of the world, as the apprehension of reality implicit, and implicitly operative, in Christian love and faith, we were concerned in the first lecture; with it, as satisfying the demand of reason that our experience be made intelligible to us, we are to be concerned in the three lectures that remain. In the present lecture I have to deal, then, with the first of the topics noted at the close of the lecture yesterday, and roughly summed up a moment ago: the view that we can best make intelligible to ourselves the experience which is our life and history upon the earth by regarding it as a process in which an absolute spirit realises himself by reproducing himself in lesser spirits; a reproduction of himself in which he makes the spirit of man more and more capable of apprehending and constructing a world, and more and more communicates the world—the world of which we ourselves are organic parts—to the spirits that thus are being made more and more capable of apprehending it. By reference to God, as such an absolute spirit, gradually reproducing Himself, through processes which we call "nature," in and as the soul of man, we can make intelligible to ourselves the life which is our experience upon the earth; can make intelligible to ourselves our self-contained and yet infinitely related individuality, our dependence and yet our freedom; can make intelligible to ourselves our experience of nature, of natural passions, and of the regulation and reconstitution of these in accordance with moral ideas and religious devotion.

The considerations which lead to such a view are, in the main, elementary and obvious, and received long ago in human thought their pointed and impressive statement. They come briefly to this. In the first place, our life is a development of spiritual capabilities; and such a development in the true sense of the term; that is, a process in which the growth takes place, not by mere increments from without, but by the co-operation of a life within with the system of a "world without"—the outer world thus becoming the means of realisation to the inner life. But in the second place, since development cannot arise out of a void—*ex nihilo, nihil*—such a process of the gradual realisation of spiritual capabilities implies, as its *prius,* an eternal and absolute spirit who, as part of the one activity which is his fulfilment of himself, communicates or reproduces himself in and as the soul of man, and constitutes that "world without" in whose history man has his place and enters upon his being, so that its natural forces are divine media in the making of man.

The former of those points is a statement of fact. Our experience, whether as in the individual or as in the race, so far from being either self-created or complete once and for all, begins as potentiality; as something which may indeed be the promise of all things, but in actual present reality is only one step above sheer nothingness. Gradually the potentiality becomes actuality; the actuality which is labour and knowledge, art and science, morality and religion—the life of the citizen not only in a political society upon the earth, but also in an invisible kingdom where the service is of ideals that cannot be written, but in proportion as they are realised pass on in vision before us. All this realisation of spiritual capabilities forms a genuine process of development; takes place, as was said a moment ago, not by mere increment of being from without, mere laying of additional reality upon a passive subject which thus is not a true individual at all; but by a process of growth from within, in which a rich and systematic content of being, present implicitly from the beginning, is gradually, by the energies of an individual life within working in unison or even in apparent conflict with the energies of the system without, made explicit. Upon that inner character of the development, however, it will presently be necessary to dwell at some length; here let me keep to its broad outline. Our life, I said, begins as potentiality. The infant child—behind it already, if scientific eyes read with any correctness the evidence of the structures in its tiny frame, a long development in which, from the dust of the ground, the way has been prepared for the spiritual history which henceforth is to be its life—the infant child shows at first little sign of intelligence, little sign of conscience, little sign of the powers that in other human individuals have been making, and in it are to continue to make, a world and the civilisation of a world. But soon—as though a work of continuous spiritual creation were going on—there appear in its face signs of the recognition of persons, signs of interest in things. Gradually the little being that has had an animal growth, and by that growth is linked into the whole æonian course of the world's natural history, enters for itself upon a history in which it shows itself to have been, always and immeasurably, more than an animal; shows itself to be a part or product of a world whose principles are immeasurably more than biological. In that history it realises for itself and in itself, by actual achievement, its own continually increasing measure of those apparently infinite capabilities of the spirit of man to which reference has just been made: the capability of science, of the fine and the practical arts; the capability of moral judgment and action, of social and civil life; the capability of religion. As it realises these capabilities—that is to say, as it gradually becomes itself, gradually enters into possession of its own nature and of its world—it becomes a consciousness at once intensely individual and altogether social. It comes to be individual in the sense that each of us possesses himself as an immediate and in that way an incommunicable life; an incommunicable life, with a specific character and temperament of its own, with a sense of responsibility for actions of which it itself and not another is the source, and with an unshareable feeling of self-identity running through all its growth and change and variety. It comes to be social, in the sense that each of us thus possesses himself and has his individual and incommunicable being, in an order in which human beings have made themselves human by living with one another in the energies and charities of that common life in which there has come to be a history of civilisation, articulated in work and play, in customs and institutions, in the intellectual and practical mastery over nature through science and the arts, in the hopes and visions wherein the spirit of to-morrow fights with growing forces its irregular battle upon the field of to-day.

Thus it is that human nature begins to be; as the potentiality of such spiritual achievements and structures. Human experience, in the individuals and races and histories in which the soul of man has been able to do any sort of justice to itself, means the realising of that potentiality. This is a first and altogether obvious fact about our experience. But our very familiarity with it makes us fail to see the wonder of it; makes us fail to apprehend the profound and difficult problem involved in it. Development does not come out of nothing; *ex nihilo, nihil.* We talk easily about potentialities; but what *is* a potentiality? It is certainly not something that exists in its own right, and, as thus existing, is the source of lines of widening and ascending existence. Rather, when there is a movement from potential to actual, a process of bringing the implicit to explicitness, there must be something at work which already at the beginning is adequate to the production of the whole process from beginning to end. We cannot conceive a process of development as beginning out of nothing; nor can we conceive the subject of the development as receiving from nothing those continual increments of being, which, as organically fulfilling the being already there, are precisely what we mean when we speak of development. In a word, what we have on our hands is the question of the Aristotelian metaphysic: what is the adequate source, or sufficient reason, of development?

To that Aristotelian question we must, I think, return Aristotle's answer: the principle of the necessary priority of Actuality to Potentiality in any process of development. In any particular case of development, there must be operative throughout the whole process a principle adequate to the production, by this gradual method, of the actuality which is the end of the process. Else the movement from potentiality to actuality could not take place at all; there would be no sufficient reason, no adequate source, of the continual increase of reality in the individual, but not self-caused, subject of the development. And if the development in question is the whole temporal movement of cosmic reality, the principle involved must be a principle eternal and absolute; absolute as requiring for its existence no other activity than its own; eternal as by that activity making possible, and in that sense including, the whole concrete content of the temporal movement of the world.

Such an absolute principle, or unmoved mover, Aristotle considered himself to find in pure thought as a supreme individual; that is, in God viewed as absolute reason—a reason which has not to go beyond itself for its object, but is altogether its own object. This conception, however, Aristotle was driven to work out in such a way as almost to destroy the value of the insight concerning development with which he started; was driven to this by the perpetual difficulty of theology—the resistance offered to any doctrine of God by the facts of contingency, of imperfection, of evil. Hence to Aristotle God was a consciousness self-contained in the exclusive sense; the object of His thought is altogether in Himself, being solely His own nature as *not* in connexion with the world of our experience. His fulfilment of Himself can only mean the blessedness of that contemplation in which He, the perfect subject, has Himself as His own perfect and sufficient object.[1] Nature can be no object of the divine mind; no system of divine energies. Nor can the natural soul of man be a self-communication on the part of God.[2] We have a God apart, who is the unmoved mover only in the sense that nature, a process or system with a life of its own, moves with immanent teleology toward Him, as a lover toward the object of love.

But here it is not with Aristotle's results, but with his principle that we are concerned. We must make for ourselves the application of it to the development now before us; the development of spiritual capabilities which is our own experience and history—is the growth of us as individuals, is the history of our society and civilisation. And the first step, at any rate, is plain. The potentialities given at the beginning, and *as* the beginning, of our experience, do not posit or create themselves. We are not conscious of ourselves as creative either of ourselves or of the natural order in which we have our development; that man of sturdy mind who wished to sum up all philosophy in the statement, *Here I am: I did not put myself here,* was governed by no unsound instinct. How, then, are we to conceive the actuality which is the *prius* of this process of development, in the sense of being the source of the given potentialities, and the inner energy of the order in which they have their development; the source of ourselves and of that system of things by which the continual increase of our being in experience is conditioned? One method of reaching a conception of such a source is ruled out from the beginning; the method of taking certain parts and factors of our conscious experience (called singly "things," or collectively "the material order"), extruding these from consciousness, setting them up as a world of independent things in a realistic time and space, and then viewing our conscious experience as part or product of such a world. To do this is not merely to try to explain a whole by reference to one of its own parts or aspects; it is to try to explain a whole by reference to one of its parts taken as that part actually is not. The true procedure lies in just the contrary direction. A source or condition must have a community of nature with that which is taken to be originated or conditioned by it. And since what we are trying to explain is the possibility of a spiritual process—a conscious experience—every step of the explanation must refer to some still greater spiritual reality by relation to which human experience (as itself organically a part of, or organically involved in the fulfilment of, that greater reality) is conditioned and made what it is. Since what is developed is concrete consciousness or spirit—consciousness which has an intellectual, a moral, a social, history—the *prius* for which we are asking must be adequate to the gradual production of such consciousness, either as being itself conscious, or as having a nature which is still higher than the nature of spirit. It cannot be a principle lower than spirit; and the man who holds that it is higher must be invited to explain, as exactly as he can, what he means; in which case one of two things is likely to result. Either he will be found to hold that the source (or, as he may put it, the genuine reality) of ourselves is something intrinsically above spirit, so that only by rising out of our spiritual individuality can we enter into true communion with it. That is, he will come to Mysticism; and then the problems of theology will be problems for him no more; in him, so far as he can attain his goal, the unquiet spirit of man will have entered upon the rest which lies the other side of reason and all its searchings. Or else his meaning will be found to be simply this: that the principle in question is self-conscious, is spiritual; but, as the *prius* of the whole movement of spiritual development in individuals and in all their history, is free from the limitations under which spirit moves in its gradual development in man. But that position we are concerned, not to deny, but to affirm.

---

[1] Christian faith and Christian theology face the same difficulties of contingency and imperfection and evil that drive Plato and Aristotle with remarkable identity of logical motive under great superficial difference to the dualism which haunts their theology; the dualism between the empirical world and the divine or ideal. And Christian thought faces these difficulties in far intenser form; the Christian consciousness of evil and of sin is immeasurably more acute than the Hellenic. But also with greater resources; for the Christian conception of God is that of the Father of our spirits and the Saviour of the world; and the œcumenical theology, centred in the idea of the Incarnation, is a doctrine of the union of the divine and the human natures. (To the Platonic and Aristotelian dualism, and the overcoming of it in Christianity, I have referred briefly in *The Study of Nature and the Vision of God,* pp. 216-232 and 251-267.)

[2] See, however, p. 147 *infra.* If Aristotle believed that at death the Active Reason in man is freed from all relation to Passive Reason, and thus in some way restored to its divine eternity and absoluteness, there would be in that some reconciliation of his doctrine of human individuality with his doctrine of God; but only by making human individuality itself an inexplicable union of two disparate types of Reason.

So far the matter seems clear; unless we hold to the criticism which criticises reason out of existence or out of connexion with reality. The question of really serious difficulty is the one to which we now come. But before taking it up, let me carry a step farther the warning noted a moment ago. We must not try, I said, to explain our experience by extruding from it certain of its own elements, hypostatising these as an independent system of things in realistic space and time, and then regarding our experience as part or product of such a system. We must not try to account for our experience *either* by shattering it to pieces, and treating the fragments as worlds in themselves; *or* by setting up entities which have no connexion with our experience, and which, therefore, our experience does not warrant us in affirming. It is such procedures which really deserve the reproach commonly directed against metaphysic—the reproach of trying to jump off our own shadow. It is a gross case of such a procedure to argue in this way: Granted that the growth of human experience requires the operation of a spiritual principle which, *so far as human experience is concerned,* is absolute, yet it does not follow that, from the point of view of the whole universe, the spiritual principle in question is absolute; absolute to human experience it may be, without being absolute altogether. In the first place, the man who holds to such discontinuity in the universe, must come to terms as he can with that belief in the systematic unity of all existence which is the basis and presupposition of all scientific work. It is the fundamental faith of science, that every fact is connected with every other fact, so that the ultimate explanation of any fact whatsoever is the ultimate explanation of all facts. But leaving that aside for the moment—it comes up presently in another connexion—let me point out that it is not a question of how large or how small is the place of humanity in the total system of things. The point is that history—all the history that has been or can be, however great or small the place of mankind in it—is a spiritual process. No man has ever heard of, or in any way discovered and investigated, a fact which is not a fact for consciousness, an object of the exercise of consciousness, and in its own way (by freedom or by compulsion) a determinant of the course of consciousness; which is not, in one word, an element or factor in the development of consciousness. The man who believes that in addition to the universe of our experience—I do not mean a universe completely present in our feelings and sensations, but the universe which is the sum total of the conditions of our experience and whose order is the order of our life—the man, I say, who believes that in addition to that universe there is another, which has absolutely no organic relation to our consciousness, no organic function in its development, can only be invited, first, to give his reasons for believing in such a universe, and, secondly, to describe the object in which he thus finds reason to believe. In the meantime, one must insist that all facts with which our sciences, our philosophy, our theology, have anything to do, are factors in the development of consciousness; either as facts immediately present to us in the way of sensations and feelings which influence the course and the character of our self-consciousness; or as the conditions of the occurrence of those feelings and sensations—conditions which may, or may not, consist in other sensations and feelings in us, but the systematic discovery of which is, in either case, the business of science. Space and time, for instance, are forms of the organisation of our experience. The whole order of natural fact in time and space—including our body and all its animal history—is an order partly present in and for our consciousness, partly asserted by us in order to explain the presence of the facts already experienced. The "laws of nature" searched out by us are laws which express the abiding or objective relations of the elements of our experience; laws, that is, which express the conditions under which the elements of our experience are given to us. So that the laws of nature are laws of the single process of which our experience is an organic part; a process whose essential character has thus, in our consciousness and in the development of our consciousness, a revelation of itself. This does not mean that we can change natural laws by our wishes; can by a wish, but without natural media, reunite broken bones or roll back the tides. It means precisely the opposite. Taking natural laws as they are, in all their aspect of compulsion, the place of them is consciousness and the production of consciousness. The facts whose determinations they express are facts in a spiritual process; the spiritual process in which individual human experiences have their being, and which in those experiences reveals its character in part, and gives a clue to its ultimate character. When we use the term "nature" to denote, not an abstraction made for purposes of scientific convenience, but something that concretely and actually is, what we have is a certain process of experience and its implications. Sense-impressions are given to us under definite conditions; and as we, in understanding, trace out those conditions we more and more become acquainted with an objective order of facts, laws, uniformities, which we call not "sensation" but "nature." Such a process is spiritual throughout; is throughout a process of modifications of our consciousness, and of relations of our consciousness to some greater whole of reality which must be kindred in nature to our consciousness in order thus to exist in organic connexion with it. But I need not labour an argument which in spite of its rather formidable sound, expresses a simple and altogether elementary insight. The shortest way to bring out its meaning and importance is to remind you of the suggestions made, in however cramped and arbitrarily limited a fashion, by Immanuel Kant; and of the formula in which Kant's critical insight came at last (and through other minds) to express itself, *die Dinge sind Gedanken, die Gedanken sind Dinge.* Things are thoughts—they have an ideal or spiritual nature as elements in experience; but thoughts are objective. To put it more fully and more fairly, things are elements in a spiritual process which is at once cognitive, moral, religious; a process in which the experiencing subject comes gradually to know a world and to apprehend the principles of its natural and social order; and by ideals and impulses which constitute his very nature, is called to a unity of thought and affection and character with that order and with its creative source. The history of the universe, so far as we can form any conception of there being such a thing, must be in the sense just indicated a history of spiritual life. That we *must* say; because the moment we ask ourselves what a "thing" or "event" *prima facie* is, we see that it is an element or factor in such life. So that when it is urged that the spirit which is the *prius* of our developing spiritual being, must no doubt be viewed as the absolute principle of *our* experience—the absolute principle for *our* theology and philosophy—but is not necessarily the absolute principle of the universe, the answer is that that objection will have a serious meaning, or any meaning at all, when reason has been given for believing in some reality other than that which is present to, or implied in the possibility of, our experience. Or if we turn the negative into a positive we get the truism, that since the experiencing subject and the experienced world are the correlative aspects of a unitary spiritual process, the principle by which we explain our own origin and capability of development is the absolute principle of the world.

But when such imaginary difficulties are out of the way, we come to the real heart of the problem and to the real place of difficulty. The actuality, we say, involved as the indispensable *prius* in that process of realising spiritual potentialities which is the life of man and the history of mankind, is an absolute spirit. That spirit is absolute, as being self-existent and self-determining; for his own existence and the existence of all to which he gives rise, he requires only his own activity; in the creative work wherein the whole order and constitution of the world has its source and maintenance, and the history of the world the ground of its possibility, he acts altogether from himself. And his consciousness is, in the full sense of the term, an eternal consciousness; he has present to him in one complete grasp all the concrete content of the history in time which by his creative or self-communicating activity he makes possible. But that being granted, how are we to conceive the relation of that spirit, and of the activity by which he makes us and our experience possible, to ourselves with our keen sense of freedom and responsibility; our sense of distinct individuality, of having a life of our own and not being simply modes of some one life which alone truly lives; our sense of working out a future and a fate in which the absolute principle of the world may indeed be fulfilling its purpose but which are none the less *our* future, *our* achievement, *our* fate? That is the central and critical point of the whole problem. In the rational investigation of it we can of course begin only with that end of the relation which we ourselves know, or rather are; namely, ourselves and our experience. As we examine from within our experience and the method of its development, an answer grows clear; an answer of the only kind which the case admits; not a detailed picturate answer for the imagination, nor something forced in immediacy upon us in sensation, but a general (and at the same time concrete) principle for the reason.

The outstanding fact which bears upon the problem is that general character of our experience which was noted at the beginning of the lecture, but to which at this point fuller statement should be given. The growth of our experience is not the mere laying of additional material upon a passive subject by an external power; it is a true development, a process in which the subject is himself operative in the unfolding of his own potentialities. Within the developing individual experience there is, indeed, continual action and reaction between factors which we can name only by such words as self and not-self, subject and object. And not only so; it is precisely in and through that continual action and reaction that the development takes place; it is only in the consciousness of objects, only in knowing objects and acting upon them, that the consciousness of self—the consciousness of individuality, of freedom, of responsibility—develops. But the process in which all this action and reaction goes on is thoroughly misapprehended if it is taken to be a process in which a purely outside power acts formatively upon a passive subject. So far from this being the case, we must insist (1) that our experience, instead of growing by mere additions laid from without upon a passive subject, is a process of making explicit a systematic content present implicitly from the beginning; (2) that in the bringing of its implicit content to explicit consciousness, our experience has some of the most important characters of a self-organising process. Indeed, it is precisely the fact that, while we are not conscious of our experience as self-created, yet we are conscious of it as in important respects self-organising, that constitutes and gives point to the question now before us.

First, then, the growth of experience is a process in which we realise for ourselves, make explicit and actual for ourselves, a systematic content present implicitly and in potentiality from the beginning. Take, for instance, any particular sensation. Set aside the abstract ways of dealing with it; the abstraction of the realist to whom the sensation is the psychical representative of some non-psychical reality; the abstraction of the purely analytic psychologist to whom it is a sort of psychical atom, a given inexplicable ultimate. Take the particular sensation as it actually has its being in some man's cognitive and practical experience, and thus in the history of mankind. In experience we deal with sensations cognitively by tracing out their relations and the conditions of their occurrence, and so apprehending them as elements in an eternal or objective order; and we rely in practice upon the order so apprehended. That is to say, any particular sensation in its actual being in experience has a nature which we apprehend only gradually in our whole scientific and practical development; and which we could adequately comprehend only by knowing the world and the system of the world. Any particular sensation develops all its significance as an element in an individual experience only through a process in which on the one hand a world is known, and on the other hand all the cognitive forms and resources of the experiencing subject—perception, conception, judgment through all its categories, reasoning—are employed in knowing that world. To each man his sensations (whether with or without definite volition on his part) are communicated in accordance with, or rather as forming organic parts of, the complete or eternal order of the world. So that to do justice to any one of his sensations, the man must apprehend that eternal order; which again would require that his mind should become all that it has in it to be. Precisely of sensations, as elements in the complete or eternal system of reality—precisely of sensations, that is to say, not in any abstract sense, but as they actually occur, and are, in individual experiences—the maxim is true, *In omnibus partibus relucet totum.*

This already carries a suggestion with it. A particular sensation in any given individual experience requires for its complete apprehension, we have said, a knowledge of the universe; which, again, involves that if the sensation is to be completely apprehended by the individual mind to which it is present, that mind must effect the complete unfolding and development of all its own capabilities. And the suggestion is that a sensation for its complete apprehension requires all this, just because the sensation was communicated by the absolute principle of reality, in whose creative energy that particular sensation in that particular mind is an organic part in an eternally complete universe. The innumerable relations which express the nature of any simplest and most rudimentary factor in any man's experience, are "potentially real" to him—they are "there," for him gradually to trace out—because they are actually (i.e. consciously) and eternally real to God.

That suggestion, however, must be considered later. In the meantime let me note that what has just been said about sensation is frequently put in another way. The question is asked, Which comes first in the building up of our cognitive consciousness—sensation, perception, conception, judgment? And the answer always has to be that while one or other of these may come late to formal clearness, yet in their essential nature and activity no one of them comes before or after another. If it is said that perceptions and conceptions must precede judgment, or else judgment will have no terms to relate, the answer is: that shows well enough that perceptions and conceptions must be there if judgment is to be there; so that judgment cannot precede perceptions and conceptions; but then no more can perceptions and conceptions precede judgment. For while formal judgment may come late, yet without the judgment in some implicit or explicit form—without the synthetic unity of consciousness through all its own elements, distinguishing, comparing, relating them—there is no such thing as a concept or percept at all. Then do sensations precede all the rest? No; for without an activity which is essentially that of judgment—that same activity of distinguishing and relating in the synthetic unity of consciousness—there is no such thing as sensitive experience, in the only sense in which sensitive experience is human experience, at all. Rather, we must say, there is at the beginning the potentiality of all these. There is for each individual man a world to be possessed; a world complete and in that sense eternal; a world of which the man's own experience of knowing it and acting in and upon it, is organically a part—so that the form of his knowledge and action is self-consciousness. There is for the man that world to be possessed and an experience of possessing it. And in the possessing of it, sensation and perception, conception and judgment, come gradually to be differentiated from one another through a process of development, in which sensation, perception, conception, judgment, reasoning, all go on together as correlatives, and there can be no advance of any one of them to explicit consciousness without a similar advance of all the others. It is not a case of first the lower—as a given element, able to exist in the complete absence of the higher—and then the higher. It is a case of the development of manifold forms and capacities, all in one system, from their potential state for us to their actual state for us. Indeed, to do justice to this, it should be put in a still wider form, as a statement of the relation of our consciousness of self (our consciousness of our experience as *our* experience, our consciousness of individuality, of freedom, of responsibility) to our objective consciousness. Neither can be said to come before the other. There is no consciousness of objects, as distinct from a succession of purely subjective feelings, except to a self which in apprehending objects distinguishes itself from them, as a supposed purely subjective self would not distinguish itself from its feelings. In other words, objective consciousness implies, and is possible only through, self-consciousness. Yet that does not mean that there is a self and a consciousness of self, prior to the consciousness of objects. It is only in the apprehending of objects that the self is aware of itself as a self; and only in the cognitive and practical intercourse with objects that there is any development of the self. The whole movement of knowledge and action in which we become conscious of self and conscious of objects, is a movement in which the two sides—consciousness as the sense of self, consciousness as the apprehension of objects—are both implicitly present from the beginning, and come in inseparable correlation to be explicit, and, as explicit, differentiated from each other.

Our growth in experience, then, is our gradual entrance into conscious possession of what we implicitly possessed or were at the beginning. And we should remember that this form of our experience, as the conscious realising of what lies implicit in the nature and connexions of our being, holds as true of the practical consciousness as of the cognitive. Our apprehension of duty, with all the intensity of feeling involved in it, is an apprehension of objective relations which constitute at once our own nature and the social order of the world. The dutiful man apprehends himself, not as an atomic individual, but as having by his very nature as human a place and station, and hence definite functions, in an objective social order; whether it be the social order simply of mankind, or some greater social order of heaven and earth. His duty, as the loyal performance of those functions, is thus not something alien from him; it lies implicit in his nature, as a vocation; and his nature is defined by its place in the concrete system of reality. The moral life is the life in which, whether with intellectual clarity or not, a man comes to "know himself"—to apprehend himself as he truly is—and to be faithful to the knowledge. And what he truly is and truly has been from the beginning, in being human at all—what he finds when he "comes to himself"—is an individual constituted by universal relations, and capable of apprehending the obligations which those relations lay upon him. With or without clear intellectual consciousness, this is apprehended as a principle of practice by every good man; in the prophets of the moral consciousness, from Plato onward, it has come to intellectual clearness as the doctrine that moral good—the good in which man fulfils the vocation implicit in his nature—is common good, good in which there is no distinction between good for self and good for others. Hence it is, too, that the principle of morality cannot stop short at mere morality, but is fulfilled only in religion; truly to know ourselves is to know the eternal principle of the world's order, and to be called to unity with it in all the energies of our nature, all the devotions of our will, all the achievements of our life.

Both for the cognitive and for the practical consciousness—still more for the two together as constituting our life in the integrity of its actual movement—the true account lies, then, in recognising no mere process of the external manufacture of experience out of elements some of which exist prior to others; nor any process of the merely external addition of higher elements on the top of previously given lower ones; but an organic unity of development—the organic unity of a movement in which man more and more apprehends in his own consciousness, more and more achieves by his own will, the potentialities and the vocation which lie in his nature by reason of its universal and eternal relations. To put it in a form which would have been understood in the thirteenth century, and ought not to be misunderstood in the twentieth, man is a self-conscious and self-determining unit in the *totum simul* of a complete or eternal system, and through and in his growing self-consciousness and self-determination, he enters more and more into possession of the eternal reality of which he and his experience are themselves a part. Into that possession he enters through an experience which is subjective and objective in the deepest sense of both terms. He apprehends the reality of the world, and in knowing that reality, knows the reality of his own individual nature and being; but he is able to know the world only in knowing himself and the world within him—finding in himself the key to the nature of the world, and in the nature of the world the revelation "in large letters" of himself. The true return upon self, the true "entering into one's self" is thus in the most real sense a taking possession of the world; while the casting one's self into the world's great causes of truth and of good is the true finding of one's self. And the growth of human experience as a process in which self-conscious individuals thus enter by knowledge and action into the truth of themselves as members of an eternal system, so that they cannot know it without knowing themselves, or know themselves without knowing it;—this growth is a process in which, so far as we do justice to our nature, there is built up in us a consciousness which in the true form of its idea is an eternal consciousness. The problem now before us might in fact be put in this way: How is it that for man, a creature who comes into being in time, there lies open the possibility of such gradual establishment in him of an eternal consciousness?

The very fact which leads to such a statement of the problem conveys also a suggestion for its solution; the suggestion noted a moment ago in connexion with sensation and the scientific process in which we endeavour to grasp the nature and relations of our sensations as elements in a single eternal system. Here that same suggestion takes this form. Our growth in experience is our gradual making clear to our own consciousness, our gradual realising by our own will, of what at the beginning we possessed implicitly, or potentially were. And such entering into the reality of our being means making ourselves intellectually and practically at home in an eternal system. Does not this suggest that the absolute principle, the creative and organising energy, of that whole system is itself an eternal consciousness, and that, by some reproduction or self-communication, it is present in us as the principle of our individuality; so that human nature has potentialities, in the loyal and faithful realising of which each of us more and more finds and fills his own peculiar station in the total system of things?

But before considering that, there is a second point of description to be taken up.[1] As we have just seen, the development of our experience means bringing to explicit consciousness, bringing to deliberate possession and achievement, that systematic content which is implicit in the most elementary beginnings or parts of our life; implicit in the sensations that we refer to an objective order, thus apprehending them as elements that have their character and place in the single complete system of reality; implicit in the most rudimentary sense of obligation. This second point is, that in all this development of our experience we ourselves are active. Our experience, in its movement from implicit to explicit, from vague to clear, from potential to actual, is in important respects self-organising. The analytic psychologist distinguishes for us the elements in the process of experience; but so far as he does justice to the experience which he observes, he is himself the first to break away from Hume's point of view, and to tell us that the elements which he has distinguished are elements that have their nature and their being in a process. They are not "eternal distinct existences"; not a given raw material of experience, in the sense that they exist prior to experience or in abstraction from experience, and, as thus existing, have in their own right a nature and laws of their own; so that experience is built up out of psychical atoms, the form of the construction, the course of the groupings and successions, being determined by the laws and qualities which those atoms possess in their own right as their nature. There are no such things as elements of experience apart from functions of consciousness. It is through and in functions of consciousness that elements of experience are what they are; there is a process going on, and no scientific analysis does justice to it which does not bring to view both the elements that are organised and the laws of the activity which is the continual process of their organisation. That activity, as already indicated, is essentially of the nature of judgment; and is involved, in however inchoate a form, in the most rudimentary stage of anything that is human experience at all. It is involved in all such sensational experience as can be a part of human experience—in the apprehension, for instance, of this blue or that green, of this sweet or that sour, as distinguished and related elements of one conscious experience; is involved in anything which is human experience as distinguished from the mere reaction of an animal organism upon a physical stimulus. Our experience as intellectual (to confine ourselves for a moment to that) is in fact a process of judgment: on the one side, a continuous activity of differentiation, a continuous particularising and individualising of facts, even though it be only the infant child's distinction of one element of sensation or feeling from another; on the other side a continuous activity of integration, in which the distinguished elements are more and more brought to the unity of a single system, in which, if it could be completely realised, reason takes for granted that it would find rest as in an absolute whole of truth and reality. New material of experience is continually being presented and received; but received neither passively, nor as foreign matter; it is received by being related to the matter of experience already present, upon the silent assumption that the new and the old form one system, so that the real nature of the old is more fully apprehended by receiving and apprehending the new. And as the single web is thus woven wider to take in the new materials, there is a definite method in the weaving; the synthetic or relating activity by which new material finds its place in experience, and yet the synthetic unity of the experience is maintained—widened and deepened in being maintained—goes on in those regular and definite ways, which it is the business of logic, as in Kant or Fichte, in Plato or Hegel, to analyse out. These, since they are the functions through which our experience has its order, cannot be derived from particular objects as these might be supposed to be apart from those functions; for particular objects, as elements of experience, are what they are only in that order, and only through the exercise of those functions. So that these latter, as the forms of that activity of judgment in and through which our experience has its continually growing synthetic unity, express the very nature and constitution of our mind as intelligence; a nature which only in experience develops to clear and systematic consciousness of itself and of a world; but apart from which experience as synthetic and potentially systematic would not be possible at all. Furthermore, it is involved in what has just been said that these functions or categories themselves form a systematic order. They are the expressions of a single category—the many sides of a single operative conception or principle—which consciously or unconsciously governs all the work of our intelligence whether in our common or our scientific acquaintance with the world: the conception, namely, of the systematic unity of all existence, the conception that all the objects to which we refer our sensations, and all our sensations as referable to objects, form a single world whose constitution is an eternal system of relations. To take but one instance when every step that every scientific man has taken from the beginnings of science until now is an instance, if the man of electrical science sees a spark where the laws of electricity, as so far known to him, do not call for it, he never dreams of freeing himself from the pressure of the problem by a pluralistic hypothesis; never dreams of leaving the "new" fact standing as an isolated fact which can just exist by itself. He seeks to set that fact in its place in an order of nature; an order one and abiding. If he succeeds, he may possibly, not overturn, but reorganise, the science of his day. But all such modifying and reconstituting of scientific opinion—in a word, all the growth of science—proceeds under the impulse and governance of the conception of an absolute truth toward which we move by the continual correcting and revising of inadequate views; revising and correcting which have no meaning except under the conception of such an absolute or total truth, and which our minds would never undertake at all were they not implicitly animated and governed by such a conception. And this is no conception of an abstract goal; it is the conception of a concrete or all-inclusive whole of knowledge which we more and more realise as we move upward by the continual reconstituting, the continual widening and deepening, of our present abstract and piecemeal views of things. Absolute truth means reality, as a single or total or eternal order, fully known. The animation of the mind of man by such an idea suggests, once more, that reality completely or eternally knows itself—is, in a creative principle of unity, completely conscious of itself as an *Idee*—and that that principle of unity progressively communicates or reproduces itself in and as the progressive soul of man; a soul progressive just because of its implicit animation by such conceptions—conceptions which lay absolute demands upon imperfect experiences. Once more, however, that suggestion must stand over until the matter of fact has been stated. The point now before us—the activity of man in organising his own experience in accordance with operative conceptions which constitute the very nature of his mind—is exceedingly well put by Mr. Bradley. We must not fall into the confusion, he reminds us, between "that which the mind has got before it" and "that which it has within itself." For it is the whole of the mind which works upon particular facts; and the whole of the mind means the idea of reality as a single system, a single concrete and absolute fact, working upon the particular facts which as presented are fragmentary and abstract. "Before the mind there is a single conception [Mr. Bradley is speaking of the Dialectic Method], but the whole mind itself, which does not appear, engages in the process, operates on the *datum,* and produces the result. The opposition between the real, in that fragmentary character in which the mind possesses it, and the true reality felt within the mind, is the moving cause of that unrest which sets up the dialectical process"[1]—sets up, we may say, not only the dialectic movement from conception to conception, but the whole process of investigation, the whole search for order and law, in all science whatsoever, and in all our common uncritical experience, of which science is the criticism and the systematising. Science, to adapt to our own use further words of Mr. Bradley, goes from less to more, continually overcoming its own fragmentariness, because the whole which is both sides of the process—and the mind as animated by an implicit sense of the whole—rejects the claim of one-sided *data,* in the sense of demanding the whole which is at once the limitation and the completion of those one-sided *data.* Or as Mr. McTaggart, commenting upon Hegel's Logic, very tellingly puts the same point—a point which, in a moment, I shall have to insist is as true of conduct as it is of science—our explicit ideas are all abstract; that is to say, our facts, so far as we have got them consciously present to ourselves, are incomplete and fragmentary. But with this abstractness we cannot be satisfied, and therefore strive continually to round those abstract ideas out into an idea which, if realised, would be concrete or absolute; an all-inclusive and completely organic whole of experience. And what prevents us from resting in those abstract or fragmentary ideas, what makes us labour perpetually to see deeper into these present incomplete facts and, it may be, to transform them, so that we can hold them as an organic unity—in a word what makes us scientific in our thought, and intent upon ideals in our action—is the fact that in us, who have these fragmentary explicit ideas and experiences, there is implicit and implicitly operative the absolute or concrete idea.[1]

---

[1] See page 90 above.

---

[1] *The Principles of Logic,* 1883, p. 381.

It is but putting this into other words to say that our experience is organised through the implicit operation therein of ideals. In cognition there is the ideal which is the inner impulse of all scientific work; the ideal of the systematic unity of all existence, in which every fact is related to every other fact in a definite or eternal order. Such an ideal it is which governs, uncritically in everyday experience, more critically and systematically in science, all the process in which we widen our experience of fact, while at the same time we maintain, or labour to maintain, its synthetic unity. The conception which thus prompts and controls the cognitive growth and organisation of our experience, Mr. Joachim puts very well when he tells us he has never doubted "that the truth itself is one, and whole, and complete, and that all thinking and all experience moves within its recognition and subject to its manifest authority";[1] expressing in that, surely not some psychological peculiarity of his own, but the plain nature of the intelligence which is in all men and in all the history of science. This ideal is not adopted from without nor built up in any external way; it is one which the mind has as its very nature. Being what we are, we find intellectual rest only as we discern a unitary and self-consistent order in the whole of existence; only as we are successful in seeing the facts of our world of experience held together in the various inner relations of a single self-consistent system. All that process and activity of judgment in which we build up our ordinary consciousness of things, and make our common uncritical acquaintance with nature and society, proceeds, with gradually increasing clearness and decision, under this governing category; and our whole structure of science and philosophy is but the carrying of that ordinary consciousness forward to a stage in which its form, as systematic, corresponds to its fundamental and impelling category. The possibility of human experience is, on its cognitive side, the possibility of such an ideal; the capability of such an ideal *is* a man on the intellectual side of his being; the operation of such an ideal *is* experience as cognitive, and is the history of science.

---

[1] *Studies in Hegelian Dialectic;* see, for instance, §§ 3-9, 71-90.

---

[1] *The Nature of Truth*, p. 178.

But the cognitive organisation of our experience, which thus, with or without clear reflexion upon the process itself, is effected by the operation in us and as ourselves of the ideal of an absolute truth—the impelling idea of the object of our knowledge as a single and eternal systematic reality of which we ourselves in all our experience are organic parts—this cognitive organisation of experience is but a part of our complete organisation of our experience. The cognitive ideal is itself a part or aspect of a wider ideal, which expresses our total nature, which operates in the total, or as we commonly call it, the practical, organisation of our experience, and in the progressive realisation of which our nature as a whole finds all the rest of which a developing nature is capable.

In this total, or practical organisation of our experience, two aspects, or rather two levels, may be distinguished; the moral and the religious. In the practical life no separation can be made between these, without the gravest injury to human nature and its civilisation; save that, often enough, at critical points in its troubled spiritual history, human nature has been driven to set its own fundamental elements and interests in hostility to one another, waging war on religion in the name of morality, or (less often) on morality in the name of religion. On the moral level, as the ideal now in question operates implicitly or explicitly in our life, it works its way, with unspeakable labour and pain, through earlier forms in which it appears as rigid adherence to custom or as unquestioning reverence for law, to a stage in which it knows itself as an interest in humanity as such; an interest, that is to say, in a type of social life and order in which the individual members of the society can come to be all that they have it in them to be. Such an ideal cannot fully define itself (much less realise itself) in a life like ours upon the earth, any more than the cognitive ideal can in our present life realise itself fully, in that view of the world which would be absolute truth—a view of the world in all its completeness of detail with every particular fact, every particular element of experience, seen in the totality of its relations. None the less its inchoate operation in us has been the inner spring of whatever moralisation of humanity has so far taken place. But if we would be true to the facts of experience, we cannot stop at that point with the practical ideal. All that we commonly express by the immense word *morality,* it takes up into itself as a stage or aspect of something still deeper. We carry the account of our experience neither far enough nor deep enough, if we rest satisfied with saying of the practical ideal that when it comes (as Socrates wished it to come) to clear consciousness of itself, it knows itself as an interest in humanity as such. As a matter of fact and of history, human nature is moved by an interest in the total or eternal reality of which it takes itself to be but a part. It is moved by the idea of the supreme principle of reality fulfilling itself in the system which it constitutes; and of that fulfilment as having in human nature one of its organs, so that the law, or purpose, or affection, of the supreme principle has its achievement, or some part of its achievement, precisely in the loyal devotion of the spirit of man to that achievement. This is the religious interest and ideal; the interest which gathers all partial and particular human interests into itself, as organic parts of itself, and by thus gathering them into itself, deepens and consecrates them. Here it is with matter of fact that we are concerned; not yet with the source or conditions of that matter of fact. And taking facts as they are, it is only when we find human nature animated by this highest and all-inclusive interest and affection, the interest in God and the purpose of God; only when we find it fulfilling that interest by surrendering and devoting itself to God, so that in it God may have at once an organ and a place of the fulfilment of Himself and of His purpose;—it is only then that we fully see what is meant by saying that human experience does not grow by mere additions laid from without upon a passive subject, but rather is a self-organising, or truly personal, life.

Our position so far, then, is this. Beginning with experience—experience as it is, experience which in one sense is part of nature, and in another sense has nature as part of it—we found it to be a process in which potentialities are realised, an implicit content gradually made clear. But such a process, if taken simply as such, is not self-explanatory. We, as the individual subjects of such development, are conscious of ourselves neither as creating ourselves, nor as creatively instituting and maintaining the conditions under which our development proceeds. And in any case, potentialities, as such, are not creative energies; still less, creative energies that make the end possible from the beginning. But the movement from potentiality to actuality cannot take place out of the void. Hence we were driven to a theory associated with Aristotle's name, but not dependent upon that name for its validity; the theory of the possibility of development in the priority of Actuality to Potentiality. Throughout the whole process there is present and operative an Actuality which is adequate to the production of all the reality which in the course of the development gradually appears. Our problem, then, came to be this: How are we to think of that Actuality which, in the sense just indicated, is the *prius* of the development of consciousness—not simply the growth of your individual experience, or mine, but that total process of spiritual life in individual centres and social orders, which, as at once involved in nature and involving nature in itself, is the only history of the universe that can without self-contradiction be conceived? The answer lay in a belief in an Absolute Spirit, as in some way the source of human experience and of whatever other spiritual life there may be which has a history in time. But the conclusion could not be left in that form; further articulation of it was at once demanded. For at once the critical question arose how we are to conceive the relation between the Absolute Spirit and our experience with its keen sense of intellectual, of emotional, of moral individuality. That was a question to which we could hope for no answer in complete detail; could not hope for such a knowledge of the exact nature of the creative activity of the Absolute Spirit, as that Spirit itself has in actually exerting it. Yet the question was not *prima facie* hopeless; was, in fact, the opposite. When we are concerned with a process of development, and are asking about the relation of what is being developed to the absolute Actuality which makes the development possible by operating through all its course, the one rational or scientific clue to the nature of the relation is the inner nature of the particular process of development itself. And in the present case we know—or rather, are continually entering into the knowledge of—the inner nature of the process. For the process of development here in question is the development of our own experience. And we know experience from within; know it in knowing ourselves. Hence we turned to experience again; to the individuality with the relation between which and the Absolute Spirit we are concerned. And what we found was that the development of our experience is the movement of an inner life. Our experience, while not self-creative, is in a very real sense self-organising throughout the whole process of its growth. That growth is the unfolding, the bringing to a more and more systematic consciousness, of an implicit content; and this by the exercise of inner energies—energies that from within co-operate with those energies without, those energies more than ourselves, which commonly we call "the world." The total movement of human nature from potentiality to actuality, the movement which is at once the development of individuals and the history of civilisation, is actuated from within by operative conceptions which are of the very nature of man. In early stages there is so little awareness of those that their action seems like that of instinct; as the eye sees, without seeing its own construction, so at first the mind operates without thinking upon its categories. But they are none the less the organising principles of experience; and through our very loyalty to them they come gradually to clearer and clearer consciousness as the ideals of humanity; while, through that clearer consciousness, the loyalty to them becomes, in turn, more and more intelligent and therefore more effective. Thus it is that elements of experience, to us abstract and incomplete, are gradually built up into an organic system; that is to say, are gradually apprehended as they truly or objectively are in that single eternal system of reality in which they are neither abstract nor incomplete. And this both intellectually and practically: intellectually in all the growth of science in which we more and more make ourselves at home in, or possessors of, that eternal order which is timeless in the sense that it contains concretely time and all the content of time, and, as thus containing time, cannot itself be located in time; practically, in all that labour of man toward a perfect society in which science and art, morality and religion, all would come to their own—new heavens and a new earth in which a purpose of God would be fulfilled in the fulfilment of man.

Such being, then, the nature of our individuality, we cannot think of God as giving rise to it and to all the process of our experience in any external way; as a workman, for instance, might be imagined to make a "thing" with a nature intrinsically different from his own. Rather we must think that human individuality, with all its capabilities of free experience, comes to be through some such communication (under whatever limitations) of Himself and of His own nature on the part of God, as gives rise in us to a life which is *an und für sich*—a life which has a centre in itself—and has at the same time the bond with God of an essential and intrinsic likeness; and hence is capable of intercourse with God—intercourse with that thought or activity of His which is the natural world, intercourse with that purpose of His which is the supreme law of the order and history of the universe; a spiritual intercourse or communion which is possible only where, on the one hand, there are distinct individuals, only where, on the other hand, there is between those individuals some essential community of nature. Such intercourse between the spirit that knows itself as man, and the Spirit that in knowing itself knows the whole order of reality and in imparting itself imparts the potentiality of all knowledge and of all practical attainment; such intercourse and co-working of the powers that man knows as his own with the powers of the spiritual system without, the system which has its being in the energising of God and is called by us the world; such intercourse *is* the experience of man, as that individual and social process, intellectual and practical, moral and religious, spiritual even in being natural, in which we come gradually to be ourselves. For our coming to be ourselves is no abstract process; it is our gradual building up of all our civilisation, with its earthly and heavenly citizenship of the soul of man.

Just how God can thus communicate His own nature, and give rise to other lives than his own—individuals that distinguish themselves from God and nature, and, because they do so, are capable of co-operating with God in the sense that by the exercise of energies of their own they respond to continual further communication from God, and so have their "natural" growth and development;—just how God can thus communicate Himself we cannot imagine. For there is nothing like it in our own experience, to guide us in such imagination; we are not creators of spirit—our souls are not the place and home of other spirits than our own. So that we can never hope to apprehend the nature of that divine activity in which our individuality is communicated to us, as God Himself apprehends it in exerting it. Though even in saying this, we must remember one qualification: there *is* in our experience upon the earth, there *is* in the "relations dear, and charities of father, son, and brother," that which gives us some clue to the depth, and to the possible tragedy, of the affections involved in such a communication of life from God to man. But with that qualification we must accept this limitation of insight; and to reject the theory because it cannot remove that limit, is to reject it because it cannot meet a demand for the impossible. The ground upon which such a view is accepted is not at all that we have it forced upon us in some immediacy of sensation; not at all that it can be depicted in some form of imagery, or brought to the test of some apparatus of sense. To demand such presentation of the Absolute Spirit and of his way of giving rise to the soul of man, as a condition of believing that there is such a Spirit and such an origin of man, is to repeat in the extremest possible form the mistake made by the purely analytic psychologist, when he cannot see in experience anything except "elements" of experience and therefore demands that some one psychical element—some specific type of feeling, or what not—be shown as the root in us of religion; whereas religion is the highest attitude and exercise of our total consciousness. The demand for "proof," so often made both upon the religious man in his religion and (what at this point concerns us) upon reason when in seeking to understand the possibility of its own experience it rises to a belief in God, often is found to mean one of two things, both of which in such a connexion are absurd; either deduction from some still higher principle; or experimental verification under the form of sense-perception. The view now before us, if it tried to make itself more convincing by giving either of those two sorts of proof, would but show that it had failed to apprehend alike its own meaning and the nature of the problem from which it began. From the point of view which in this lecture it is our business to take—the point of view of human reason trying to understand itself and its own many-sided and most wonderful experience—the convincing power of such a view does not lie in its ability to furnish proofs of a kind which the nature itself of the problem rules out. On the contrary, such a view, if accepted by the rational consciousness at all, is accepted on grounds the same as lead us to accept any broad scientific hypothesis that goes beyond immediate verification; we are trying to make something intelligible to ourselves—in this case, the possibility of our experience as it actually is—and this hypothesis, not as a sense-image but as a rational conception, goes farther than any other in making intelligible to us what we are seeking to make intelligible. It goes farther than any other in meeting those requisites of an hypothesis which Mr. Bradley has so aptly stated: it must hold together; and it must hold the facts together. We are seeking to make intelligible to ourselves an experience which is not self-existent and yet is in a very real sense self-organising and (as self-organising) self-determining; and the manifest way is by reference to an experience which *is* self-existent, and to a reproduction of the supreme and self-active subject of that experience in and as the human subject. That supreme and self-active subject we must think of as sufficiently like us to be the source of us;

hence, a self-distinguishing and self-objectifying consciousness, a spirit or person—with the qualification (to be returned to in a moment) that in his personality he is the source and home of persons. On the other hand, we have to think of such a supreme subject as different from ourselves in the sense that he is absolute where we are dependent. That is, in the first place, he is altogether self-existent and self-active, while we have our life and individuality in him—have our growing freedom as his gift. As the supreme subject of the world, he constitutes that whole order of things of which we human individuals are organic parts, having each of us a special place to fill, a special function to discharge. In the second place he is eternal; since he constitutes, and thus has present to him in its unity, the whole concrete temporal movement of the world, he cannot himself be located in time. The temporal order has its being and movement in him; time is in him, not he in time. But our human consciousness enters only gradually into the eternal; only gradually, in the human growth in truth and goodness, becomes possessor (as mediæval men would say, *comprehensor*) of reality as it truly or objectively is; that is to say, as it eternally is—a single system altogether complete for the divine consciousness. Facts, in their presence to God, are present as constituted or created or made possible by Him; and thus are present in the totality of their relations. But to us facts are present as "given," though not as given externally to a passive subject; given piecemeal, and slowly apprehended in the scientific and practical mastery of their relations. It is in God's energising and in His self-communication that the world, natural, historical, social, has being and that movement of being which we call life. So that God in His consciousness of Himself has a consciousness of the whole natural and historical order of the world. But in our human experience self-consciousness is abstract; it fully possesses neither itself, nor its world, nor the unity of itself and its world in and as a single universe, a single organic whole of reality. It is this abstractness that humanity, through whatever growth it makes in truth of science and of practice, continually is overcoming. The idea of a self-consciousness which in being itself would be a complete consciousness of the world; the idea, in other words, of a mind whose apprehension of itself would necessarily be a concrete intuition in which the world would be completely or eternally transparent to the subject, no barrier intervening of ignorance, of evil, of capability unrealised; this is to our human self-consciousness the inner though seldom recognised ideal that here upon the earth animates and impels all intellectual and moral realisation of the capabilities of the spirit which is man. To us it is an ideal which passes ever on before; but in God it is realised eternally—or one could say simply "is realised"; for its reality *is* eternity. That is the soul of truth in the otherwise ambiguous statement that God is altogether actuality; is all that truth and goodness which we, in so far as we do justice to our divine origin and live in the grace of God, come gradually to be, but the more of which we attain the more we in vision see before us unfulfilled. In the third place—if for convenience I may thus distinguish statements which are really one and the same point stated in different ways—in an activity to which there is no parallel in our experience (though in our experience there is, as we have seen, a hint of the deep affections involved) God reproduces Himself in other spirits, and thus is in His spirituality a home of spirits, in His personality a home of persons.

Certainly such a principle cannot be presented to us in sensation, in perception, in any form of picturate imagination. But apprehended in the only way in which it can be apprehended—by our consciousness as active will and reflective reason—it enables us practically (i.e. in religion and in the morality which religion includes in itself) to organise the whole of our life, in which sense-experience itself is a part; and (what at this point is specially in question) intellectually to comprehend how such a thing as human experience is possible; whether that human experience be the common labour and the natural affection of the simplest man earning with pain the bread that he and his children eat; or whether it be that astonishing power of scientific intelligence and that depth of moral and religious passion which in the labour and natural affection of the common life have their promise and their beginning. The movements and the structures of knowledge, of industry, of art, of social order, of morals, of religion—structures and movements which are the civilisation of man and the history of that civilisation—are, we must think, works and products of the spirit of man in its communion, in its intercourse and co-operation, with the Absolute Spirit whose impartation of himself, however gradually and through whatever natural media, is the source of all life and of every capability of reason and of passion. And the failures and vices of that civilisation are the failures of mankind to apprehend and fulfil the demands laid upon it by the origin and nature of its own life; failures the ground of whose possibility I must attempt to discuss later, here remarking only that they constitute the gravest of all the problems which beset, not merely the view of life now being presented, but every view of life, every type of theology and philosophy, whatsoever.

The problem just alluded to is, in only too sadly real a sense, a difficulty for this theory and for every theory. But another difficulty, very widely urged, is really not a difficulty at all. It is often said that the reference to an Absolute Spirit, in our attempt to understand how our experience is possible, involves denying the reality of change; involves taking the world to be a static universe, shut up, as Plato put it, "in awful meaninglessness, an everlasting fixture"; so that everything has already been done, and life loses its zest. But the reference to an Absolute Spirit really involves the opposite of this; it means that change is intelligible at all, is possible at all, only in and as and through the activity of a spiritual being who has all the changes present to him eternally or *totum simul.* We begin with change as a fact; and Absolute Idealism might be summarily described as the most reasonable hypothesis that men have so far been able to make as to the possibility not merely of change in the abstract, but of the actual changes which are the history of the world. The actual temporal movement of the world, as a single history and not a succession of absolutely discontinuous universes, each arising unintelligibly from the void only to return at once to it, is possible only because a single supreme subject of the world constitutes and holds together as one all that movement. That, indeed, is a truth so elementary that it has its witness in our most ordinary consciousness. A man can apprehend events in temporal succession only because he has time in him (as a form of the synthetic unity of his consciousness) as well as being himself in time; he could not so apprehend events if time were an independent existence and he were situated at some point in it. The development of the spirit which is man means the realising, in a life in time, of a consciousness which, if it could be made perfect, would be an eternal consciousness—a complete intuition of reality. We do not do justice to the development of the soul of man—a development in which events are known as forming a temporal order and succession, and the present is a continually moving synthesis of an experienced past and of an expected future with what is at the moment being presented—if we merely say that man lives in time. He also has time in him. And the latter is his essential nature; the former is the way in which he enters into possession of that nature and of its concrete object or inheritance. And such an essential nature taken on the universal scale—taken, that is, as the nature of a being who is not, as man is, in course of development and thus in time as well as having time in himself—is what is meant by the absoluteness of God, and by the "timelessness" or eternity of the divine consciousness. Such Absolute Idealism assuredly has difficulties enough. But it at least does not hold to any such meaninglessness of "everlasting fixture" in the real world. It holds that the real world which is at once nature and history—the scene of our life and the course of our life—has its unity in and through the supremacy of a continuously creative and self-communicating God, who is limited by no external relations, whether such as consist in the nature of a realistic time or any other, but on the contrary is so creatively related to the world that His knowledge of Himself involves a consciousness of the whole order of nature and history.

It is worth while to give a moment longer to this; not so much to answer an objection as to make the point itself clearer. When we seek to get acquainted with facts, and when in doing so we correct and revise and enlarge our opinions in order to bring them into accord with "the truth of the objective world," we really assume that that objective world is a *single* world, in which every fact is systematically related to every other fact. But that singleness of the order of the world takes in the whole succession and concrete content of time; else reality would not be *one* world, and its order a single system of relations; rather it would be a series (if that word still had any meaning) of totally disconnected universes succeeding one another in a realistic time. Often when we reflect critically upon our ordinary thought, we only half bring to light the principle which is involved in it and upon which it proceeds. We see that in all effort to know, there is involved, as an operative conception, the principle of the systematic unity of all existence. We see that when men say they give up that principle, they really do not give it up; they go on thinking; go on judging, believing, being scientific. But then, even after we have critically accepted the principle which all along we had acted upon, we continue to hold unconsciously to a realistic view of time, and think of the single system of reality as moving on through such time. But a unity of existence, moving along through a realistic time, is not a unity of existence at all. If we would do justice to the idea which really animates all our scientific, or potentially scientific, thinking (not to speak for the moment of our practical life at all)—the idea which on the one hand we could not give up if we would, and which on the other hand is being progressively, though never completely, vindicated by every step in the continuous advance of science—we must take the unity of the real, not merely as a unity of co-existing things which moves on through a realistic time, but as a unity of the whole concrete content of time. We must, in other words, think of history as a genuine whole. But then comes the question: How is it possible for history to be such a whole; how is it possible for the content of time to have such unity? Absolute Idealism, whatever its other defects or merits, has felt the pressure of that problem, and answers it in the way already indicated. History can be a whole, and not an unintelligible temporal series of disconnected universes, because it is rendered possible by the self-communicating activities of an Absolute Spirit, who is the supreme subject of the world, who holds together as one all the temporal movement of history, and who, in presenting to himself the concrete content of time, presents it to himself in a consciousness which, as being single and complete, is eternal.[1]

---

[1] In saying that Absolute Idealism is the most reasonable hypothesis to account for the possibility of change—the actual process of change which is the history of the world—I was thinking of Professor Royce. But the roots of such Idealism run far back; not to mention here its debt to monotheistic religion, its roots run back, on the logical side, to the point where the problem of the Many and the One first was raised among the Greeks. For when we think of an objective world which is a manifold of matters of fact, and yet is one world, we think of reality as a single system of related facts. And *a single system* (to come nearer to the abiding truth of which we continually are revising and enlarging our science) means, as comes at last to be seen, an eternal system; a system which includes in itself the whole of time—the whole concrete succession of matters of fact in time—as a single determinate whole. It is as such a single definitely constituted whole that God has the world in all its temporal history present to Him in that presence which is its creation; and God, as thus having the whole of time in Himself, is not Himself in time; His existence is not at some one point, nor between some two

To sum this up. Human individuality being what upon reflective analysis it is seen to be, the problem of the relation of the Absolute Spirit to that individuality has, we may say, two sides. On the one hand, man's life is the development of spiritual capabilities. And since potentialities are not creative energies that begin with a void and evolve something out of nothing, it is manifest that in some sense man receives from God all that he has and all that he is. But on the other hand it is equally evident that in some sense man is himself the builder of his own experience; as we have seen, man is himself active in the process of his own development; active in apprehending, in however dim and prophetic a way, certain ideals, and in organising his life as the effort to realise

---

definite points, nor does it merely go on endlessly, in the succession of a time which is external to Him—a realistic or self-existing time.

A very telling presentation of this is contained in the earlier part of the late T. H. Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics;* though Green occasionally used forms of expression which, while clear enough in their context, can when taken alone—as bad exegetes take texts in isolation—be interpreted in a way which denies Green's own insight. For instance when he speaks of God as timeless, as having no history, as independent of time; or when he speaks of relations into which, since they are once for all what they are, time does not enter; or of the complete (and therefore changeless) knowledge of those relations as forming a system of thought into the inner constitution of which no relations of time enter;—in such statements he does not mean that God has nothing to do with time, that in God's consciousness time and temporal histories do not enter and have no place. He means that God, as having time in Himself, is not Himself "subject to conditions of time"; is not a being that stands in the flow of a realistic time, a time which is external to Him and conditions Him from without. And in the same way, when we take things as they really are—i.e. as they are to God—the complete system of relations which is the order of the world (including relations in the way of succession in time, and all other relations) is a system eternal, or, in Green's use of the word, timeless; it does not lie in a time which is beyond it.

When we are thinking of the concreteness, or completeness, or eternity them. So that the problem of the relation of the Absolute Spirit to human individuality is the problem of holding these two sides together in a single view. And the answer lies in this direction. In the deepest possible sense, our experience is communicated to us from God; and not only that, but as we shall have presently to consider, our individual experiences must be viewed as organic elements or factors in the self-realisation, in the total experience, of God. But that communication is made not in any external way; not as any work of an external power upon a passive matter; but rather by communicating a life and continuously co-operating with that life; one at least of the forms of the co-operation—the one earliest and most easily recognised by man himself—being what

---

(the three words mean one and the same thing), of the divine intuition of reality, we should mark one further point concerning what has already been described as the animating principle of our human effort after knowledge of the real—the operative, though often scarcely conscious, conception of the systematic unity of all existence. The complete fulfilment of the ideal contained in that conception would be the *totum simul* of a complete or eternal (though not in our case, creative) intuition. But the point I wish to note is that it is not involved in the validity of that ideal that we should ever completely realise it; should ever, by making discourse of reason complete, rise above discourse of reason, above the present form of our experience as developing in time, and enter upon that single complete or eternal intuition of reality which is knowledge in the true and final form of its idea. What *is* necessary to the validity of that ideal is that it should be absolutely realised in the creative or self-determining principle of the world; and that with that principle our experience should be in organic relation—should have in that principle its source and perpetually sustaining power. Given that view, we can "put things together" in one convincing hypothesis. The absolute intuition in which the ideal that animates our intelligence would be fulfilled, *is* real; real in and as the creative consciousness of God; the presence of facts and relations there is their creation and their continued "objective existence." But the principle of that intuition—the "synthetic unity of apperception"—being communicated to us by God in and as our intellectual nature, makes us to be intelligences we call "nature," the system of orderly facts and fundamental instincts in relation to which, and in reaction upon which, man develops his being. Such communication of an inward and kindred life we can express only by saying that the activity in which God makes possible the experience and history of man is an activity of reproducing Himself. It is *self*-communication; a communication on the part of God, in however inchoate or limited a way, of some at least of His own powers and characteristics, in and as the individual soul of man. So that the soul of man, whatever natural processes or age-long animal histories may be the media of its coming to be and of its gradual development, is related to God not as a mode to its substance, nor as an external object to a work-

animated by the ideal in question; makes us to be "by nature" scientific. And it may very well be that our life goes on for ever in time, animated more and more clearly by that ideal, approximating more and more to its fulfilment as to an infinite goal, but never realising the absolute intuition which would be that fulfilment in its final form. Such approximation would mean the gradual building up in us of a consciousness which, so far as it goes in apprehending the objective truth of things, would have the form of eternity; yet would never become that "intuitive understanding" to which would be present the whole content of time, thoroughly mastered and penetrated and thus brought under the aspect of eternity.

The above applies to our experience as cognitive; with the necessary change of terms such a view applies even more deeply and searchingly to our experience as practical. And with regard to both, it is worth while noting that the most important thing in our consciousness is what we ordinarily do not bring to clear consciousness at all; our operative and impelling ideals. As was said earlier, we see without seeing the construction of our eyes; yet we can investigate the structure of our eyes if we will. So we ordinarily think and act without thinking of the nature of our intellectual and moral being. Yet we can investigate that nature if we will; though never so as to make completely and clearly conscious to ourselves all that even at this present moment is involved in our consciousness.

man, but as a true, though incomplete, individual which has life in itself, and just because it has life in itself is able to enter into that co-operation with God which *is* man's life as a life with and through nature, a life in and through a social and historical order. It is because the soul of man thus has its origin not in any external work or creation of God, but in a self-communication on His part, that man is what we have seen: a being altogether dependent, a being neither self-existent nor self-intelligible; and yet in his own way a creator and founder. He is dependent, in that his being is from God; apart from the grace and continual self-impartation of God he has no being, no freedom, no individuality—is nothing and less than nothing. But because he has his origin and continuous maintenance of life in such self-communication and self-impartation on the part of God, he has the potentiality of freedom; freedom not merely as having life within himself and energies of his own, but in the greater sense of having within his nature the call to serve by his own energies the ideals which are possible to human nature because the eternal and absolute principle which constitutes it, constitutes it with the demand of the whole in it, and with an infinite dissatisfaction until that whole be realised in beauty and truth and goodness. Thus it is that man comes to be as the potentiality of godlike achievements, and as at the same time animated by ideals which, in however dim a form of operative conceptions and fundamental interests, are the continual impulse within him to the realisation of that potentiality on its many sides; ideals which may be intellectual or artistic, moral or religious, but which one and all represent the bringing to bear upon present given facts in their incompleteness and imperfection, of the demands of an absolute principle, the principle of the whole. Thus it is that the process which Mr. Bradley and Mr. McTaggart describe mainly on its intellectual side, but which is as truly the process of our conduct as of our knowledge, can go on; the process in which what the mind is judges what the mind has; the process in which the concrete, or complete, idea implicit in us makes us for ever dissatisfied with our present explicit ideas which are fragmentary and abstract. That process, viewed from above, is the concrete or absolute idea, implicit in our minds as the very nature of them, striving to make itself explicit in and as a consciousness in which the world and ourselves as organic parts of the world are apprehended under the aspect of eternity; viewed from below, it is the fragmentary facts of our experience being brought to the bar of the concrete or absolute idea, and there put under compulsion, not indeed to deny themselves as falsehoods, but to enlarge and relate themselves until they are no longer abstract—i.e. until they *are* the absolute idea. And what is here argued is that such a nature of our experience, such an animation of the spirit of man by the idea of the whole, is explicable only on the supposition that the spirit of man has its origin and continual being in a self-communication on the part of the principle of the whole, the Absolute Spirit who is the eternal and creative subject of the world.

The process which is thus our experience—the process of the animation of the individual spirit of man by the operative idea of the whole—has within its unity many distinguishable sides; but it is by the one broad principle of explanation already indicated that we can go farthest in making clear to ourselves the ground of the possibility of them all. By a self-communication on the part of the absolute principle of the universe, such as makes the feeling for the whole and the demand of the whole operate, however inchoately, within each individual soul, we can best explain all the aspects of the growth of our experience, intellectual, artistic, moral, religious. To each of these aspects or stages of the organisation and growth of our experience I wish to make, though it must be in the briefest fashion, some special reference; for the significance of the whole position comes out only as we pass in review the great factors or organisations of our life—the scientific, the artistic, the moral, the religious—and see how in each of these our experience is possible only through the presence to man and in man of a spirit who, being absolute, at once includes man in himself and gives to man a life of his own; an absolute spirit in whom man lives and moves and has his being, and who therefore is to man at once transcendent and immanent. In this the order of the discussion must, of course, not be taken to be serial; our life is a single woven web, and it is only by principles adequate to explain the whole that we can explain any part. It is only by such a presence of God to man and in man as has just been spoken of, that we can explain how the common uncritical intelligence of man is capable of its rough and ready acquaintance with the face of the world; only by such a presence of God that we can explain how the ordinary unreflective good man is enabled, in this world of moral perplexities, to feel goodness as a vocation and to live his life in the faith that without ultimate defeat he can perform that vocation. But we must have some order of statement; and the most convenient way is to pass from abstract to concrete; that is, to begin with our experience as animated by the purely intellectual interest—our apprehension of reality simply as truth—and to pass, by way of art and morality, to religion.[1]

First, then, our intellectual organisation of experience. As we have seen, the ordinary consciousness guides itself both in knowledge and in practice—unsystematically it may be, and uncritically, yet often with an astonishing sensitiveness of conscience and swift subtilty of mother-wit—by a sense of the bearing and demand of the whole upon the part. And when that ordinary consciousness systematises itself into the body of the special sciences, it still (allowing for division of labour, and the consequent limitations of view in particular sciences) is animated by the sense of the whole; now in a specifically intellectual form. All scientific investigation has its originating and sustaining impulse, as we saw, in the primary faith that reality is a single system in which, with no discontinuities or loose ends, every fact is related to every other fact, so that the nature of any particular fact whatever can be fully grasped only by comprehending the complete or eternal order of that system. But the fact on the one hand that our mind is animated by such an impulse, by such an intellectual ideal or operative category; the fact on the other hand that the world continually responds to the search of a mind so constituted and so animated, so that the mind in thus fulfilling its own nature more and more makes itself at home in the world; in one word our growing knowledge of truth, whether in the sciences or in that knowledge of everyday experience which is the beginning of all science;—all this we can make intelligible to ourselves by supposing three things. (1) Truth has its being as eternally or completely present to God, in a presence which is its creation; by truth being meant reality as the object of intelligence, the concrete facts of the world in their concrete relations—nature, for instance, not as a set of hypothetical constructions, but as an actual world of experience, a world of sound and colour, taste and odour and visible form, with all its sensible frame organised and governed by an inner constitution of intelligible principles. (2) We are capable of coming to know the truth, which thus has its being in its presence to God, by reason of a constitution of mind and through the continuous operation of an intellectual ideal (the ideal of the systematic unity of all existence, which prevents us from resting in facts as they are first given, and drives us to the never-finished but continually advancing effort at the scientific systematisation of experience) the existence of which in us and as ourselves can be understood only by supposing that they are communicated from God in that communication which is the creation of the spirit of man. (3) The communication takes place, not in some single instant of time once for all, but is a continuous self-impartation on the part of God; a continuous creative grace of God, which is the source of all our powers, and, in response to our exercise of them, gives us still more; so that in that grace and in our co-working with it we have our continual increase in being and in the powers of being. Nature, to speak of that part or aspect of truth which has been specially a field of debate between men of science and men of religion—nature is an activity and a way of God. It is a system of facts present to God; present to Him as constituted by Him, known in being created, created in being known. And we, alike in sense-perception and in science, are able gradually to enter into a knowledge of nature, because our mind is communicated to us from God, and hence is able to grow up into a deeper and deeper apprehension of His thoughts and works. It is not that the eternal and eternally creative subject of the world imparts the content of his mind to a merely passive human mind. That is as little true in knowledge as it is in morality and religion. Rather, we must think, the eternal subject of the world, in reproducing himself as the human soul, imparts to that soul under whatever limitations the same actively synthetic character (the character of intelligent spirit as a "synthetic unity of apperception") which the subject of the world must have in being the subject of the world at all. Hence in the very nature of man as knowing intelligence there is that operative and impelling conception, that sense of the systematic unity of all existence, of which we already have had to take note; and there is that ascending series of categories into which the sense of the unity of existence articulates itself, and through which it fulfils itself. The human soul thus carries in its very nature as intelligence the impulse continually to introduce order, and unity through order, into that comparatively unorganised *continuum* which is continually the "given" of experience and continually in scientific work is differentiated into its elements in order to be re-combined into an intelligible systematic unity;—an "unorganised *continuum*" whose margin we are continually pushing farther back; and can do so because, while it is given to us as comparatively unorganised, it is not unorganised to the God who gives it, but for Him is eternally what we gradually and incompletely are making it for ourselves—an intelligible world, a differentiated unity, orderly, systematic, rational through and through.

---

[1] The discussion in the text confines itself to three of the four organisations of experience here mentioned; knowledge, morality, religion. To the consciousness of beauty (I cannot bring myself to call it the æsthetic organisation of experience) no special reference is made. The position that would be taken is, I think, plain; but instead of trying to put it down in set terms, it is better to refer once and for all to the discussions which for all time, and with no second, hold the field—the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*.

Communicated to us, too, in that same self-communication of the absolute principle of the universe which makes us capable of science, are the capabilities of morality and religion. It is by a sense of the whole, a feeling for the demand of the whole, that our common consciousness, in and as the life of the ordinary good man, really is animated. The good man, however unreflective, conducts his life upon the assumption that reality, in spite of baffling and tragic perplexities, is one and is his home; a place to which intellectually he can adjust himself (in "common knowledge" or in systematic science) in an adjustment which is no denial of his being, but on the contrary a genuine realisation of it; a place in which practically he has a vocation—a vocation and, in daily duty and daily affection, in daily work and all the struggle to make the conditions of daily work more human, a possibility of performing that vocation without ultimate defeat. And in religion, in that form of it which alone concerns us here, this is completed. In such religion, both our intellectual and our moral organisation of our experience are gathered up into something higher; something in principle, though not in detail, ultimate; so that the demand of the spirit of man, the demand which gives rise to, but only partly satisfies itself in, science and art and the moralising of society, finds its truly concrete fulfilment;

the demand, namely, of the whole (which means the demand of the supreme and creative principle of the whole) upon the part. In spiritual religion that demand becomes, in the profoundest of all possible senses, the controlling power of life. The man possesses and is possessed by a moving and effectual vision of a single supreme principle of all reality; of the nearness of that principle to his own soul and to all souls; and of the possibility of communion with it—communion with it in a devotion and loyalty which animates from within the whole life of the individual, and, acting in him and in others, seeks to organise the whole of human society into the brotherhood of a new heaven and a new earth. Religion means that such an all-conquering faith in the organic connexion of the least of individual beings with the supreme principle of all existence has assumed definite and historical forms, and is seeking to govern the whole of human life by bringing all its energies and institutions under one inward devotion. The faith and the demand which animate uncritically the common consciousness, which animate intellectually and systematically the scientific mind, thus become in religion as our human devotion to God's purpose and God's point of view, the practical determining power of life. Without such a demand at the centre of his being, without such an interest as potentially the deepest, the all-inclusive operative factor of his nature, neither could man be religious at all, nor could any grace or revelation of God make any appeal to him or receive any answer from him. But to account for the possibility of such a nature of man, and of such an interest, we must think once more of an activity on God's part which can only be called self-communication. Such a demand of the whole upon the part, and such a response, mean that the absolute principle of the whole is present and operative in the spirit which feels that demand and makes that response. From God the creative principle of the whole there is communicated to us, in the communication which is the origin and continuous maintenance of our life, a sense of the whole and of its demand upon us; a sense which in this its profoundest and all-inclusive operation calls us, in all the activities and capabilities of our life, to devote ourselves to the supreme principle of the whole and to His creative purpose. We must think, in other words, that God is present in man, not as a substance in its modes, but in an altogether profounder and more real sense; is present through such a self-communication that the demand of God operates continually in human nature, and is responded to unconsciously and partially in science and art and morality, consciously and concretely in religion. To put it in the language of the religious heart, it is only God's grace, originally and continually constituting us, that makes us capable at all of responding in any form to God's grace. And here, as before, the impartation is no merely external process. Our capability of morality and religion is imparted to us in the form of those operative conceptions, ideals, interests, which, as we have just seen, constitute the very nature and inner make-up of our being; interests and ideals which in our first possession of them are inchoate and potential; but which, in response to kindred powers—the powers of God in the spiritual world without—move on continually to clearer consciousness of themselves and to profounder operation. It is these categories and principles, impulses and affections, operative conceptions and moving interests, as the characteristic activities of a spirit whose life is its own life, that make human nature, in a sense at once higher and more tragic than Shakespeare had in mind, "servile to all the skyey influences"; make it capable by its own energies of communicating and co-operating with its eternal source; capable in its own free activities of receiving the gradual impartation of the truth and goodness which in their divine source and home are eternal and absolute; capable, too, of finding its rest—rest in the one worthy and enduring form, rest in the true fulfilment of one's vocation—only in God, only in such a giving of itself to Him that human life becomes God working His works through man. This practical interest is, in the first place—first not in order of time, but in the order of statement here for convenience followed—an interest in humanity as such, our concern in our fellow men for their own sake; the interest through whose operation it is that society has become a moral order. This interest impels men long before they clearly recognise its meaning. But at last it comes to know itself as the ideal of a possible perfection of human nature, which sets us upon the effort alike after a goodness of individuals and after a social order in which that goodness of individuals can be realised. But the practical or total interest does not fulfil itself if it remains solely at the moral level. In proportion as it does itself justice it becomes that interest which gathers all other interests concretely up into itself, infuses a deeper soul into them all, and brings our nature through all its diverse elements and impulses into unity with itself and with the truth of the world; the interest, if I may continue to use the word in a connexion where all words are inadequate, in the supreme and eternal principle of all that existence of which we are but a part; the interest in God and in His will and purpose. Our capability of this interest is our capability of religion; of religion as the concrete and all-inclusive unity and activity of our life. And such a capability we can account for only by supposing that, appallingly grave as the limitations are, yet, under those limitations, God reproduces Himself in us; is present to us and in us, in a continuous communication of Himself which is our life and, if we will, our growing freedom. Thus it is, and thus alone, that the soul of man is capable of its seeking to put itself at God's point of view; capable of its longing to give itself to Him, so that He may fulfil His purposes in all the life and labour of our humanity; in all our love of one another and of the earth our home; in all our sciences, all our arts, all our morality. Thus it is, and thus alone, that we are capable either of seeking God, or of responding to His grace when (in that unceasing work of Redemption which we are presently to see as the essential process and reality of human history) He seeks us and would lead us to the love of which we must say, in Professor Seeberg's word, that it cannot become anything to anyone without becoming his all.

Of the relation of God to our individuality we have to say, then, at least two things. First, God is creatively immanent in the soul of man; it is only through such immanence of God in man that man is capable of experience—capable of science, of morality, of religion—at all. Human nature knows itself as having a life of its own. But when we ask how such a life can be, we have to answer that it is a life divinely communicated. It is only through continuous self-communication on the part of God, only through an immanent presence of God to man involved in such self-communication, that human nature is capable either of the ideals which represent to it its own possibilities, or of the free energies in the exercise of which those possibilities can be, and frequently are, progressively realised. But in saying this we must remember what the immanence of an absolute and eternal spiritual principle in a race and a history of developing individuals means. To be immanent in humanity and its history God must also be transcendent. The principle which is immanent without being transcendent, is not immanent at all, but is merely identical with the thing in which it is said to be immanent. Secondly, the immanence of the absolute principle in man, so far from destroying man's freedom and individuality, is the basis and the only possible basis upon which man can have genuine individuality and freedom at all. To put it in the ancient language of religious confession, it is only an inner and continual fountain of divine inspiration that makes man capable of his human labours. By the continual breath of God we have our being; the spirit of God is the source and the sustaining power of the individuality of man and of that freedom which is at once the greatness of man and his peril. As the wise Stoic and the great Apostle alike saw, in God we live and move and have our being. And to have our being in God means that we are capable not alone of that poor freedom in which a man does as he pleases; not alone of that poor individuality in which he cuts himself off from the great interests of the world and the common reason of man; but rather of an individuality and a freedom which, by the very source and conditions of their existence, have before them a divine way, a divine hope, an inheritance of the nature of God.

So far, then, for such answer as it seems possible for reflective reason to give to this central and critical question of the relation of God to the human individuality which apart from some reproductive or self-communicating activity on the part of God would be nothing at all. It is an answer which proceeds from the recognition of a certain matter of fact; the fact that *Dinge sind Gedanken, Gedanken sind Dinge.* That is, to broaden the formula into its more accurate statement, reality is a spiritual process; a process intellectual, artistic, moral, religious; the concrete process of conscious life. And things, facts, events, are elements and factors in that process; the laws of things, the "order of nature," being the law and order, or part of the law and order, of that single process of spiritual life. And the only way that we can find of making intelligible to ourselves such a spiritual life as individualised and gradually developing in us, is by supposing that there is an Absolute Experience, in which also, in the deep sense just noted, *Dinge sind Gedanken, Gedanken sind Dinge;* that the subject of that Absolute Experience, gradually and under limitations communicates Himself as the soul of man; that therefore, and only therefore, the soul of man is able in its own freedom and by its own energies to enter, how gradually soever and with whatever struggle, into the experience which to God is complete and therefore eternal.

This view can be stated, and has been stated, in widely different ways; ways which seem opposed to one another, but whose agreement is really profound and essential. And one of these ways I wish to notice in passing. Earlier in the lecture, we had to ask, What *is* a potentiality? That question is important for this reason. Men sometimes impatiently say, A potentiality is just nothing at all—a mere word. And by saying that, they destroy the continuity of human experience as a process of development. For if a potentiality is merely nothing at all, then, in a process of development, each increment of reality is something absolutely new, something that has absolutely no connexion with what went before, but is, if one may so speak, just loaded discontinuously on top. The whole idea of development in general, and of the continuity of developing human experience in particular, is made meaningless. But the view already stated involves at once an answer—or rather it is an answer—to the question what a potentiality is. Something can be potential to me in the sense that that something has an eternal basis, or source, of its being in God, and that I, in virtue of my origin through a self-communication on the part of God, have the gradual attainment of that something within the capabilities of my spirit; an attainment of it which is not a mere giving of it to me from without, but is the unfolding (it may very well be, in response to external influences) of something which was an essential part of my nature from the time that I had a nature at all. For instance, as I pointed out a moment ago, we are able, in scientific work continually to organise that comparatively unorganised continuum which is the "given" of experience, because in the first place, for God it is not unorganised but is eternally an intelligible world; and because, in the second place, we in virtue of our divine origin have as the very nature of our intelligence operative conceptions and categories that set us continually upon that work of scientific organisation. And thus it is that on all its many sides human nature can be said through its divine origin to have potentialities and to have laid upon it the vocation of realising those potentialities; a realisation the achieving of which purely for man's sake is morality; but the achieving of which in devotion to the purpose of God—the achieving of it for God's sake as well as man's—is religion.

This insight that in the effort after knowledge and after good we are trying to put ourselves at the point of view of the absolute principle of reality, and thus to build up in humanity an eternal consciousness and an eternal life; and this theory that what makes us capable of such an endeavour and of a progressive success in it, is a self-communication on the part of that absolute principle itself in and as the human soul;—this insight and this theory are both very ancient. The first great and splendid expression of them is in that foresketch and prophecy of the whole movement of Idealistic thought whether ancient or modern, the Platonic doctrine of Reminiscence. The self-organising or self-determining process of our experience—the growth of mankind in the truth which is at once truth of science and truth of practice—is the coming to consciousness and to conscious realisation, upon the occasion of earthly stimuli, of an absolute principle and an absolute knowledge latent in us; latent in us, because, by a human birth which is "a sleep and a forgetting," we come hither from our true home, the world of absolute being. There is no need to speak of translating the myth into philosophy; the majestic imagery trembles already on the edge of science, and bears its meaning in its face. Our growth in true being, Plato would say—our growth in science and in all the manifold realisation of the good in a righteous order of individual and social life—means that we, in our individuality, are organic parts of an eternal and absolute order, and that gradually (in different measures, according to our devotion or lack of it) we come to possess ourselves as such. Into that possession, in its abstractly intellectual aspect, we more and more enter in the sciences, or earthly beginnings of sciences, in which we seek to know reality as it truly or objectively, completely or eternally, is. In the practical life, which includes the intellect and everything else, we move toward that possession in the arts, the morality, the religion, in which we seek to put ourselves at the point of view of the eternal whole so that through our wills and energies its creative principle may accomplish itself and work its works, and thus each of us human individuals may fill his own special place and discharge his own special function in the one total order which is to itself eternity but to us men the history of the world. Our knowledge, then—to confine ourselves for a moment to that—is an eternal and absolute order gradually reproducing itself in and as our individual minds, which are themselves parts of that eternal order; so that our objective consciousness is in the deepest sense self-consciousness. Plato sees most clearly—this in fact is the precise insight which makes him call our knowledge *reminiscence*—that the gradual reproduction of the eternal order in our knowledge, its gradual bringing itself to human consciousness in us, is no external or mechanical process. It is just the opposite of mechanical or external. It takes place by the impartation of inner energies which exert and realise, which unfold and manifest, themselves in response to "external" stimuli.

It is carrying this but one step farther to point out that such impartation can mean nothing other than a life communicating itself as a life; nothing other than that a single supreme principle, in whose continuous creative activity the real world has its being, reproduces itself as the human soul, and in the reproduction retains certain at least of the essential characteristics which it has as the creator and sustainer of the world, and as the source and home and realisation of all truth and goodness; and thus makes possible to us both our idea of, and our interest in, truth and goodness and the union of ourselves in thought and affection with their creative principle; makes us capable, that is to say, of science, of morality, of religion. And when we call that supreme creative principle of the real world, not the Idea of Good as Plato at first called it, nor simply "mind, which is king of heaven and earth and orders all things," but the Father of our spirits, the Absolute Spirit, whose character is the concrete Good, whose consciousness is the concrete system of truth, and in communion with whom lies all the hope of the humanity which lives and moves and has its being in Him;—when we say this we are not departing from Plato, but are making explicit what he felt and saw, but could express only in terms of prophecy and of myth. It was only, however, through a long and most complicated history, only through many great interpreters and in many great movements of life and science, that the view of the relation of God to our experience and our experienced world, implied in the Platonic suggestion, was gradually wrought out. At the very beginning of that history, the Platonic insight took in Aristotle another form; if indeed Aristotle's work ought not to be taken as constituting along with Plato's a single movement; for while Aristotle transposed Plato's philosophy into the key of a different temper, and enlarged it with a wealth of empirical material—empirical material illuminated and systematised by the idea of development—yet he altered neither its essential problems, nor its essential positions, nor its essential difficulties. In Aristotle the myth has become science; the doctrine of Reminiscence appears as a doctrine of Active and Passive Reason. Human individuality, finite and developing human experience, is seen to involve both the absolute and the relative; or rather, to involve the presence of a reason eternal and absolute—Creative Reason—in order that there may be the possibility at all of any "relative" or "finite" human experience which could know itself to be such. The spirit of man is capable of science because of the presence in human nature of the Absolute or Creative Reason which "makes all things"; but human nature as an individual growth in time—human nature with the emphasis not upon the absoluteness and eternity of the object of science, but upon the gradual movement from Potentiality to Actuality in the bringing by us of that absolute content to consciousness—is the Passive Reason which "becomes all things." The rational personality of man, and the gradual development of that personality in time and through experiences of sense, is, in fact, the individualising of the absolute principle—Active Reason—in and through Passive Reason. Or, to put it the other way, it is the progressive determination of Passive Reason by Active Reason; the realisation (as a modern Idealist, setting aside Aristotle's doctrine of an irrational or contingent matter in sense and the sense-world, would say) of spiritual freedom in and through a material which at first presents itself under an alien aspect of necessity.

But at last the ancient insights passed on to the men of another world; a world in which was operating a personal presence that removed from civilisation none of its great human and natural factors, and yet made all things new; the presence of One who through the gathering centuries was so revealing God as to fill religion with intense and personal affections, bringing

God near and by that very fact making man's vision of evil a vision still more appalling than that which weighed down the heart of Plato and broke the unity of his view of the world. The Christianised thought of East and West, not by deliberate intention but because human nature is human nature, received into itself the Greek insights; but it received them into an experience of more searching struggles and passions than the Hellene knew, and so came at last to see them in their greater truth. To the doctrinal theology of to-day that long and complicated, that profound and most instructive history should be present as at once the background and the perspective of its thought; such a presence of it would have saved many a cruel misunderstanding, many a bitter contention. It is hard to turn away from it here; but turn away from it we must, and come at once to another consideration; one only in the light of which does the view so far presented to-day, appear in its proper significance.

But to state this fairly, I must remind you of our procedure so far. The question before us is whether, in building itself upon the Christian view of the world, human nature as at once religious and rational is at unity with itself; or whether the man who would be faithful to reason with its sciences, and who yet would organise his life according to Christianity, is doomed to hopeless war within his own soul. Hence, after having attempted yesterday to bring before our minds the Christian apprehension of the reality of the world, we turned to-day to our rational consciousness to consider its apprehension of that same reality of things. What we had to do was to ask after the conditions of the possibility of our experience. We had to begin, that is to say, with certain things of our own, things that are our life;—our labour, our science, our freedom, our individuality and all its struggle and growth in possessing itself—in a word, all this development of spiritual capacities which is the history of civilisation and of its institutions. With these things we began to-day, and asked how such things are possible. In answer to that question it was, that we came to the belief in an Absolute Spirit whose continuous self-originating activity is the source of that spiritual history which is the world of our experience; came to the belief in a God who reproduces Himself in the soul of man, and so makes us capable of certain types of spiritual activity such that a communion is possible between us on the one side and God and His works on the other; and in that communion, further communication, gradual or sudden, from God; and so all our growth in art and science, in truth and goodness, in practical mastery of nature or in social righteousness—all our growth in that intercourse of men with one another, with nature, with God, which is our experience in its present actual form as a history upon the earth.

But when we have thus begun with our own experience and our own individuality in that experience, and have come to a belief in an Absolute Spirit and in a certain relation between that Spirit and our individuality—a certain relation between God and His created world of nature and history—there is another step before us. Or rather, if I may so put it, there is before us the attempt to view the whole position from its own centre of gravity; to view it, not in the order of discovery, but in the order of reality. The relation between God and ourselves in which we have come to believe, we must attempt to state no longer from below, but from above; no longer from our side but from God's side. Until we attempt to do that, we have not done all we can to bring out the significance of the belief to which we have been led. I do not mean to say that we can go very far in this. But if the belief to which we have come has in it any truth or significance at all, some distance we must be able to go. If we begin with our experience and become convinced that it stands in such and such a relation to the greater systematic whole of reality which we call the world, and to the God in whose supreme and creatively organising activity the world has its being, then it is absurd for us to say that the relation read the other way—from God to man—is totally unintelligible to us, totally beyond our thought. If the relation as from God to man is absolutely unintelligible to us, then the relation as from man to God cannot have meant anything to us either. So that if the view now in question has any significance for us when taken from our side, it must also have significance for us when we attempt to read it from God's side. And one point at least in that significance—a point already indicated, but only in a passing sentence—is clear: we must think of God as seeking a realisation of Himself in us; must think that in the whole of our life it is our business to make ourselves the organs of His fulfilment and realisation of Himself. For it is in God's energising that we have life and being, and that all spiritual history is made possible; and God's energising is not external to His nature—it is His self-realisation. The ancient insight which to the Stoic was a living and commanding truth, but to the great Apostle was a truth still more living and commanding, because filled with a more intensely personal content—the ancient insight that we live and move and have our being in God, means not only that we are to explain our being by reference to God but also that God lives part of His life in us, and seeks in us a fulfilment of Himself. In that sense our lives, with the very freedom and the partial independence which we have through our divine origin, are factors in God's life.

But with this let me turn back as sharply and abruptly as possible to yesterday's discussion. What we have just seen as the conclusion of reason, when it seeks to make intelligible to itself the experience which it has in and as the history of mankind, is precisely the same view of the reality of things that is implied in the devotion and the faith which are the Christian consciousness. That God is seeking to fulfil Himself in us, and that it is the vocation of man so to devote himself to God that God may have in our growing and deepening personality an organ of His purpose and a place of His fulfilment of Himself;—this, as a matter of practice, a matter of action and affection, is, as we saw yesterday, the essence and vital nerve of the religious consciousness. When religion is able to express itself, when it lives in men who can give it an articulate voice—let me so put it, in order to convey no suggestion of the detestable idea that there is in religion a natural aristocracy of those who have a special genius for it, or that there can be anything higher than the religion of the unnumbered thousands who in great simplicity love God and in that love do with patient hands the labours of the common day—when religion is able to express itself, what it expresses is such devotion to God and to His fulfilment of Himself in us and in all our civilisation. Sometimes this is expressed in the language of reflexion, but more often and more naturally in the passionate language of devotion; and, deeper than all expression, it is the heart of the religious consciousness. Expressed or unexpressed, reflected upon or no, it is essentially what religion means when religion is at its deepest and purest. Religion means the apprehending of ourselves and of the world from God's point of view; an apprehension which is primarily one of love and of action, though late or soon the action and the love form within themselves a soul of thought. We apprehend God as seeking to fulfil a purpose in our individual lives and in the collective life of humanity; a purpose which is not external or accidental to Him, is not any arbitrary decree, but expresses His very nature; and to that purpose we devote ourselves. The attempt practically to take God's point of view, the attempt practically to view our life and all the history of the universe as that in which God seeks to fulfil Himself;—this *is* religion. Only as we come to it in practice are we religious men at all; only as we come to it in reflexion—in theology and philosophy—do we grasp at all the nature of religion. As we saw yesterday, it is only this devotion to God's point of view that lifts the religious man above mere moralism. Turn to the Christian consciousness, whether as it lives in all our hearts seeking to make us more and more its own, or as it has uttered itself—so far as in words it *can* utter itself—in its own great confessional literature. Alike in the New Testament and in the later devotional writings of Christianity, in those intense expressions in which religion rises to the true form of its own idea and possesses all the field, what we find everywhere is some variation or other of the one central theme which is to religion its very breath of life: *not we, Christ in us; God working in us, both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.*

Yesterday, then, beginning with religion, in that high and intense form of it with which in Christian theology we are concerned, we found it to consist in a practical consciousness of an absolute principle; a giving of ourselves, in love and faith, to be the finite dwelling-places of that principle, the place of its self-realisation, the organs of its eternal purpose; man's effort, in a word, to make his total experience, his total being and doing, a life in which God can have a fulfilment of His purpose—which is to say, a fulfilment of Himself. To-day, trying to make human experience rationally intelligible to ourselves, we have been brought at last to the same point of view. When we ask what human experience really is, we have at last to answer: *it is a process, apparently infinite, in which God is seeking a fulfilment of Himself.* So that it is only in being religious, only in making his whole conduct a work of the love of God, that a man is, in the deliberate purpose of his life, in accord with reality. Religion is the most rational of all things; or rather it is that in which all rationality is summed up and included. And if there be degrees in reality, religion is the most real of all things; it is that in which reality rises in man to the true form of its idea. This, I think, is all that need be said about the bearing of to-day's discussion upon the general question before us, the question whether, in the Christian consciousness, the religious and rational spirit of man is in essential unity with itself or in hopeless division; save that I should ask you to remember that what has come before us to-day is only a general thesis which in the lectures that follow is to be further articulated. But to a special aspect of what has just been before us, a moment longer must be given. One of the most cruel of the necessities which lie upon the theologian is that of defending the very essence of the religious consciousness against the attacks of religious men who apprehend too hastily the nature of their own religion. Such men with the best of intentions frequently inflict upon religion a mortal wound. They see—see rightly—that without a freedom and responsibility on the part of man, religion, except as the slave's devout acceptance of his chain, withers away. But in the haste of their thought they so assert the freedom of man as virtually to dethrone God. And there can be no deadlier wound to religion than that. Half-gods may be our companions; they cannot be the master light of our seeing, cannot be the object of our worship and of our ultimate trust. To remove God from the throne of His universe is to remove Him from His place as the supreme object of love and faith. The vital nerve of religion is severed, the principle of its permanent life destroyed. God becomes one of ourselves in the wrong sense; becomes one of ourselves, warring with stronger and cleaner hands than we, but still a finite being along with us in the one great world; and the heart of man goes searching out into the dark for that Supreme which is the Overlord both of this finite God and of ourselves. And the pity of it is that this sacrifice in the name of freedom is altogether unnecessary. So far from being a service to freedom, it is a profound disservice to it. The view that God seeks a realisation of Himself in us; the view that our lives are factors in God's life, in the sense that He seeks in us the place of a fulfilment of Himself, so that it is only as we give ourselves to Him to be the organs of His purpose, that either He is fulfilled or we come to be truly ourselves;—this does not mean that human freedom and individuality are lost in God; does not mean that our sense of individuality and freedom is illusory, as Pantheism thinks, and that really we are modes of the divine substance. It means precisely the opposite. It was with the human consciousness of individuality and freedom that we began, and we were compelled to refer to an Absolute Spirit in order to explain how such a thing as *human* individuality and freedom—the freedom of a being who is not self-creative and self-existent—is possible at all. There is no difficulty in conceiving the freedom of a self-existent spirit. To conceive it as self-existent is to conceive it as free; for it depends upon nothing other than itself for either its existence or its action, but in all that it does, it acts from itself. On the other hand, it *is* a difficulty to conceive the freedom of a being who is not self-existent but has his existence from some higher source. This difficulty—the difficulty, in other words, of reconciling our human consciousness of dependence with our equally acute consciousness of individuality and freedom—is, in fact, the centre of the problem that has just been before us, and is precisely what leads us to think of an Absolute, and therefore perfectly free, Spirit communicating in some way his own nature and thus giving rise to lesser spirits who are at least potentially free, and the development of whose being is therefore a development of freedom. Furthermore (to mention here a point which is to be discussed more fully in the fourth lecture) if God is what we have come to believe He must be in order to be the source of us and of our experienced world—that is to say, a being altogether free and spiritual, the Absolute Spirit—He cannot fulfil Himself in a pantheistic world, a world of modes. He can fulfil Himself only in communion. And communion implies other spirits who have a freedom, and therefore an individuality, which, however limited, are real as far as they go; and are capable, by exercising themselves aright, of becoming greater.

The statement, then, that God lives some part of His life in us, does not mean the taking away of human freedom. It does mean what no serious theologian can deny, or can wish to deny: that God is in some way fulfilling Himself in all that He does; whether in those activities of His that we call Nature; or in that communication of Himself wherein He gives rise to societies of lesser spirits and makes possible all their science, all their arts, all their moralities, all their histories and civilisations. The whole order and constitution of the universe—the Absolute Idea—must be the expression and forth-putting, the manifestation and self-fulfilment, of God, the Absolute Spirit. God must be related to His universe, not in mere externality, not in mere outside superiority, like an artificer to a material object; but (to use a word which approaches the meaning and yet is far from being adequate) organically, in the sense that he expresses His own nature, and realises the purposes of that nature, in all that He constitutes and creatively organises. God, in any of His actions, is never less than God. His whole nature is brought to bear in every one of His actions; or, as we ought rather to say, in His action as a whole; for there can be in His activity no abstract or isolated actions. To put the same thing in still another way, there is one divine experience or activity—an activity in which the total or collective history of mankind is itself an organic part—and in that whole of divine activity God seeks the fulfilment of Himself. So that, to recur to words already used, God is to His universe at once transcendent and immanent; related to the universe as thought to its object, and as a moral agent to his own labours. But in this case the thought is absolute (*i.e.* is altogether the source of its own object); and the moral agent is one who can reproduce himself and so give rise to other spirits who in the measure of their being are also moral agents, and as such can stand over against the God who gave them life; with the consequence (which we shall have to consider later) that while we inevitably must believe that God created them in order to fulfil Himself through and in them, yet He can so fulfil Himself only by winning their loyalty, only by lifting Himself up in the midst of them and drawing their hearts to Him, reconciling them to Himself.

It is necessary to clear up this point with special care, not only on account of its intrinsic and central importance, but also because a certain widely spread type of mind revolts almost instinctively against such a view of the relation of God to the spirit of man and to the world in which the spirit of man has its life. That type of mind has shown occasionally a great robustness of moral manhood; it has done in this world a good deal of solid work, both of construction and of clear-headed reform. Yet in the main it is not attractive; of itself it would secure little hold upon deeply religious men. But it gains immense power by seizing upon, and turning into a wrong course, something which lies at the root of Christian experience. It seizes upon that profound and continual sense of our own sinfulness and of the world's evil, apart from which there is no Christian experience at all; apart from which, at any rate, Christianity is a beautiful and innocent flower, hidden in sheltered places, rather than a great and revolutionary and world-mastering religion; and by this it draws religious men, who could not otherwise be so misled, away from the Christian view of a God, the Father of our spirits, who is seeking to save us from our sin, to the un-Christian view of a God who has no intimate relation with the world of our human affairs at all, save that once He made it, and sometime will come to judge it and, if need be, to unmake it as an experiment that has failed. This type of mind has assumed two chief forms. The one admits into our life the question of its divine relationships, but admits this question as little as possible; the other does not admit it at all. The former is seen in the hard good sense of Deism; the hard good sense which wishes to keep at as great a distance as possible the consuming presence and the consuming love of God, and those profound and world-overturning passions which arise in the soul of man in its consciousness of such a presence. To such a view as here has been in question, a mind of this temper is apt to apply its term of deepest reproach—Mysticism; although such a view is mystical only in the sense in which Mysticism lies inevitably in the very nature of religion as our attempt to relate ourselves to what is higher then we; and God, precisely in being the Father of our spirits is immeasurably higher than we. This hard common sense of Deism, logical yet unthoughtful, is present in many quarters where its name is warmly repudiated; present sometimes by native tendency of mind; but sometimes through sheer haste; men are so eager to defend religion (not to speak at all of sectarian theologies) that they give themselves no time to apprehend the true and deep nature of religion, no time for the length and stillness and depth of meditation apart from which even the beginnings of an adequate reflective apprehension of the nature of religion are not possible. Then, secondly, this instinctive turn of mind shows itself in what for want of some better word may be called moralism; the mind to which morality in its abstract sense is enough. By abstract morality I mean the morality which, while it may be altogether sincere and hard-working, will know nothing of religion and the passions of religion; and so takes man as less than he really is; takes him in his present empirical interests, but refuses to consider the eternal being, the divine relations, of those interests:—a morality which is a good thing, but does not know that it is a good thing incomplete and calling out for something more than itself in order that it may itself be fulfilled. To such moralism, the freedom and self-activity of man, as it is the first thing, is also the last thing; duty is known, but not grace. But what enables religion to take such morality up into itself, and pass onward to something still deeper, is the fact that religion is the passionate giving of one's self to God, hoping, praying, yearning that God will live in us, so that we may become the organs of His purpose, and He in and through us may fulfil Himself, living in our myriad individual lives and in the total life of humanity some part of His divine life. The man who has not in affection and devotion reached this point of view has not reached religion, in any high form of it, at all; but the man who has reached it knows something of God and of man, of God's grace and of man's true freedom and self-realisation, compared with which the experience and the vision of the *merely* moral man are thin and poor. This is the very centre and vital nerve of religion; and because it is thus central and vital to religion, it ought to be vital and central to theology. In such a matter we cannot—we must not—shape theology timidly, as though religion were a feeble growth, likely to be withered by the first breath of a formula not our own. Rather, in theology as in religion, let our souls be with the saints. Let us mark what it was our Lord demanded of the heart of man. And let us hear Saint Paul; let us hear Augustine in his better part, and Luther; men whose striving was to take God's point of view; men whose passion was to give themselves to God, not simply that God may in the narrow sense fulfil us men in ourselves, but that He may fulfil Himself in us.

But I do wrong to this fundamental faith alike of religion and of reason—do wrong to the height and the serenity that even in its ages of desperate battle have been its proper air—in presenting it in this defensive way. Let me be content to draw out one further point of its significance, and then leave it to stand in its own strength and make its own appeal. That further point is this. If the time-process of our world of finite individuals is in some real sense an experience of God (one cannot say roundly *the* experience of God—as we shall see in the last lecture, in order to make that time-process itself intelligible to our minds we need the help of the profound and speculative œcumenical idea of an eternally perfect society in God), this involves the view that the suffering of the world, the long agony of the human struggle, is somehow a suffering of God. The divine existence cannot be that absolute and untroubled tranquillity of blessedness of which Aristotle thought; it must be an existence in which the sorrows of humanity are present and actual—present in harmony with all that is real in God, and yet present in their integrity as suffering. This thought that God suffers in all the suffering of the created universe, has often come to expression among theologians. It is perhaps the most significant of all the ideas that have had place in man's long effort to understand the world of his life; the effort which, viewed from the lower side, is that of making intelligible to ourselves our experience and earthly history, but viewed on its upper side is that of justifying the ways of God to man. And I am specially concerned to emphasise it at this point, because in the fourth lecture where it should have place as a leading principle, I shall be unable to do more than outline in the briefest way an argument which, indeed, implies this idea throughout, but scarcely brings it to formal expression in either of its great applications; its application as a general principle of the relation of God to the world; its special application to the Incarnation, one side of whose meaning and one part of whose function is certainly expressed by this idea.

So far for our work to-day. We have been considering the everyday experience which is our common life; the everyday experience which is the place and the potentiality of all art, of all science, of all morality, of all religion. We have come to believe that it is a process in which God seeks a realisation of Himself; so that the many-sided vocation of man is rightly performed only when the whole of life is animated from within by the spirit and the devotion of religion. Having that general thesis before us, we must try to articulate it further. That is to say, we must take up, however briefly, each of the large factors in the process with which we have been concerned; the process which we possess and know as our own life, but of which we have come to believe that it is a history wherein God is seeking to realise a purpose that expresses His own divine character. In the third lecture, then, I am to speak of nature, the arena in which, and the medium through which, man receives his spiritual being; in the fourth, of that history in which on the one hand man asserts and exercises his powers, develops his being, enters upon his freedom, sins his sin, and on the other hand God meets the sin of man by the grace of His process of redemption; a redemption which means a new birth and a new life to every interest and power of the spirit of man, so that redemption becomes the reality of history and of God's making of man, and in redemption, along with God, all men work who have taken God's purpose as their own; and thus there is established that City of God wherein, in the love of God, every energy of the human soul is exercised to the full and exercised aright.

III

NATURE

In the preceding lecture it was our business to put ourselves at the point of view of the rational consciousness, and to consider from that point of view the meaning of our life. The meaning of our life; or, if one will, the nature of the world. The two expressions come ultimately to the same thing. For the world is not merely the external scene of our life; it is the order of our life, the system of conditions under which we have our birth and our continuance of being; it (or the principle creatively active in it) is at once the object and the determining law of our labour, our art, our science, our morality, our religion; though very often the determination is effected freely—that is, by our acceptance of the law as the law of our own will. The belief to which we came was that what makes possible our experience and history upon the earth is an activity of self-communication on the part of an Absolute Spirit; the belief, in other words, that the order of the world is a divine idea—the absolute idea; the history of the world, a providential course; the supreme law of the world, a divine purpose. With such a general view before us, we have next to work out somewhat further its meaning and articulation by considering in greater detail, though it must still be very briefly, the chief factors of our life. The most convenient order of discussion is that which moves—I will not say from the outer to the inner, for those terms are misleading unless it is understood that the outer and the inner are in the truth of things correlative, each reflecting its own life and purpose and glory into the other—but from the natural order of our life to its acutely conscious spiritual struggles. By nature is meant not merely the visible place and scene of our life, but all that system of forces and processes, not at first sight spiritual, in which nevertheless the spirit of man has its birth, its growth, and all its upbuilding of civilisation.

To-day, then, it is with the view of nature involved in our rational consciousness of the world, that we shall be occupied. In dealing with this, I shall really be concerned with a single point: the deep and essential harmony between that view of nature and the place which nature takes in the fully developed religious consciousness. Hence it is best to turn first to the religious consciousness; it goes without saying, in its Christian form.

In this we must be careful of one point; we must not take for granted that every passionate outburst of the Christian heart concerning nature is to be received as a final word. As was just indicated, what we must have in mind is the fully developed religious consciousness, so far as in our life upon the earth there is such a thing. We must look to the deliberate attitude and conviction of the Christian mind when, after its first struggles, it has come to tranquillity of faith and deeply and clearly can do justice to its own organising instincts and principles. Christian men, in those early struggles in which the inclinations of the heart seem to set themselves unyieldingly against the vocation of God, often are driven to think that nature is the very enemy of God. Eventually Christianity itself overcomes that view; for Christianity is an apprehension of God, and in its apprehension of God it is the antithesis of Manichæism. Nevertheless it frequently remains the case that religious men, struggling to subdue the hard material of our life to the love of God, do not rise above an external and negative attitude toward nature as a merely physical order lying beyond the confines of religious experience. The Christian consciousness is intrinsically a sense of personal relationship; and the man to whom the maintenance of that relation means a struggle, at once in his own soul and in the social order wherein he has his life, is apt to be satisfied if only he can see nature as not contradicting too visibly his religion. His own soul with its evil, the social order in its unrighteousness;—these are to him the place of life and of the decision of its issues. Nature is like a background, or a far-removed circumference. It is enough that it be God's workmanship and under his control; enough that it be not atheistic—coming into existence without God, maintaining its existence without God; enough that even in its cruelties and disasters it be still an instrument in God's hand, unable to assert itself against its maker and master; enough that its magnificence illustrate God's wisdom and power, day unto day uttering majestically, but not in intimacy with the heart of man, its speech. But that cannot be the last word. Late or soon, as Christian men gradually enter into the significance of their own religion and consider the fulfilment of the love of God in the experience of man, the position implicit in those negatives and those remote recognitions becomes expressed in positives. For in the first place religion is the all-inclusive unity of life; so far as a man is religious, all his experience is gathered up into the love of God. But nature, as this order of outward fact, mountain and cloud and field and sky, the place of our labour, the place of our contemplation; still more, as these impulses and instincts, rooted deep in the bygone natural histories of the making of man, and now exerting themselves continually and with power in human character;—nature, as all this, is a radical factor in human experience. So that the religious mind as a mind centred in the idea of the fulfilling of God's love in human experience, must view nature also as made for the fulfilling of the love of God. To the religious mind, nature may indeed have its various special uniformities, and it may indeed be the indisputable right of men of science to search out and declare these. Yet the supreme law of nature, the law which fulfils itself in the whole of nature and in all its special uniformities, must be the love of God; the love which, in being perfect love, is perfect righteousness and perfect reason, and fulfils itself in bringing about in man and man's society an answering love, an answering reason, an answering righteousness. In the second place, the religious view of human individuality which we have already had to consider—the view of human individuality short of which we cannot stop in practice without being less than religious—applies also to nature. For the religious man the supreme thing is that God fulfil Himself. Our life reaches its true form and being when we have given ourselves to be the organs of God's purpose; when our life, our freedom, our individuality, our exertion of manifold forces, our re-making of the world—all is God fulfilling Himself in us. Short of that our very devotion to human welfare is not religion, but morality; and morality in a very abstract form; morality occupied with the fulfilment of human nature apart from its divine relations—human nature, that is to say, as it emphatically is not. And with the necessary changes of application the same position is involved in the religious consciousness, with regard to nature. Nature must be, however partially or inadequately, God fulfilling Himself. Whether nature be real as end or as means—or as both, in the sense of being an organic part of a greater whole—*that* is what its reality is; God fulfilling Himself. And that being the case, the religious man finds himself called to a communion with nature which is something like a lower power of his communion with God. To say that the Christian man's companionship with nature is indirectly a walking with God, his communion with nature indirectly a communion with God, is to understate an experience which, if entered upon at all, becomes one inestimable in significance, inestimable in consolation and restorative power. It is immediate rather than indirect; in nature the religious man apprehends directly the love of God meeting his own; and apprehends it as clothing itself in that solemn power and beauty which has but to be itself in order to be loved, and is for its own sake an end to God and to man.

The characteristic expression of this for modern men came through a mind that was moved profoundly—was moved and governed—by human sympathies; and, with no vehemence of passion in the religion, was yet altogether religious; and therefore was all the greater in its high and unmarred poetic quality;—the mind of Wordsworth. Upon that, however, I cannot now have the happiness to dwell. But I will stop to point out that the earlier and more negative attitude of the religious mind—the one which says, "Nature may indeed be a machine, but then it is God's machine; it is not atheistic, not beyond God's control, not a power able to defeat the purposes of His providence"—this earlier and more negative attitude has secured an enormous, I am tempted to say a monstrous, expression of itself in the literature of that cross-grained department of theology, Apologetics. But the later and deeper point of view, the lesson of grave and solitary hearts, comes but rarely to expression; here and there in some mighty poet; here and there in that literature of confession, of devotion, of passion, in which the religious consciousness, so far as it is capable of utterance at all, utters itself as it is.

The religious mind, then, just because it demands that ultimately all things be seen in the love of God, cannot, when it does justice to itself, view nature otherwise than as spiritual through and through in at least this sense, that it is organic to divine purposes, is an unfolding of divine grace, is a way of man's communion with God and of God's self-communication to man; nay, more than that—if anything can be more than that—is a place where God dwells with Himself in solemnities of beauty; for where God dwells with Himself beauty has its native being, and in its native being is as God is, the most gracious of all things and the most austere, the most terrible of all things and the most winning. But when that is once before us, let me, for a reason that will be clear in a moment, turn abruptly to something else. Modern men of science in their splendidly effective work have traced out the vast ascending arc of natural continuity, and with a weight of detailed evidence to which theologians cannot with honour close their eyes, have insisted that man, in every aspect of his being, must be viewed in his place in that continuity; must be viewed as organically connected with all that is below him in the ascending scale. This may be done in Darwin's way; or it may be done in the earlier and greater way of Aristotle who saw in nature an ascending order of souls—vital principles and functions—and saw the human soul as gathering all these into itself and adding to them its own specific and transforming difference of reason. Reason, a principle eternal, absolute, and creative, individualises itself in man through animal functions and in those individuals enters into relation with an empirical world; so that man though he has a divine element in him, and is rightly exhorted to rise above his mortality, yet is part of nature; and psychology as an account of the soul is part of natural science. It may very well be, indeed, that modern men of science, as compared with the great Greek idealist, have expressed their sense of the continuity of nature, and of man's place in that continuity, with more accuracy of detailed fact, but with less intelligence of outlook. It may very well be, too, that their doctrine of man's place in nature requires further and very radical philosophical interpretation. And in connexion with that, it may very well be that one of the most urgent and important parts of the vocation of the theologian to-day is to act, not as the mere critic of science, but as a mediator and interpreter between the scientific consciousness and the religious. All these things may be. But the fact remains that nature and man have been shown to be so bound together that if nature be found to be Godless we have no right to say that the true duty and fulfilment of man is to give himself to God. It is not merely that there are particular natural necessities *within* our experience, in the sense that there are continually in our experience particular elements—facts, events, feelings—which are so determined by natural laws that we by no power of wishing or willing can alter them; and which in their turn are highly influential in determining the further course and tone of our experience. It is that indeed. But it is more. It is the general organic connexion between our experience as a whole, our experience in fundamental and organising characters, on the one hand, and the processes and histories of the natural world on the other; the connexion, for instance, of interests that operate effectively and indispensably in present morality, with the long antecedent history of animal instinct. In us, most certainly, those instincts are transmuted by their presence to and in the rational and moral soul; but their presence in us, in any wise whatever, indicates an organic connexion between us and the world's long natural history. Upon *any* interpretation of science and of its results, men of science have made out a sufficiently close connexion between man and nature to shut us up to this alternative: either we must be able to believe that nature, in all her system and through all her history, is a manifestation of the divine love, and her ways ways of the grace of God; or else the religious consciousness must be shut up to a definitely limited sphere. And for the religious consciousness, thus to be limited is to begin to die. Half-gods are to it no gods at all. It is of its essence to be all-inclusive; to use Professor Seeberg's words in another form, unless it is our all, unless it gathers everything into a love for a God who is supreme in the world and supreme in our hearts, it cannot ultimately be anything to us.

That, then, is why, a moment ago, I turned abruptly to set the religious consciousness face to face with modern science. It is because the general outcome of modern science puts an additional force on the religious man to make for religion precisely the same claim that religion in its own consciousness makes for itself. If religion is to have any place at all, it must have a commanding and universal place, taking in not man alone, but man and nature as a single organic whole. But it surely is better that the theologian should learn this catholicity of mind from religion itself and in fidelity to the spirit of religion should welcome science; rather than that as a sheer measure of self-preservation in a world which has accepted the spirit of science, he should take science into religion and so force himself to a catholicity which inwardly he dislikes.

So far for the view of nature implicit in religious experience, and coming late or soon to awareness of itself. Next we have to turn to our rational consciousness of the world; the consciousness which has the whole of life (including our relation to nature) as its object, and in dealing with that object gives to rational reflexion, in science and philosophy and theology, the right of way. Here what we have to do is to apply a general position, already before us, to the matter now in hand.

Let me first briefly recall that position. We began, where in all such inquiries we must begin, with the fact that is given, with experience; with the consciousness for which there is no definition except to say that it is ourselves, and that its development is the growth of art and knowledge, of morality and religion, of social and political order, of all that has an essential place in our increasing civilisation upon the earth. That consciousness, as cognitive, distinguishes facts from one another; and at the same time brings them to systematic unity under the forms of time and space and of those categories, those implicitly operative conceptions and intellectual ideals, the continually clearer and more critical use of which is the history of the sciences and of philosophy. As practical, it lays upon itself categorical imperatives, responsibilities, ideals, and in positive or negative relation to these—never in mere non-recognition of them—it carries on its work of subduing the earth and establishing upon it a social order of life. As religious, it gathers all its concrete content to unity, in devotion to an eternal and absolute principle which it recognises as its source; devotion whose intent it is that that absolute principle shall, in the devoted human soul, go forward on its way, accomplish its purpose, and in that sense fulfil itself. Beginning with this, as given matter of fact, and asking after the conditions of its possibility, we came to believe that such spiritual history, whether upon the earth or elsewhere, is explicable only as a process in which an Absolute Spirit at once communicates himself, and seeks to fulfil himself. With that view, then, of the real process of the world, what are we to think of nature? What can be its place in such a process of divine self-communication and self-fulfilment?

To begin with, we must recall a most elementary insight. It is an abstraction to take nature as a system of realistic things and events; a system existing in its own right in a realistic time and space. If any man of science finds it convenient to make that abstraction, and so gives to all his hypotheses—atoms, ethers, vibrations, evolutions—a realistic setting, the abstraction is legitimate enough, provided it be remembered that it *is* an abstraction, and that the scientific results thus gained are themselves abstract. They are true under the abstraction; but they are not to be taken as a body of doctrine complete in itself and constituting the final truth about actual reality. Before they are the truth about actual reality, they require further interpretation; require the restoration of the relations abstracted from. When we thus remove the abstraction, and take things as they actually are, all these physical facts are seen to be organically connected with consciousness. Either they are empirical content of consciousness; or they are accepted and believed in by us (in our hypotheses) as the conditions, the objective order, of the giving of such content of consciousness to us. In either case—in the first case directly, in the second so far as the alleged facts really do exist (i.e. so far as our hypotheses are true)—the physical facts are organic to the life and history of consciousness. The objectivity of physical facts,—the existence, that is, of a single definite and reliable order in which stand both the facts actually present in our consciousness and the conditions of their presence there (the conditions, for instance, of the occurrence in my consciousness of a given sensation which, in being an event in my experience, is an event in the history of the world, linked into all the other events of that history)—this objectivity of physical facts means the very opposite of independence of consciousness. It means that those facts are elements in the one history in which the individual and collective history of human consciousness is contained and has its being. The only ground we human beings have for asserting such and such a physical thing or fact or event to be an objective reality is (1) that that fact plays a part in making our experience what it is; whether directly, by appearing in experience under some form of sensation or feeling—some "fact of nature" in the way of sight or sound, ache or pain, which we by no wishing can alter; or indirectly, as something which does not appear, something which is not feeling or sensation or perception, but, no matter at how many removes, is the condition of something which does appear; (2) that the fact in thus influencing or determining, in its own way and to its own extent, the course and character of our experience, does so in definite connexions, which are common to us all—does so, as we commonly say, in accordance with natural laws. That there are laws and uniformities in nature means that the physical content of our experience is given to us in a definite order and under definite conditions; conditions which all men of physical and natural science, in all their work from the beginning until now, have been seeking to make more and more clear to themselves. So that the laws of nature are, to their own extent, laws of experience; statements of the conditions under which certain elements or aspects of our experience are what they are; and in certain cases, laws of nature are laws within individual human consciousness—psychological laws, laws of the on-going of the subjective process of experience. Space and time themselves are forms of the synthetic unity of consciousness, ways in which it holds its facts together in a systematic and potentially intelligible order. And if we human beings are in space and time, as well as having space and time in us, the space and time in which we live are themselves in the Absolute Spirit—are the space and time whose concrete content is present to God as the determinate, the definitely organised, whole of nature and history. And space and time are only the beginnings of the order of the world of consciousness. Even in its imperfect realisation of itself in man, consciousness is a principle at once intellectual and practical, being by its categories, its interests, its ideals, the upbuilder and bearer of civilisation. Physical facts, in being organic to the life of such consciousness, have a nature deeper than the word "physical" usually conveys; a nature which comes to light only when we consider the life and the works of spirit—art and science, morality and religion, all those affections and charities which are at work in the life of man, and, as working there, are suggestive of still greater charities and affections working through all the system of the world.

The objectivity of natural facts means, then, that there is a regular and reliable order in the world of our experience; the world of which we have to say both that it is the object of our experience, and that it is the system in which our experience has its being. And when we remember that we do not create ourselves—are not the ultimate sources either of our own nature as able to systematise facts, or of the nature of facts as capable of such systematisation—and therefore ask how we can have such experience of such a world, the answer lies in one direction and not in another. It cannot lie in the direction of abstraction; abstract "minds" to which facts are given from outside; and abstract facts which somehow in a realistic space and time exist in their own right, and under certain conditions arouse sensible and intellectual counterparts of themselves in those "minds." Rather, the place of natural facts in our experience being what it is, the convincing hypothesis about their objectivity—the objectivity which we do not create, but in which a great deal of our life is based—lies in just the opposite direction. Those facts, we must believe, can be given to us as an objective world, and we in and through such a world can receive and develop our being, because, in the first place, those facts and all facts exist in their concrete and systematic unity as the activity and content of an eternal mind—the Absolute Spirit who is the source of our minds; because, in the second place, the Absolute Spirit in communicating our minds to us, communicates to us impressions and feelings under the conditions which we call physical, and makes us capable of apprehending those impressions and feelings as forming, together with their conditions, a single systematic whole of reality—makes us capable, that is to say, of apprehending an objective world of experience. The unorganised *continuum* of feeling which is probably the first stage of human experience—in individuals and possibly in the race—is gradually developed into man's ordinary experience of a common or objective world. And the fragmentariness, the incompleteness, the lack of intelligibility, in that ordinary experience—all those characters of it which leave the spirit of man dissatisfied and unfulfilled—are more and more overcome in that penetrating and systematising, that mastery and conquest, of the world, which already goes on in our ordinary life, and which we call on its practical side morality and religion, but on its intellectual side science and philosophy and theology. The special character of our mind which makes it thus capable of developing unrationalised beginnings of experience into systematic science and orderly life, has been brought to statement a thousand times and in as many different ways; in dealing with it in the preceding lecture Mr. Bradley's form of statement, and Mr. McTaggart's, were followed. It lies in that sense of the whole, that operative conception of the systematic unity of all existence, which, however implicitly it may work, makes the mind incapable of resting satisfied with fact so long as fact retains its first appearance of being fragmentary, of being disconnected, of being inadequate to the highest purpose. Of this sense of the whole two things are to be said. First, it is of the very essence of human personality. It realises itself on the intellectual side in the categories, from whose points of view we unify experience by systematising its facts; on the practical side, in that demand of the whole upon the part, obedience to which is morality and religion, disobedience to which is selfishness toward men and rebellion against God. Secondly, the presence in us of this operative sense of the whole, is explicable only as a communication (a communication which is the origin of our life) on the part of the supreme spiritual subject who is eternally and creatively the principle of the whole.

If we were thinking only of our knowledge of nature, this might be put briefly by saying that in order to understand how such a thing as science of nature is possible—nay, in order to understand the possibility of the ordinary man's everyday acquaintance with nature, of which all natural science is only a further systematisation—we must believe not only that nature is in God, in the sense of being an activity or thought of God, but also that God is in us, in the sense that He communicates to us our intellectual being, so constituted (in its special categories and in its general sense of the unity of all existence) that by its free energising it is able to follow that thought of God which is nature.

But the cognitive relation to nature; the endeavour, in everyday life and in science, to know natural fact as objective, and the development, unsought but real, of the intellectual being of man in that knowledge and in the effort after it;—this is only part of our total relation to nature. Our intercourse with nature is both intellectual and practical; and if the view here taken be sound, all this intercourse with nature must be regarded as a process in which the Absolute Spirit, the subject of the world, makes our life possible by an activity which we cannot present to ourselves under any form of imagination but which we must think of as an activity of reproduction, of self-communication, of making Himself the creative principle of "finite" individualities. God, we must believe, has the whole of fact, the whole of nature and history, present to Him in a presence which is its creation. In that presence it is a system which is absolute as including all particular reality, infinite as having all its determinations within itself, eternal as being the whole content of time held in one grasp, held *totum simul.* Human knowledge means that that system is, to the extent to which human knowledge goes, reproducing itself in and as our articulated consciousness of the world; a consciousness which also (since our whole experience is itself an organic part of the world) is a consciousness of the self, a knowledge of our own nature and relations. And the development of knowledge which thus takes place is itself a part or factor in the total creative process in which God gradually brings into existence His true creation, a society of spiritual beings; a society in whose life (so far as we know that life in man) nature is at once the object of knowledge and the arena and material, the laws and conditions, of practice. But what makes the human soul capable of being the place of the reproduction which thus is knowledge, and of the gradual creation in which knowledge is a factor—or rather, what constitutes the very form and method of that creation—is the fact that God, the creative subject of the eternal or objective system of reality, so communicates Himself in our human personality that in all our apprehension of parts the principle of the whole is within us, impelling us to bring for ourselves the parts into those relations to one another and to the whole which they have in their objective or eternal being; whether those parts are natural facts that we have not yet seen in the completeness of their relations, or social facts that we cannot accept as a permanent and final order of life. We might sum it up in a great word of Dante's: in bringing himself into accord with truth, whether it be the theoretical truth which is knowledge of nature or the practical truth which is social righteousness, man eternalises himself; he develops in himself a consciousness which, in so far as it is true, is eternal—is with an eternal object made one. The infinite whole is eternally conscious of itself, in the sense that God, in being conscious of Himself, is conscious of the complete system of reality which He constitutes and maintains and in which, as we must believe, He realises Himself as active goodness and love. But that infinite whole has also a consciousness of itself, inchoate, discursive, and yet tenaciously and by inner nature progressive, in the countless finite minds which are themselves organic parts of the whole and which, therefore, as was noted a moment ago, have in their consciousness of the world, as far as it goes, a true consciousness of themselves, and in their consciousness of themselves a key to the nature of the world. What Dante and the great philosophy of which he is the spokesman would tell us, and what we cannot repeat to ourselves too often in an age when analytic psychology is frequently taken as in principle a complete account of experience, is in the first place a matter of fact, and in the second place an insight. The matter of fact is that man's growing consciousness is not a merely self-contained individual consciousness, a consciousness whose whole reality can be exhibited by psychological analysis; it is, on the contrary, a growing consciousness of a world in which man is himself a part or member, a world in which individual experience has its being in collective or social experience, and the collective and historical experience of mankind is itself part of a greater whole of reality. The insight is that that greater or all-inclusive whole of reality is a system which has its being as at once present to and constituted by an eternal spirit, the spirit who is God. To put it in terms of a modern formula, our more and more definitely articulated synthetic unity of apperception means not simply the psychological unity of the individual consciousness, but the unity of a world, the object of all science; a world which we, as ourselves part of it, progressively can possess, because God possesses it eternally in an intuition which is at once knowledge and creation. The consciousness of the whole, we must say, the consciousness which is eternal and complete, is, in however fragmentary and discursive a fashion, reproducing itself in the innumerable finite centres of consciousness which themselves live and move and have their being in the eternal consciousness. An eternal spirit in whose activity and self-determination the universe exists; and the reproduction of itself, the communication of itself, as the supreme form of its activity; such is, we must believe, the ground alike of the existence and of the progressive widening, the inwardly impelled and outwardly conditioned development, of the inchoate consciousness which we know in and as ourselves. And such reproduction is not something abstract. It is throughout a matter of definite or personal consciousness; it means that the God who eternally is conscious of Himself and of the world which He constitutes, gives rise to man by an impartation of

Himself; an impartation such that the spirit of man, while discursive in procedure and therefore always incomplete, yet has that synthetic character, that demand for unity and wholeness, which (speaking from the human side) is in one of its aspects the driving power of all effort after knowledge, and in another of its aspects is the driving power of all moral growth, of all effort after social righteousness, of all religious passion and aspiration.

The insight that the activity of the absolute principle of the world is involved in all the stages and constituents of the experience of man—man being the race and the individual in the race; that, therefore, man's growing apprehension of himself, his growing possession of his life and of the world, is a growing apprehension by him of that absolute principle, a progressive knowledge of God and of the ways of God; that, in other words, man's knowledge of reality and his practical mastery of the world approach their full truth only as they become the mind whose light is God, the devotion whose object is God—so that we must deepen the formula used a moment ago, and where we saw that our consciousness of the world, so far as it goes, is a true consciousness of ourselves, must now see in our apprehension and knowledge of God (which involves our being apprehended by God) our only adequate consciousness either of the world or of ourselves; that, furthermore, this knowledge of God, only in which does man know anything whatever as it in principle truly is, is not something abstractly intellectual, but is at once intelligence and religion—an indissoluble unity of science and action, of contemplation and affection, such as rightly is called eternal life;—the view thus summed up we are concerned with at this point only in its application to nature. But the view itself I take to be what we have to learn from all the great idealistic philosophers; or, as perhaps we ought rather to call them, the great men who have led the world's scientific struggle toward Idealism. Certainly it is the view of the world and of man's experience suggested by Plato. Aristotle, when we remember that he has in him principles which call for, and make possible, the overcoming of his dualism, leads us in the same direction. And this view of experience and of history is surely the soul of truth in the enormous systematisings of Hegel. But in Hegel the logical method is a tyrant, and at the end the emphasis falls wrongly; the experience which to him is the fulfilment of all our experience—the religion which, in absolute knowledge, has grasped its own principle and therefore the principle of all reality—is taken rather as philosophy than as religion.

Nature, then, has its being in a process in which God fulfils Himself in the gradual creation of a spiritual society. But, as we have had at every point to notice, we ourselves are active in that process. To have knowledge of nature the human soul must exert energies of its own; although those energies of its own could neither exist, nor have any effect in the way of knowledge, unless similar energies were working on a greater scale through the whole of nature. And if this is true of the knowledge of nature, still more is it true of that practical intercourse with nature—the labour and wrestle, the steadily growing mastery crossed by occasional and terrible defeat—which has an even greater place than knowledge in the total process in which we at once receive and achieve our spiritual being. But most of all is it true just there where active energies seem laid aside, knowledge and practice having passed over into what transcends and yet fulfils them; the contemplation and the love in which man is made one with nature; not through the death whereby nature makes those who are dear to her a perpetual presence; but in a life which is life indeed, the life known to him whose steady eyes saw still farther than Shelley's—that in which the burthen of the mystery, the weight of all this unintelligible world, is lightened, and we see into the life of things, apprehending a presence far more deeply interfused, wherein in community of life all thinking things are with all objects of all thought made one. Through the breathing of divine breath into the dust of the ground nature has been brought at last in the soul of man to know her own spiritual being—perhaps in greater souls, but at any rate in the soul of man; and the man that thus has entered upon being learns late or soon to know as it truly is the dust of the ground from which he came; learns to know it in the flame of morning and of even-ing, in the solemn beauty of the mountains and the sea, in the silence of the fields and of the starry sky. Knowing these things, he knows the companion and home of his own soul. Her majestic gates his city opens to him; *cor magis*—still more her heart.

So that the total creative process in which nature has its being—the process which from God's side must be described as His fulfilment of Himself—must also be described from our side as the process wherein our individuality, which to our own consciousness of it seems to begin with nothing, gradually is given to us, and gradually by our exercise of our own energies is developed. And the theologian does well, and not ill, to open his mind to the great place which nature takes in this process of the creation and development of human individuality. In the scientific endeavour to penetrate to the real or eternal relations of natural fact with natural fact, and still more in the long struggle to turn natural materials, natural powers, natural laws, to human ends—not to speak here of the companionship in which the soul of man finds its counterpart in nature—we come to be ourselves. Nature is thus a place and a means both of the self-realisation of intelligence and of the development of rational will. And behind all this there stretches out a longer history in which, just as truly, natural processes have been organic to spiritual development. Through natural processes going back in time beyond the power of science to follow with exactitude—through the slow formation of an animal body from the dust of the ground, and the slow shaping of instincts and passions that now in us are the impulses and the objects of a rational will—our spiritual being has been communicated to us as a human life upon the earth. With regard to both these things—the original giving of our spiritual being and its capabilities, the gradual realisation of some of those capabilities through intellectual and practical intercourse with nature—we must think of nature as the medium or method of that gradual self-communication of God by which alone have we any being at all, or any continuance and history, any increase and development, of that being in the process which is our life. We admit a confusion into our thought if we say in an absolute sense that nature as the physical order is God's creation. God's creation is a spiritual society, gradually being realised by continual communication from God Himself—the creative grace of God. Nature, in all its history, in all its processes, in all its uniformities, is a medium of that self-communication, in the sense that in the way just indicated man comes in a physical order to be what he is; through the physical receiving his spiritual being, in the physical having an arena and materials, laws and a home, for the development of his spiritual capabilities. And this from the earliest state of man which history can conjecture; whether that in which primitive men made their first frail shelters against storm and cold, and organised their rigid, and to our eyes hideous, social order; or whether there has been upon the earth some still earlier history which has a real connexion with what now we know as the history of mankind.

But I must come once more to the point which in these lectures is always before us. The total process which, viewed from below, is the experience of man as a history in time, while viewed from above it is an eternal or completely systematic reality in which man, himself a part of it, gradually makes himself at home—this total process is made possible by the self-communicating activity of God; and as so often already has been said, we cannot think of God's activity as external to His nature. His activity is His realisation of Himself. We must say, then, that God fulfils Himself in nature, in the sense that He fulfils Himself in that whole of creative activity in which nature is an organic factor; a means toward an end, if we will, but in the one creative activity of God the end reflects its glory on the means, and the means by its splendour makes possible the end. Or rather, in the activity of God, in which there are no merely external relations, the means is itself part of the end; is part of the concrete filling and structure of the end; so that God in fulfilling Himself in the end, fulfils Himself in a very true sense in the means.

With regard to nature there is, then, in the final outcome and meaning of things, a very real harmony between religion and reason. Religion, as we have tried at every point to keep clear to ourselves, means taking God's point of view; means determining the whole of experience, including nature, with reference to God. It means asking, with regard to the realities of the world, *How, in these things, is God fulfilling Himself; or how, by human devotion, is He to be enabled to fulfil Himself?* So long as we are concerned in human self-realisation—the fulfilment of the capabilities of the race—solely for its own sake, we are, as we have seen, at the level of morality; a high level, but not the highest. We do not reach the level of religion until for us the centre of gravity is not in human nature but in God; until we think, not of human self-fulfilment for its own sake, but of God's fulfilling Himself in us—in us as individuals and in the collective life of our race; and hence are led to devote ourselves in self-surrender to God. It is not that we seek any the less the realisation of humanity; but it is sought for God's sake; a man's interest in his fellow men being not lessened, but deepened, when he sees that he can so devote himself to it as in it to be devoting himself to God. And religion, regarding all things from that point of view, must, if it would do itself justice, regard from the same point of view nature and all our intellectual and practical intercourse with nature; even though to no small number of religious men we seem in our intercourse with nature to be farthest away from religion. But that brings us, with regard to nature, to a convergence of religion and reason upon a common goal. For what we have just seen is, that when in our rational consciousness we try to know things as they are, we have to view nature as being essentially what the religious consciousness implies it to be; have to view it as a process, or an organic part of a process, in which God is seeking to fulfil Himself. In the intercourse with nature, for instance, which is the development of science, it is not merely that we are realising our nature as intelligence; the divine and eternal principle of the whole is realising itself in us. Our freedom and individuality as intellectual—the nature of our mind as animated by a sense of the whole and hence as actively gathering facts into a synthetic unity of apperception—means the whole, which in the creative consciousness of God knows itself absolutely and eternally, coming also to know itself in individual human centres; conscious centres which are themselves God's real creation, so that consciousness, altogether in God and potentially in man, is a true infinite, having itself as its own object and "other." Our freedom and our individuality, then, even in their intellectual expression and realisation of themselves in the knowledge of nature, are really what in our experience as religious they already know themselves to be and rejoice to be—God living in us, and in the achievement of truth which he makes possible to us realising Himself. And if this is true of our intellectual or scientific intercourse with nature, still more is it true of our relation to nature in practice and in contemplation, so far as in the contemplation and the practice we do justice either to nature or to ourselves. To put it (I think fairly) in one summary word, our intercourse with nature has in it a principle—is made possible by a principle—which receives full justice and expression only in that faith and vision which is Christianity; the vision and faith to which the whole of experience, alike intellectual and practical, alike in knowing and feeling and doing, alike in science and art, in morality and religion, means God living in man and animating man with the divine or universal point of view, the point of view of the whole—nay, the point of view of the Father of our spirits who would be unspeakably less than a father if in the lives and achievements of his human children He did not live some great part of His own life.

In connexion with the foregoing, two special points call for mention, and it is best to set them down at once. The first is this. When it is said that nature is a medium through which God communicates that spiritual being, and those spiritual capabilities, which are the soul of man; the communication being gradual and involving a process of growth in which man becomes more and more active, co-operating more and more with God;—when this is said, the statement is intended to be exhaustive with regard to the place and function of nature in human experience and in the development of human experience. But it is not intended to be an exhaustive statement either about the place of nature in God's thought and activity, or about God's way with man. Nature, it is said, is a medium of God's self-impartation; but that does not imply that it is the sole medium; it may very well be that nature is but a part or aspect of God's way of communicating Himself. Not to raise here the question of the relation of historical revelation, and the historical process of redemption, to the uniformities of the physical order—a question to which we must turn later—one would still have to take into account the suggestion of the Mystics that there is a communication of God to man which lies in its immediacy beyond all communication through orders of natural and historical fact. The theologian who is able completely to rule out that suggestion, must be gifted either with very human rashness or with more than human insight. And as likely as not, the former; at any rate, there is immediacy in all experience, and it is only through such immediacies of experience that nature and history are to us what they are and mean to us what they mean.

In the second place, it will be noticed that upon the view so far taken of nature, and of its place and function in the spiritual process which is the history of the world, nature is at once greater and less than man. As a medium in that process of divine self-communication in which man comes to be man, nature is a *prius* of individual human existence. In and through it, man, with all his spiritual capabilities, enters upon his being and continually receives (if he will) the enlargement, the development and discipline, of that being. Into its system of facts and laws the individual man is born; in accordance with those facts and laws, he receives the endowment of qualities which, in his measure of freedom, he must partly develop and partly overcome; and thus it sets for him the arena and certain of the objective conditions of his life. In that sense it is greater than he; but in another sense less. For it is the means, whereas the spiritual development of the race of man is the end. Yet even in saying that, we must remember what already has been said: in the activity of God means and end are not external to each other; they are correlative; and whatever glory is to be in the one must also be in the other. And upon that qualification thoughtful men do well to insist. One of the unconscious vices that do us wrong to-day, is our impiety toward the earth. I mean not now the impiety of hasty and preoccupied minds, to which the perpetual forms about us can never utter their voice of memory, of consolation, of rebuke. I mean the more terrible impiety practised toward the earth by a race that, after age-long struggle with hunger and with cold, has entered at last upon a day of natural opulence, and in that day has built up a civilisation wherein one knows not at which to be the more amazed; the wonder of the achievements; or the incredible profligacies of waste, and the social injustice, the oppression of class by class, which is the inevitable outcome of the spirit of unashamed and wasteful expense. In such a time, no one who wishes to see our practical life and its arts put upon just foundations can feel any vocation to encourage by so much as a syllable the laying aside of what fragment still remains to us of the bygone reverence of men toward their ancient mother, the dust of the ground. To-day, after having been to man his foster-mother, genial or cruel, his sublime and dread teacher, sometimes his kindly companion, sometimes his terrific enemy, she has become to him something like his slave, the object of his cleverness, the object of his prodigality. To-morrow, for our salvation, our devices outworn by the march of her ages, it may be that she will hold once more, terribly in her inexorable arms, her proud and frail child.

But, returning to the general position, I wish in connexion with it to refer to a famous and much disputed formula concerning the relation of nature and man. "Nature," so that formula runs, "comes to consciousness of itself in man." The first thing to mark about such a saying is that its significance depends altogether upon the general setting of thought in which it is found. Those, for instance, who hold that nature is intrinsically non-spiritual could use it with the meaning that human consciousness is a part or a product or a function of mechanical and physiological processes simply as such; these being viewed as existing in their own right, independently of any eternal creative spirit, and as having in themselves the power to give rise to a spiritual principle in man. But by those who hold to such a theistic view of the world as is here in question, this saying that nature attains to self-consciousness in the soul of man can also be used. And as so used it is eminently valuable. It stands as a reminder of certain great organic unities; and stands exactly at the point where such a reminder is most needed—the point where dualism and semi-materialism most readily creep in upon our theism. If we believe in God at all, it is not difficult for us to believe in such an organic connexion between God and the human soul as leads us to declare with Saint Paul that in God we live and move and have our being. For God is spirit, and the human soul is spirit, and spirit can with spirit form one society. But this order of physical facts and events, this order of mechanical and chemical and biological processes in space and time—how can there be an organic connexion *either* between it and God, *or* between it and the spirit of man?—for on one side is matter, on the other, spirit. And most of us yield, less or more, to the pressure of that feeling: in half our mind we are theists; in the other half we are materialists, held back by our religion from living out the practical consequences of our materialism. But it is just in warning us against such a dualism that the summary formula now in question, used as a theist or as an absolute idealist would use it, is valuable. Nature rises in man to self-consciousness. The distinction, that is to say, between Nature and Spirit is a real distinction; but it is a distinction *within* a single system animated creatively by a single supreme principle; it is not a dualism between two mutually exclusive orders of reality. Nature is an activity of God; but that activity of God does not terminate solely upon itself; it is the means or medium in and through whose long and infinitely diverse processes God gives to spiritual beings their existence, and the conditions of their gradual growth in science and art, in morality and religion. Men are spiritual beings to whom God so gives their life that they *come up through nature.* God, the creative principle of nature, carries the natural process to the point where there arises in it the spirit which is man; so that in the knowing and the doing of man, in his arts and sciences, his morality and religion, nature comes both to the conscious knowledge of itself and to the conscious service of spiritual causes;—is fulfilled in grace. There is already a prophecy of this in Aristotle's view of nature as a graduated order ascending toward, and fulfilling itself in, soul; the highest soul here upon the earth, the one in which the natural process here culminates, being the soul of man which takes up into itself the functions of the vegetative and of the animal soul and adds to these the distinctively human (and divine) element of reason. There is a still profounder and more searching forecast of the whole position, in the Platonic doctrine of Reminiscence. Modern men who, intentionally or unintentionally, have carried over into the treatment of nature the great speculative traditions of the œcumenical theology, have stated the matter in ways such as this: God, externalising Himself in nature, returns to Himself in spirit and in the history of spirit; the history in which spirit does justice to nature through the very process in which it emancipates itself from its bondage to nature and enters into its heritage as spirit—enters into the life in which, both in knowledge and in action, men take nature and themselves for what they truly are, themselves for children of the self-communicating God, nature for a way of His self-communication; so that in the concrete or total process, spirit is seen as the truth of nature. When it is said that in the science and the religion of man, nature comes to consciousness of herself and to the truth of herself, the statement is false, if by nature we mean some abstraction—nature without God, nature as in some way independent and original and creative. But the statement is true, if in it we are taking nature as nature really is—as a way of the divine creation. To say, in that sense, that nature becomes conscious of itself in the human soul, and in the spiritual achievements of that soul fulfils itself, is not to affirm that sticks and stones as such, nerves and nerve-tremors as such, account for the experience of man. The statement rather means that sticks and stones and nerves are not fully known until they are viewed as, in their natural system, a medium of communication from God, who is the creative energy of nature, to man who has through nature the slow dawning of his self-consciousness, and finds in nature at once the sheltering home and the stern arena for the gradual and struggling development of the capabilities of that self-consciousness; until at last the growing child knows in their truth the gracious forms of his Father's house. Such a view, I think we must say, is not merely convincing as a matter of reason. It is the view of nature which religion more and more tends both to hold contemplatively and to put into practice, as religion more and more does justice to itself. And this being the case, one is surely not wrong in urging that it is a view intrinsically congenial to the mind and spirit of the true theologian. For surely the aim of the theological mind, so far as it maintains its allegiance to the two great powers of religion and reason, and goes hand in hand with contemplation and with faith, is to see God in organic connexion with the whole life of the earth, and with that whole history of man in which the life of the earth enters into conscious apprehension of its own meaning, and strives to realise that meaning for itself and by its own energies; the manifold energies, at once natural and divinely given, of the soul of man.

But we must take a further step—the saddest that human thought is called upon to take—if we would see the whole significance of the fact that in the sense just indicated nature comes to the conscious possession and realisation of itself in man. That further step is the recognition of a fact which lies at the basis of to-morrow's discussion, but which, in order that the matter may stand from the outset in its true perspective, I must at least mention here. It is the fact that in man nature comes to be sin and to know itself as sin. However stern and high be the moral nobility of the dogma of total depravity, as man's uttermost judgment upon himself in the presence of God or in the presence of men and women upon whom he has inflicted irremediable wrong; or whatever its difficulty in reconciling itself with the mind of our Lord, who saw in the worst of men and women beings capable of responding to the saving grace of God, and who would not have the little children forbidden, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven;—however all that may be, it is not with a dogma of any sort that we are here concerned, but with only too sad a fact of experience; one brought home to us both by our own hearts and by those ancient Scriptures which perpetually search our hearts and compel us to come to ourselves. He is still a child in the observation of fact, who imagines that our involution in sin comes only through wrong decisions of adult and enlightened will. It does indeed so come; but there is more than that. Sin has the character of a universal; through nature it passes upon all mankind. I had to point out in the opening lecture, how true of our experience is the sad ancient orthodoxy which tells us of original sin; tells us that before we could consciously turn to God, natural passions had already a masterful place in our will. Here it must be pointed out in addition, that to this sad orthodoxy of men who felt themselves entangled by a power beyond their own will in a sinfulness that they hated, the most penetrating insights of modern science give a telling—in view of what now is in the world, a fearful—confirmation. Upon the agonised confessions of the men who felt the battle within them to be a battle of spirit against nature—a different law in the members warring against the law of the mind, and bringing us into captivity under a law of sin—there could be no better comment than the hypotheses of modern science as to the relation of the instincts and passions that now are constituent elements of human nature, to the long continuities of that natural process which goes back far before man, but at last, coming to its goal in man, is in that goal heightened and transformed, and enters upon its most powerful and most terrible workings, knowing innocence no more; knowing innocence no more, and having no hope, unless, deeper than nature and deeper than sin, there be, as the true and inner reality of the world's whole order and the world's whole history, some redemptive and saving process.

With this we can sum up our position so far. We had to ask what the reality of nature is. And by nature was meant, not some second world of mystical values and operations hidden behind the physical world like a divinity behind his visible symbols; but this actual world of sensible fact and steady uniformity with which the common man and the man of science each in his own way deals, finding in it the object of his knowledge, the arena and conditions of his labour, the stubborn material of his moral struggle—nay, more than that, the companion of his moral and religious spirit, a revealing power, able to bring in times of defeat a consolation inexpressibly grave and high. Nature being such, and playing in our life such a part, we were driven to conclude at least this, that the reality of nature is the reality of a relation between man (or some wider society including man) and God. Nature, that is to say, is a term or method in a spiritual process; is that through which and in which God gives to us our spiritual being; a medium through which He makes the communication of Himself which is the impartation to us of life and freedom and individuality. When we see that—and, I think, only then—we at last see nature in the truth, not of its empirical detail indeed, but of its intrinsic character and reality. It is the divine way of giving rise to spirit; its laws, its principles of uniformity, are in the last analysis spiritual laws, divine purposes; its necessities are divine media in producing freedom.

This might be put in another way by saying that while, with our imperfect knowledge of details, we are not justified in carrying the teleological view of the world through nature in that petty sense in which teleology is applied within arbitrarily selected sections of reality (the sense which Kant ridiculed in his instance of the sand dunes and pine trees), yet in the broad and deep sense, the teleological view is valid; and valid with regard to nature. For the universe is one; and in that universe the supreme law is the purpose with which God constituted the world, and which He seeks to realise through its total process and history. The supreme law of nature, then, the law to whose realisation the total system of natural events is organic, is in the deepest possible sense of the word, an ethical law; a law, that is, which can ultimately be satisfied and fulfilled only in a certain state of character and society on the part of the self-conscious and self-determining spirits who are the primary reality of the universe. All natural law is thus in the last analysis, spiritual law, ethical law, religious law; a statement which does not mean that natural law either is, in its ultimate basis, capricious, or can in any way (from God's point of view, or man's) afford to be so. What it does mean is this. On the one hand, nature is not an independent order of existence over against God. Nor can there be any such thing as an ultimate resistance on the part of the material order to any divine purpose, or to the divine government of the world. On the other hand, since nature is a factor in the creative or self-communicating activity of God, the supreme law or purpose in that activity of God is the supreme law of nature. The purpose of God is that highest natural law which includes and sums up in itself all the system of special natural laws into which, in order to realise itself, it articulates itself.

The ultimate thing about the laws of nature is not, then, their inexorableness; but the fact that in that inexorableness God is fulfilling Himself and fulfilling man; fulfilling Himself and man even where nature goes her ways most relentlessly; in the earthquake, and the anger of the sea, and in the laws that bring us by innumerable paths to the death which is no mere change of the body, but for each of us terminates upon the earth the working of his spirit, no matter with what devotion to God and man his heart was set upon the work. Even in that presence of universal and inexorable death we must, I think, hold from the point of view of reason to the belief which we have already seen the Christian consciousness maintaining in its own way of vision and of faith. If the purpose of God—the purpose fulfilled in the concrete and many-sided communion of a spiritual society—is the highest law of nature, the soul of law in all natural law, then that purpose is the ultimate law at work, as in every part of the process of nature, so in that part of it which is death. The purpose which is thus the concrete law of the world's whole order we cannot conceive to be accomplished except in the character and society of personal spirits; though we know only too sadly how great a place among its instruments and its ways that purpose gives to death. But that in which alone the purpose of God is capable of achievement cannot in a divinely constituted world be thrown away, or be used as a mere means to something intrinsically different from itself. And just such a thing is the soul of man; it is not merely a part of an eternal system, a mode in a system of modes; it has within itself, under whatever present limitations, the principle of that eternal system; a principle, we must believe, which God, having once communicated it, will never violate. For the violation would be an ultimate defeat of Himself. The passion within us to overcome the apparent victory of death, and to complete the work left fragmentary and broken upon the earth, the passion to have our own part in the achievement which is eternal, and to be present in the ultimate fate of things—this passion we may well believe to be one of the many prophetic forms in which the eternal order of the world has in us a consciousness of itself.

In our manifold relations to the natural world and its unyielding order we are dealing, then, not with an alien, a decisively limiting, reality; but with a reality of which we are justified in believing (though we cannot penetrate the details) that it is friendly to us in the spiritual purposes and functions of our life; is at once the field and the friend of spiritual developments and achievements. If only the spirit of man is faithful to its vocation, the forces of nature which "in themselves are nothing," become its great allies:

—Winds blow, and waters roll,
Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity.

Man is divinely related, not only where he commonly and rightly thinks he is—with regard to the source and origin of his spirit—but also with regard to the apparently neutral processes and surroundings in which the struggles and the development of his spirit take place. His relationship to nature—nature in all her processes, all her strange blending of apparent indifference and cruelty with unspeakable tenderness and grace—is in its ultimate truth a relation to God and to the purpose and the ways of God. To put it in technical language, the world of spirit, even in its relation to nature where most of all it seems to meet the iron barrier of a reality intrinsically different from its own, is truly infinite; for the true infinite is that which finds itself in its other, and hence has no essentially external limitations. Individual men—each to his own extent and in his own way as an individual member of the world of spirit, different in some respect from every other individual there—have that infinity as their heritage and home, their *Vermächtnis und Acker*. And as that true infinity is their heritage, so also is true unity. The spirit of man can have in itself and with itself no unity worthy of the name until—by whatever new life in itself and transformation of its world—it has entered into unison with the realities that are its opposites. Its opposites: nature in its necessity the opposite of our freedom, so long as our freedom is unchartered, or we ourselves imperfect; God in His perfect goodness the absolute opposite of our sin. But if man be what we have concluded him to be—divinely related, both in his ultimate origin and in his connexion with nature—he has in him the hope and the promise of such unity, the hope and the promise of being at one, as with God, so with nature; at one with God as a child with its father; at one with nature and the world as that child with the persons and things of its home.

It is important to emphasise in this way the true character of man's relation to nature, not only to bring out the essential unity of religion and reason in their view of the world, but also for a critical purpose.

There is an immature Idealism which falls helpless at just this point; an Idealism which only half apprehends its first elementary insight, and so never gets beyond it. This Idealism has seen, in its too quick way, that natural facts are elements of experience; has seen that "things" are ideas, or groups of ideas, in our minds, and that "matter" is "a permanent possibility of sensation," or, to put it more fairly, is a name for an orderly and reliable system of presentations in our consciousness. But it has not grasped the nature of spirit as something more than mere idea and presentation; has not grasped the active unity of synthesis in our conscious life as a growing experience of an objective world; has not grasped the constructive power of reason in us and in the world. Things are ideas, it sees; but the coming and going of those ideas in our minds it can only regard as something like the coming and going of images in a mirror. The mirror is there, and reflects whatever happens to pass before it. Such Idealism is able to mark out almost at a single stroke its scheme of the universe. We exist; and God exists; things are our presentations; and our presentations are given to us by God. But this is one more example of great truths half understood, and made still more powerless by being packed into too neat and easy a formula.[1] The man who holds it has at his finger-tips the quickest of all the formal refutations of Materialism. But the Materialism and the Idealism which consist in abstractly opposing matter and spirit, and then choosing one or the other as the real, are neither of them of much concern to us. What does concern us is the fact that while "things" are truly "our ideas," yet we ourselves as individual consciousnesses have had a gradual growth from nothing to our present being, and in that growth precisely this world of "things," this world of natural facts, has played a great and determinative part; a determinative part which can be indicated in at least three respects. First, in the narrow or psychological sense, in which things are presentations to individual minds. In this sense, natural facts are certainly elements in conscious process; but those elements come and go in the individual minds concerned, in a way which is to a very considerable extent, determinative of the experience in which they come and go. Even as presentations in individual experiences, natural things and events enter among the factors which influence, and sometimes decisively determine, the course, the tone, the whole general character, of the experiences in question. And when even thus much has been seen, it has to be admitted that to the extent to which this obtains, man *is* a product of "nature," and his expe-

---

[1] I have stated here only the form of this immature Idealism which concerns us in dealing with the relation of religion to nature. Of course, such Idealism is capable of a very different turn; especially when governed by a purely analytic psychology. In that case it reasons more logically. Things are my presentations—the only knowable reality of them is that they are ideas of mine or groups of such ideas. Then why

---

call them "things" any longer? My presentations they are, and I have no right to call them anything more. So we come by a way still swifter than Hume's to the denial of objective reference; the denial of an objective order of nature, and of other selves constituting an objective social order.

rience an experience determined by nature and natural law. If "nature" is essentially mechanical in its course and determination (as it might be without being material—might be as a system and succession of psychical elements), so, to the extent here in question, is man. In other words the Materialism that has been too easily refuted comes back in a subtler form; as a psychological fatalism, a mechanical process of psychical elements and of their complexes. And then all that our Idealism amounts to is that this fatal or mechanical psychic process, going on in and as our individual minds, is immediately the work of God; in other words, what we have is not a real Idealism at all, but Pantheism working itself out with psychical categories. But this is only the beginning. If I admit the conception of nature as a system of facts, not present in its completeness to me, but constituting the system of conditions under which the sensations that are present to me are given—a conception employed in particular forms in the whole of common life and in all scientific work, and in those particular forms receiving continual verification—then I must admit in a still deeper sense an influencing or determining of particular elements of my experience by nature; and, to the extent of these, an influencing of my experience as a whole. And then in the third place, behind all this determination of particular facts in our experience by nature and natural law—a determination which, so far as it goes, affects our experience as a whole—there is what we have already had to consider: the general connexion of man's experience as a whole with natural histories and processes, in which (according to the judgment of men of science) many powers and tendencies of man's present being were slowly shaped in a natural history before as yet man was. I do not mean under any of these heads to make the sweeping statement that natural determination of our experience is decisive and final. Sometimes it is. To name but one out of a thousand instances, what is all my will, all my resolutely pursued scheme of life, when I am in delirium of fever? But in the main, what nature and natural laws and natural histories do, is to give us the material upon which, as we gradually struggle up from our early semi-bondage to it, we more and more react. To give me the material or part of the material upon which I am to react, does not settle fatally and decisively whether I shall move upward or downward. But it most certainly plays a part in settling what the particular road will be along which I move up or move down. Putting all these considerations together, it is plain that any Idealism which is to be of constructive value to the theologian, must have some deeper insight into nature than simply that it is a system of ideas in our minds. And that is why I have dwelt so intently upon the greater and deeper Idealism which stands in the succession of the Platonic doctrine of Reminiscence, and has received in our own day an immense reinforcement from Hegel; the greater Idealism which, in the effort to make our experience intelligible to us, insists upon the objectively and eternally spiritual character of the natural world, as not only a system of facts present to the divine mind and communicated (in response to man's effort) to man's mind to be the object of his natural knowledge, but as also a system of divine energies by and in which God communicates being to created spirits. Most true, our experience is in part made what it is by the presence in it of natural facts, and results of earlier natural facts, whose laws can be changed by no wishing or willing of ours. But what this means is that God, under forms of externality and necessity, continually is manifesting Himself to us and in us, and by that manifestation is continually developing in us our own capacities, continually communicating to us our own intellectual and practical being as free spirits. Nature in its reality is what the very highest demand of the religious consciousness requires it to be; a manifestation of God, a method of His creation, a form of communion between Him and man—communion the deepening of which is a deepening, as of man's devotion, so of his freedom.

You will notice what a burden—I do not say of struggle, but of final and hopeless antagonism—is on this view lifted from the shoulders of religious men. If the history of creation is really the history of a self-communication on the part of God through which man has come to be, and is still coming to be; and if nature is a form of that self-communication; then religious men are set free from the long nightmare of a natural necessity which has in it no heart of grace, and of a bondage of man to nature such that man can escape from it only by some desperate, even though divinely aided, undoing of his natural being. Not that there is escape from the struggle between the religious heart and nature. The very fact that nature comes to its right and its truth in spirit means that nature is not to remain mere nature; means that in all realisation of spiritual capabilities and in religion as the summing up of such realisation, there must be struggle with nature. If man will be saved, he must in a very real sense overcome and transform nature; must come to the divinely intended consummation through a great *Negativität*—that of the men who die in order to live. It is better for us to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. Of prodigal and luxurious societies there is no need to speak; from mere luxury he is a weak man who cannot instantly and easily save himself. But in societies whose strong men, instead of making themselves the bearers of social functions, elect for the self-seeking and tyrannical life—that is to say, in the civilisation which is too much our own—the *Negativität* involved in religion and in all goodness may very well come to be the inner austerity of men who stand in opposition to the spirit of their age. And this struggle between the vocation apprehended as of God, and the nature that lives and works in us and in society—this struggle has been in the nature of the case so intense that it has manifested itself in one of the greatest of the historical antagonisms of human thought; that between Christianity, as the religion of grace, and all forms of naturalism in life and in the arts. But even in insisting to the utmost upon the struggle between nature and grace, we must not insist upon it wrongly; we must not make practical naturalism to be intrinsically and universally rebellion against God. To find God, man has not to pass out of nature, like some exile who did not know that he was an exile, but at last, coming to himself, turns his face steadfastly toward "the city which is his own," and leaves behind him a renounced and hostile world—*aliena terra.* Rather, in man's finding of God nature is fulfilled; grace being the truth of nature.

And this has its intellectual side; the kindlier relation which may exist between men of religion, intent upon the divine activity and purpose in nature as a whole, and men of science intent upon the detailed steps of the natural process. If nature is what we have come to think it is, there is no need for us, either as theologians or as religious men, to start in fright from the prevalent scientific belief in a close connexion between man and nature; especially in a close connexion between the present life of man and the world's long natural history. We do well indeed to object to the assumption which is unnecessarily woven into a good deal of otherwise admirable scientific work; the assumption that man is simply an animal organism and his place in nature therefore solely a question of comparative anatomy. But that assumption is not science; it is a mixture of bad metaphysic with bad observation of fact. It takes nature as a non-spiritual realistic system—which is bad metaphysic; and man as merely an animal organism—which is to forget that man is the subject and bearer of a spiritual history and the upbuilder of a many-sided civilisation. But taking man as he is, and nature as (upon the best hypothesis we can form) it seems objectively to be, we are not called upon to struggle in the interest of religion against any science which is scientific. We need not be driven to bay, imagining that we must somehow overturn science in order to establish religion. We need not set up civil war in human nature, with the scientific impulse and innumerable scientific insights on one side, and religious devotion on the other; incensed opposites between which we must choose, as though the man who gives himself loyally to one were thereby called upon to renounce and to seek to crush the other. On the contrary, if nature is a way and arena of divine grace, nature and all our natural powers are truly fulfilled only as we rise to religion. If the principle that works creatively in nature is a principle whose highest and all-inclusive manifestation of itself is grace, then nature receives justice only as taken up into that conscious and devoted life for which the reality of realities is the grace of God. It is true enough that there are men who seem constitutionally held back from the security—the high and generous and catholic security—of the religion which has possessed itself; only when the mad energies of panic are tingling in their veins can they feel, vividly and intensely, that they are serving God. Such men are apt to take fright at any sign of mutual comprehension between religion and science. So far from seeing nature as God's creative way, and doctrines of development—doctrines of the continuity of process between the lower life of yesterday and the higher life of to-day—as just for that reason having nothing in them for religious men to fear, they are apt to declare, without further consideration, that such doctrines justify us in remaining at the animal level and gratifying with immediacy of obedience all our animal instincts. But this is completely to reverse the true view; with the gravest of injuries, as to the cause of truth so also to the cause of religion. That nature, with all her marvellous animal histories, is a way of God; that the life of man stands in its place, in intimate and organic connexion with the age-long natural process:—this, so far from bidding us to remain at the level of "mere nature," and to gratify every passion as it arises, rather bids us to fulfil in and through nature the eternal and spiritual purposes of God. It bids us continually to be carrying nature to its true goal, by making it the material and content of religion; so that nature—to call up once more our old formula—rising to consciousness of itself in man, may in that consciousness and life of man be lifted to its explicit, its self-understood and deliberately loyal, unity with God; knowing as its final meaning and outcome, not the sin of man, but the grace of God in which man overcomes his sin, and brings himself, in the love of God and in the animation of his life by that love, to his own true manhood; and nature in him to its true fulfilment.

The view of nature now before us I wish to apply to two questions which rest with grave weight upon the religious mind of to-day; two questions which religious men can ask only with unspeakable pain, but which they are compelled to ask by some of the most telling of the intellectual forces of the age. In view of the uniformity of nature and the invariability of natural law, can such events as the miracles of the New Testament possibly have happened at all? And in view of that same uniformity and invariability, have the prayers of Christian men any real effectiveness; can they really bring anything to pass, really play any part in determining the course of history whether in individual lives or in the race and its civilisation? The former question, if it concerned only a few isolated wonderful events, would be insignificant; its importance lies in the fact that the events to which it refers were isolated neither from one another nor from the general course of history, but have had in the religion, and therefore in the total life, of mankind, a place which can only be called creative. The question is important because what is really at issue in it is whether, with fidelity to the scientific mind, we can retain that œcumenical reading of the New Testament history upon which Christianity as a world-power has been built up. Concerning the importance of the second question no word need be said. It is a matter of that communion with God which to-day and in all ages, is the heart of religion. But, as you will notice, it is in a precise and very limited form that these questions come at this point before us. To-day we have not to discuss them generally, not to consider their total place in the Christian life or in the divine process of redemption. We have to consider them only in relation to the doctrine of the uniformity of nature and the invariableness of natural law; and even in that, have only to trace the bearing of the view of nature now before us.[1]

In each case, then, the question at issue is the question of the real character of the uniformity of nature. When it is said, for instance, that such events as the New Testament miracles cannot possibly have happened at all, the meaning is not that historical evidence proves these events never to have happened, but rather that, the order of the world being what it is, such events are intrinsically and at all times impossible. And in such a position, "the order of the world" means virtually the principle of the uniformity of nature; so that what we have to consider is the real significance of that principle.

The idea of the uniformity of nature has in it a great truth; or rather, is our attempt to bring a great truth to application; the principle of continuity. That principle we often do not bring to explicit consciousness; the failure to bring it to clear consciousness and thus to do justice to it, has often enough forced theology into a false position with regard to science. But we all really recognise it, in the sense that, critically or uncritically, clearly or unclearly, it governs our thinking; in fact, the words which would deny it carry a meaning only by building upon it. For the principle of continuity is really the application to the temporal process of the world of that operative conception of the systematic unity of all existence, which, as already we have seen, lies at the basis of all connected thinking, of all intelligent experience whatsoever. Nothing in the temporal movement leaps suddenly into being out of nothing; nothing arbitrarily passes away leaving no trace of itself. On the contrary, the whole temporal process is a unity in which every step is related to all that comes before or after. The total process is continuous in the sense that the conditions of the occurring of any event are the complete history of the universe up to that point; or, conversely, that if you analyse any event completely, what you are compelled to pass in review is the total history of the universe up to that event. In that meaning, the principle of continuity is indisputably binding upon us. To think at all, or to act connectedly, is to recognise it; the only way to escape from it is to cease thinking and acting. But it is with this as with nearly all elementary and fundamental principles. The critical point is not whether we shall accept the principle or no. About that we have no choice. The critical point is whether, having accepted it, we shall apply it so hastily and arbitrarily as largely to defeat the principle itself. The important thing is the nature of the process which is continuous. The continuity, for instance, of a purely mechanical process, with action and reaction always equal and opposite, is a very different thing from the continuity of a process of spiritual and moral self-communication in which the sum of energies continually increases as the creative work proceeds. But if the significance of the continuity thus depends on the character of the process which is continuous, our present question merges in the larger question, What is the real nature of the world-process in which mankind has its life and history, and in whose continuity we have no choice but to believe? That, however, is the question which in the preceding lecture, and to-day, has been before us. The world-process is a creative work in which God is bringing into existence a spiritual society; bringing it into existence through a process of self-communication. So that nature is a divine activity, a form or medium of the divine self-communication in which man comes to be; the end or purpose which God has in view in thus communicating Himself and giving rise to a world, is the supreme law of nature. And this not in any abstract sense, but concretely; as was said a moment ago, the purpose of God is that highest natural law which sums up in itself and includes all the system of special natural laws, into which, in order to realise itself, it articulates itself. It is only a scientific convenience, and not the truth of things, to take the physical order out of its true setting as an element in divine activity and in human experience, and to treat it as if it were an independent closed circle, with an inner continuity of its own, or even with a series of such continuities, physical, chemical, physiological. But to go further and assume this uniformity, or these uniformities, to be concrete and final; to assume that with absoluteness and finality they forbid us to believe that such and such events, recorded in the traditionary history of religion, can in the nature of things ever have happened at all;—that is to turn a convenient scientific abstraction into an *a priori* theology. It is to treat the abstract as though it were the concrete, the provisional as though it were the final. It is to treat certain special or abstract uniformities as though they were the concrete continuity of that divine activity in which God creates a world and seeks in it to realise His purpose. Such a proceeding, however, is very easy. Easy as it is to make abstraction, it is easier still to forget that one has done so, and thus to take one's results as concrete. Hence modern men are continually under the temptation to set up at one stroke an absolute foreclosure against miracle; either by assuming as a finality the point of view from which nature is simply taken for granted as a realistic order, without any consideration of its relation to the spirit which in man knows it and acts morally upon it; or, still more easily, by assuming without further interpretation the point of view of some special science of nature, with its working hypothesis of a physical, or chemical, or physiological, uniformity. Not that the making of abstraction is necessarily a wrongdoing. In any such life as ours, the sciences which deal with the world's detail cannot have the *totum simul* of intuition; they *must* make abstraction. Hence we have special or departmental sciences; sciences which are deliberately abstract, dealing, in a vast division of labour, with selected spheres or aspects of our world of experience, each taken in greater or lesser isolation from the experience of which it is really a part or with which it is organically connected. Such sciences, just by reason of their abstractness and the limitation of the field thus gained, are able to move with assured steps; in some cases, where the abstraction is particularly thorough, with virtual infallibility. With this procedure of the special sciences it is surely no part of the theologian's duty to find fault. But it is part of his duty to point out that when we follow that procedure, we should recognise what it is we do, and should not treat our abstract results as though they were concrete. When we take things concretely—take them as they are—the universe is not a mechanical or merely physical process; nor yet a merely physiological process; nor is any part of the universe a *merely* mechanical, or physical, or physiological, process. If the view now before us is at all sound, the universe is a society of spiritual beings; its process is the history of such a society; and the divinely constituted laws of that history, laws in the deepest sense spiritual and moral, are the ultimate laws of every part of nature. The highest law of existence—*a fortiori,* the highest law of nature—is a divine purpose. In the history-in-time of the universe God is working something out, realising a divine end; and that end is the inner soul of all natural law. In nature there are indeed processes which can be studied as mechanism, and described in mechanical terms. But the mechanical description is proximate, not complete. The processes which can be studied as mechanical are not merely mechanical. They are organic factors in a world which is more than a mechanism; they have their being and function in a world-process whose inward reality is a divine idea and the orderly divine activity of the realisation of that idea; an activity which has in it the truest and deepest of all continuities, the continuity of a purposeful life of life which reaches "from end to end, sweetly and strongly ordering all things."

---

[1] In the discussion which follows, I have included one or two paragraphs published earlier.

Except, then, as a provisional division of scientific labour, we cannot break the world up into a number of realms, each with its own sort of reality, each having a continuity of its own. It is only as such a provisional working method of science that we get a series of uniformities, each governing its own particular sphere or aspect of nature or of history. When we wish to take things as they are—as we must do, if we are to be in position to assert the absolute negative that certain specified events cannot in the nature of things have happened at all—there is but one continuity in the process of the world. The true unity and continuity of the world consists in the unity and continuity of its divine and altogether reasonable plan, a plan in which God manifests and realises Himself. The continuity of things, the continuity of that process which is at once nature and history, lies in the fact that everywhere in that process there is present and operative a purpose which is the expression of the nature of God as reason, as righteousness, as the love that gives all things—but so gives them that to the men who achieve them they are to the last degree significant and valuable. The question whether such and such events which seem to have had an immense place in determining the course of human history, ever can have happened at all, is not, then, a question to be finally settled by reference to any abstract uniformity, mechanical or physical, chemical or biological. It can be settled only by reference to that divine plan or purpose which is the true and concrete principle of continuity in the world's whole process, including the whole of nature. Events, or classes of events, can happen or cannot happen according to their possible or impossible relation to that plan.

The continuity of such a divine activity, such an organising and gradual creation of a spiritual society, is almost the opposite of a mechanical continuity with absolute equality of action and reaction. It is the continuity of a process in which a supreme and eternal purpose is being realised by continual impartations of fresh life, and through struggles ever new; a process in which no step ever quite repeats a previous step. In a spiritual society in course of development in time, the total practical situation is never the same at any moment as it was the moment before. Just because the history of the world is spirit, and spirit is life, there is no exact repetition of events. Hence the divine administration of the universe cannot be a series of repetitions; cannot move in a closed circle or upon a dead level. Yet it is truly continuous; every step in it is organically related to the whole, and thus is, in the deepest sense, under law. The bearing of this upon the disastrous—I had almost said, the half-atheistic—idea of miracles as divine interferences, will come before us presently; at this point let us notice that such a continuity as has just been indicated cannot very usefully be stated in terms of mere uniformity. When we are considering, not abstract aspects of the world-process, but that process in its concreteness as the history of a divinely founded society the possibility of whose life lies in a continual divine activity of self-communication, the term "uniformity" can only stand for the altogether indisputable but rather useless principle that, given absolutely similar conditions in the total process, similar results would follow. For instance, if the total condition of the universe should become at this moment similar—strictly and absolutely similar, in every minutest point of achievement, of possibility, of need, of spiritual darkness and light—to the condition of the universe at the time of the Incarnation, then the Incarnation would take place again. Else the same conditions do not lead to the same results; the same situations do not receive the same treatment; instead of such an order of the world as expresses reason in God and develops reason in man, there is pure arbitrariness at the heart of things. But when all that is granted, it is of little use. For as we have just seen, the universe never does thus return temporally upon itself so that all things become absolutely similar to what they were at some previous time. One cross-section of the temporal process of the world is never absolutely similar—given long intervals of time, is never even closely similar—to any previous cross-section. That is prevented by the mere fact of time, of tradition, of memory; by the mere fact of the inheritance of past experience in conscious recollection and gathering character and objective institutions. True, the whole of history is for God an eternal whole; else there could be no history, no time-process, at all; no succession of events forming a single intelligible order. But eternity is not a static and lifeless image. Its reality is the reality of its historical content; the labours and struggles and achievements which make up the history of mankind or whatever greater history there may be in which the history of mankind is a part. And in that history, as was said, God faces a situation ever new. No doubt it is involved in the very idea of divine rationality that God always would meet absolutely the same situation with the same procedure. But in a world-process which is not mechanical, but is the experience and activity of a spiritual society, identically the same situation never does recur. The continuity of such a process is the continuity of a divine purpose in an unceasing activity of spiritual creation; an activity in which each step means to its own extent a new world; so that, to repeat the statement of a moment ago, God faces a new situation every day—a new situation with every step. If the world is constituted as we have come to believe it to be, the strictest continuity prevails in its total process; and yet continually all things are new; no particular fact or event ever occurs, absolutely similar, in the total system of its relations, to a previous one. It is no argument against a recorded event, that it is viewed as having happened only once in the history of the world. Such uniqueness is in greater or lesser measure true of every event whatever, the setting of yesterday's sun, the rising of the tide to-morrow, the yielding or the resistance of any man to his besetting temptation. The common denial of the possibility of miracles assumes just the opposite of this. When it is said, for instance, that in the nature of things our Lord cannot have risen from the dead, what is assumed is that the universe somehow can return in its temporal process to a state absolutely similar to a previous one; and that it actually does this so incessantly that the exact things which God did in the days of our Lord, He must needs be now doing every day; with the consequence that from what God is not doing now, we can infer what He did not do then.

But so to argue from the nature of things is to misapprehend the nature of things. It is to take the world, either as a closed system of physical facts apart from divine and human consciousness, or as a spiritual activity which somehow proceeds on a level, each day like the proceeding. To ask whether, in view of such a uniformity of nature, we can believe in the possibility of miracles, is to apply no true test. With regard to the miracles of the New Testament the case is rather this. In the first place we should see them in their unity; not many separate events, but one miracle whose importance lies, not in its character as merely wonderful, but in the fact that it stands central and creative in the history of religion—which is to say, in the history of mankind. In the second place, the question whether such a miracle is possible or no, is really the question whether it is in accord with—whether it is demanded by and is organically part of—the plan and purpose of God as He conducts the affairs of a universe which is a spiritual and social order, and in which, therefore, for every divine act whatever the determining conditions are ethical. But that far-reaching test is incapable of exact or scientific application by human intelligence; it can be employed only in prophetic insight and religious feeling. That there is a divine plan of the world we must indeed believe; but we cannot so grasp all the details, all the articulation, of that plan, as to see each fact or event in the total system of its relations; we cannot give to the facts of our history their complete "divine interpretation." We are brought, then, into this position. The only criterion that would enable us to make absolute statements is out of the reach of our intellect. It can be appealed to in religious feeling and insight; it cannot be appealed to in the way of final and decisive science. We must rule out statements of this kind, that such and such a recorded event can never in the nature of things have happened at all. And when we want to know what actually has happened, and desire something more exact and scientific than religious feeling and prophetic insight, there is one procedure always open to us and always relevant; the old-fashioned question, "Is this event historically well-authenticated?" We can set to work to weigh the historical evidence, doing our best to estimate the competence and good faith of the witnesses, but not trying decisively to close the case beforehand by general considerations. We can, in a word, obey the lesson of that wise man of science who said that the scientific spirit consists in a willingness to believe that anything whatever can happen, coupled with the determination not to believe, without convincing evidence, that it actually has happened.

But in saying this we must be prepared to reckon with a consideration which sensible and thoughtful men are sure to bring forward. "We admit," they will say, "that the sweeping negative statements, considered a moment ago, cannot maintain themselves. We admit that the decisive and final criterion whether for negative or for positive statements, is beyond exact application by human intelligence. And hence we grant that in order to keep first things first, we must put first the weighing of historical evidence. But it is not enough simply to weigh historical evidence as a shrewd judge of human nature would weigh evidence in a court of law. In a matter of this kind, while there are no decisive considerations such as foreclose historical study, yet there are strong antecedent probabilities, strong rational considerations for or against; and such considerations do weigh, and ought to weigh, with sensible men. Even in estimating historical evidence we cannot help considering the intrinsic credibility or incredibility of the events related; and thus general principles, and a general point of view, do enter, professing no absolute finality and yet influencing profoundly and inevitably our thought." From the demand thus indicated there is, I think, no escape. But we should be careful to take the right way, and not the wrong, in fulfilling it; should be careful that the general considerations which influence our thought consist, not in the abstract or hypothetical working conceptions of the special sciences taken as finalities, but in an insight into the nature of things as they actually are. In other words, we should regard the world-process not merely as a series of details to be treated in convenient divisions and under convenient abstractions by the departmental sciences; we should regard it, in its physical facts and in all its facts, as constituted by an eternal spirit who in constituting it acts altogether from himself (i.e. is free) and seeks to fulfil himself in the realising of a purpose which expresses his very being. The purpose of God is not another detail added, "at the top," to the details which it is the task of the special sciences to investigate; it is the creative, the animating, the unifying principle, which gives rise to the details and fulfils itself in and through their total order; so that in all the special sciences we are studying it, although it is not the business of those sciences to insist upon this or even to be aware of it. To the total scheme of natural facts and laws—or rather to that total order of which "nature" is itself an organic part—the purpose of God is related as, in Plato, the Idea of Good is related to the other Ideas, or as, in Hegel, the Absolute Idea is related to the Ideas which are its organic constituents and which, if taken merely in their own right, are abstractions. So that no reference to any special law or departmental uniformity; no reference to an abstract physical or biological uniformity, the true significance of which is not fully seen until it is seen in the "divine interpretation" which it is not the concern of physics or biology to seek; no such reference, but on the contrary only a comprehension of the demands of that purpose of God which is the ultimate law of the whole order of nature and of every natural event, can justify statements of the form that such and such events cannot in the nature of things have happened at all. But such comprehension of the purpose of God, our reason, still at the beginning of its knowledge of things, can have only in part. The human mind, not being an intuitive understanding, cannot grasp the complete divine interpretation of any particular event, the complete system of the relations in which the particular event stands woven into the total history of the world. Our apprehension of the divine purpose, so far from being clear and final science, is rather a matter of faith; a matter of prophetic insight and of that religious feeling which means the whole character of a man, religious through both his intelligence and his emotions, bringing itself to bear upon the special problems of his life. It is by such religious feeling—such total movement of the character of men who through all their consciousness love God—that the ultimate problems of our life, alike on their practical and their theoretical side, best are settled. To such a mind, looking upon the world and seeing in it a spiritual society and spiritual history in which God seeks to fulfil the purposes of His own goodness in and through the devotion of human hearts to goodness, the broad antecedent probabilities would, I think, seem in favour of the great body of the New Testament miracles; or rather, of the New Testament miracle; for, as already we have had to remind ourselves, there is one New Testament miracle, the Incarnation and saving mission of our Lord, and particular miraculous actions have their importance as parts of it, or as organically related to it. This, however, leads beyond our present topic—the bearing of our view of nature upon the question of the possibility of miracle. The antecedent probability of such a manifestation and saving work of God, as the central and determinative event or factor in human history, appears in its full strength only when considered in the light of the grave and deep need of humanity through sin. But upon that I must say what I can in the brief space of to-morrow's lecture.

The most important of all protests against miracle and against the mind given to miracles is that made for the sake of religion itself. Such a protest was a continual attitude on the part of our Lord—an essential feature in His establishing of inward and spiritual religion; so that the more fully developed the Christian consciousness becomes in the church, the more acutely the difference is felt between the miracles of our Lord in their simplicity, their beneficence, their profundity, and the ecclesiastical miracles in their riotous and meaningless abundance. But the characteristic modern protest against miracle is somewhat different; is a blending of truth and error. It has truth enough in it to make it strong; error enough to make it dangerous. It arises in part from that inadequate view of nature the criticism of which has just been indicated. But it also arises in part from something deep and true alike in the religious and in the scientific mind; arises as a protest against an idea of miracle really as offensive to the Christian consciousness as to the scientific mind. Christian men sometimes defend with a strange frenzy ideas whose implications are ruinous to Christianity itself; and most pertinaciously many a Christian man has defended the idea of miracle as an interference from above with a regular order. With so deep a violation of the principle of continuity the scientific mind could make no terms. And the offence to the Christian consciousness was really just as deep; for the conception of God involved was the conception of a bungling workman who made a system external to himself and was compelled at critical moments to interfere with its regular working. But neither offence was necessary; for the continuity of the world, as we have seen, is the continuity of its divine plan; and in the carrying out of that plan every divine act—every step and stage in God's manifestation of Himself, every step and stage of His work upon human hearts—has its definite place, its strictly organic connexion with all that comes before or after. Whatever events actually did happen in the divine founding of Christianity stood in their place in the continuity of the world's process; they were integral and organic parts of the divine plan of the world, integral and organic parts of the fulfilment of the purpose of God. So far from being lawless, or mere interferences on God's part with a regular order of the world, they were in the deepest sense lawful; as lawful as the movements of the tides or the falling of the leaves in autumn; in a sense, more lawful, because nearer to the centre of all law, more immediately expressive of the divine purpose which is the one supreme law within and throughout that whole system of natural law into which it has articulated itself. So far from being violations of continuity they are expressions of continuity, as being each in its place exactly what the principle of continuity called for at that place. The way in which the events related in the New Testament came to be regarded as divine interferences with a more or less non-divine world-order that had a continuity in its own right—a continuity which miracles violate—has in the main been this. In the first place, men of science inevitably adopt the procedure which we have just had to note. They take parts or aspects of reality in some degree of isolation from the total system, the total spiritual purpose and history, of the world. They proceed as though reality were a number of special spheres, each with a uniformity and continuity of its own, a continuity mechanical or chemical or physiological, as the case may be; a use of the principle of continuity abstract and provisional, but allowable because each of the sciences in question is a limited inquiry, intentionally and professedly leaving out of its field of view a great deal of that total movement of spiritual reality which is the history of the world. But then comes an intellectual trespass so easy that it is made not merely by the light-armed guerrillas who fight metaphysical battles with physical maxims, but by genuinely scientific men. The distinction between the work of a special science and the attempt to apprehend the nature of reality as a whole, the attempt to apprehend the creative principle of unity in the world and thus to see into the life of things, is overlooked, and physics or chemistry or biology becomes at one stroke metaphysic. The relations of natural objects to one another, as these are taken in the special sciences, are regarded as constituting the whole nature of objects, without reference to the spirit for which they are objects and to whose experience they are organic. Natural objects, in other words, are taken as constituting a world-in-itself, a realistic world in a realistic space and time; the laws and uniformities of that abstract world are taken as the uniformities and laws of all reality, including all that experience and history of man to which the process of nature is organic; so that an abstract or provisional uniformity, a uniformity requiring further interpretation, is treated as though it were the concrete continuity of the total world-order. And then there remains no choice but to say of miracles, either that they cannot happen at all, or else are divine interferences with a natural system in itself closed and complete. Such views, once they are held by scientific men of weight and power, gradually infiltrate popular thought and the thought of the church. The distinction is not clearly drawn between natural science, which commands the adherence of us all, and "Naturalism," a premature and hasty metaphysic got by treating natural science as in its methods and principles adequate to the total process of reality, including man's experience. Hence Naturalism seems to have the whole weight of science behind it, and easily becomes a sort of undetected and uncriticised subconsciousness, operating unperceived but most effectively upon all our thought. Almost unconsciously it becomes an organising point of view, gradually establishing in our minds its new interpretation of the nature of the world and of man's history, and thus giving to thought and life, both within the church and without, a new complexion and a new controlling centre. And this is the easier that nowadays Naturalism seldom expresses itself in the old crass ways. Extreme materialisms, mechanical systems, accounts of the whole of human experience in terms of purely biological evolution, do not so easily enchain men now as they did half a century ago. It is as a subtler spirit that Naturalism operates in popular thought, in philosophy, in theology, in historical and Biblical studies. It comes to us as a sort of intellectual atmosphere or fashion. And the intellectual fashions of an age often have an enormous power, irrespective of their intrinsic strength or weakness; an ability to present themselves like absolute necessities of thought. And that not merely to weak and unstable minds; but to those also that through sincerity and strength are most open to all the thought of their day and most anxious not to be deniers of any truth. Frequently, too, in that irony which waits upon criticism, such an intellectual tendency or fashion does but lead a mind of critical habits to expend its destructive power upon the old, while it accepts uncritically and as a matter of course the new. And as many an unhappy chapter in the history of theology shows, the Apologist—who ought to be, in the deep and honourable sense of the words, a mediating theologian, a man who knows that new truth fulfils old truth and who therefore, taking his stand upon the old, welcomes the new, making each interpret more deeply the other—the Apologist, in his eagerness to attack the specific conclusions of those whom he takes to be the opponents of religion, frequently and without thought adopts precisely that part of their view which is genuinely and permanently dangerous; namely, their presuppositions. With regard to miracle, for instance, instead of detecting in a naïvely realistic view of nature the root of the trouble, many Apologists themselves assume that view without thinking about it at all. Then the belief in miracle becomes as hopeless to them as it is impossible to their opponents, and can be retained only by desperate expedients; only by assuming, for instance, that in the regular courses of a nature which goes its way virtually without God, God interferes from above. We should notice, too, that Naturalism in its more refined forms can easily adjust itself to the half-way Idealism to which reference was earlier made. That Idealism knows that things are ideas; and therefore can refute any gross form of Materialism. But it has dwelt so exclusively upon "ideas" and "presentations," that it has failed to grasp the essential nature of the principle which presents ideas to itself; the essential nature of spirit as self-organising, self-determining, self-realising—self-realising through self-communication, and in that way creative of a world of freedom. Hence, even in asserting that there is an eternal spiritual source at once of the spirit of man and of the objectivity of things, it fails to see that God in all His communicating of Himself as the spirit of man, in all His giving rise to a world and making its history possible, does so in order to realise Himself through the free activities of the spirits whom He has made; does so in order to realise Himself by developing in man spiritual freedom and therefore genuine goodness. It does not see that the divine activity which is the creation and maintenance of the world—the activity in which every natural fact has its being, its place, its function—is something more than a presence of ideas to God and a communication of those ideas to us; is, namely, a free and teleological activity in which God seeks a realisation of Himself in the achievements, in the duties and affections, of the lesser spirits to whom He has given life, and who are capable of those achievements and affections because their divine origin means just this, that God communicates to them, under whatever form of potentiality, some measure of His own nature as free and continuously creative. This immature Idealism, in a word, has not grasped the meaning of its own first principle. It does not see that spirit, as the highest principle of the world, means a God who can realise Himself—can give to His own nature its appropriate expression and activity—only in and through the life of a society of freely creative spiritual beings; whether that society have its being eternally, as in the Trinity; or under a form of development, as in the world. Hence such Idealism can easily be brought into accord with a naturalistic view that has purified itself of mere Materialism. To put it the other way, the naturalistic view in that refined form can easily express itself in terms of such Idealism. It can admit that a supreme spiritual principle alone suffices to explain the process of the world; to that extent it can be explicitly theistic. But whether it is clearly conscious of the fact or no, it really clings to and is controlled by the belief that God, in all the activity in which He constitutes the world and makes possible a history of man, proceeds only in the ways now becoming known to us in the physical and natural sciences; ways, therefore, which do not go beyond the bounds of those uniformities which our sciences of nature are gradually learning to formulate as laws. Thus it is possible for men who hold with conviction a spiritual view of the world, but do not see all that their conviction means, to be governed in their thought by an implicit Naturalism. Their Idealism is not what Kant could have taught them to make it—critical; and critical in the important sense, critical not of results alone but still more of categories and working principles. They do not see that working principles, used legitimately enough in dealing with spheres and aspects of reality taken in abstraction from the supreme principle and ultimate law of all reality, require further interpretation before being applied to the process of the world as it concretely is for God and man. Hence they take those principles to be applicable immediately to reality as a whole and in its continuity; necessarily applicable, therefore, to the life of man in all its content and all its relations; applicable to religion, and, in religion, to the person and the mission of our Lord.

But before leaving the question of our too easy drift toward what one regretfully calls Naturalism—narrowing to this poor use a splendid word—we ought to remind ourselves of one thing further. The history just in question, as it actually has been wrought out by individual men, has had a side altogether generous and high, and, to all except the meanest of men, profoundly moving in its tragedy. It has been the history of a heart-breaking sacrifice made in loyalty to what was taken as the call of truth. Views adverse to miracle came with what seemed the whole weight of science behind them. Hence it was frequently not the weakest men in the church who yielded up the beliefs that had been to them the life within their life; it was very often the strongest and the sincerest; the men who knew that the love of God involves the love of truth, and who therefore felt most keenly, as part of Christian virtue, the obligation to keep their minds open to all that came under the form of truth, so that from God they might receive His many revelations, denying none and scorning none. If there was fault or guilt, theirs was the greater who, by giving place to the spirit of panic and the spirit of anger, drove theology from her work of mediating and interpreting to one another the many sides of the growing thought of man.

But whatever be our judgment with regard to that, we cannot well disagree upon this: that the question about miracle is important only as it is directly or indirectly a question about the one great miracle—our Lord and His mission. If it were merely a question concerning isolated wonderful events, we should indeed be foolish to give it any central place in our thought about our life and about the way of life. And in a civilisation such as ours—a civilisation haunted by the ineffectual and accusing shadows of the unskilful and embittered poor—the men who are possessed by the love of God, the saints of God who do not know themselves to be saints, if we told them that our faith was bound up with such a conception of miracle and that it was being shaken, would be likely to listen only for the briefest of moments; but, in the brief moment, they would reply that there is one reality and it is all miracle; for the reality of our life is the ever-present grace of God; and that is a continuous miracle and turns into miracle all that it touches.

But in connexion with the principle of the uniformity of nature there was a second question. In view of that uniformity, in view of the invariableness of natural law, can the prayers of Christian men have any real effect in bringing things to pass; any real effect in determining the course of that which day by day is unfolding itself to us out of the unknown—the course of our civilisation upon the earth?

The bearing upon this of what has already been said about nature and its continuity, can be stated very briefly. But first let us remember what conception of prayer it is that can here come into question. For prayer is in its own school continually transformed. Of prayer as a mere external means of extorting from God the objects of desires that forget God; prayer whose petitions God can grant only if there be in His administration of His world a place for that sad disciplinary wisdom in which parents give to wilful children the objects of their will;—of such prayer I need not speak. But in the prayers of very many of those who love God, slowly a change is wrought. We begin our life with eager and impatient hearts; and in the impatience and the eagerness our religion on all its sides is likely to share. Our plans and hopes stand clearly before our minds; when danger threatens them, our sense of the danger is acute and vivid. The imminence of the peril, the cruelty of the possible loss, the loveliness of that which seems about to be destroyed, the hopelessness of a future from which those fair forms are gone, or in which those carefully formed plans are to find no realisation and have no place:—with pitiless clearness all this is present to our minds, and we hasten to God with petitions most definite and most urgent. Just what God should do for us, just what He should do for His Kingdom in this difficult and critical time, we tell Him. And then we wait for the answer; sometimes divided between hope and fear; sometimes in that faith which is ready to think of God as under compulsion to reduce the whole system of nature to anarchy, when our hearts are set upon something that we can have only through the shattering of the natural order, and we ask God for it with an undoubting belief that He is going to give it to us; a view of prayer pathetic were it not so splendid, pitiable were it not that it is often held in that simplicity of heart which is the root and beginning of every human excellence. But the God to whom we have prayed is greater than we. His love is a love for individuals; but He sees the part in the whole, and time as eternity. Nature He makes orderly; expressing in it His own rationality, and thereby making possible for us men the development of rational individuality in intelligence, in morals, in the deep affections of a life in which we must help one another as we can in the presence of vast and inexorable, but not unintelligible, forces. With eternal patience, with a wisdom beyond our earthly comprehension, He works out His vast designs; and into those designs He weaves our lives; so that sometimes the answer we had so eagerly prayed for, comes; but sometimes does not come. Does not come—because in its place comes something greater; something longer in its process and wider in its issues, leading us out through slow years into fields of life more sober in colour than those we had planned, but greater in labour and deeper in truth. ". . . . Men fight," as William Morris said, "and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name." And as this goes on, there dawns upon us—sometimes gradually and peacefully, like the deepening of morning into day, but sometimes through struggle and rebellion—the vision of a wisdom greater than ourselves, working through the whole process of the world, active in the total movement of human history and society. It is the "hidden wisdom" of the world; it "reaches from end to end, sweetly and strongly ordering all things." Unfailingly—a wisdom and power which "groweth not old"—it goes on its way, and individual wills, individual plans, individual prayers, oppose it in vain. They can neither compel it, nor persuade it, out of its course. Yet it is not the tyrant or the destroyer of the individual will. On the contrary, the individual finds his salvation in making himself at one with it; that our lives can be woven into its design is our one true glory and our one true hope. It is not an easy lesson; but as we gradually learn it, our many prayers come more and more to be special forms of the one petition that God will fulfil Himself, and that He will grant to us and to all the souls for whom it is our duty to pray, the one all-inclusive blessing of having a place in His fulfilment of Himself; of being organs and agents through whom He achieves His eternal purpose for the world. Thus it is that prayer in its own school apprehends its own principle, the principle which is the vital nerve of all saving religion; the principle that the one thing for man to desire, the heart of desire in all desires, is that God be fulfilled, that God's will be done, that

God's kingdom come. The centre of gravity of prayer comes to be no longer in ourselves but in God. All the horizon of a man's life changes upon him; all things, and all the values of things are referred to God; more and more the soul, as from a high and solemn place, surveys the whole of the world as the scene in which God is to be fulfilled. Prayer comes less and less to be mere importunity; the powerless creature upon the earth begging things from the all-powerful Creator in heaven. More and more it comes to be communion—a son talking with his Father about the things to which both are devoted; though it is true enough that so long as our life upon the earth remains the thing it is, blended of hope and pain, of glory and pitiful weakness—a life in which the strongest are frail, and the securest work of man trembles over an unknown deep—the element of importunity can never wholly cease from our prayers. But for all alike, the strong, and the weak, and those who in their weakness are the strongest of all, prayer that is sincere more and more apprehends its own nature; more and more becomes genuinely religious and a part of genuine religion. And as it does so it becomes more and more a school of character. At first in our impatient and urgent prayers—prayers that almost are ready to set aside God's way with the world if only our way may prevail—prayer is only to a limited extent a discipline and purification of the soul; now and then the sense of God's presence and of the wisdom which with Him is love, rebukes the narrowness, or the folly, or the selfishness, of the petitions that we press upon Him. But when prayer becomes truly itself, becomes a genuine companionship of the soul with God, the divine nature is always drawing the human nature upward toward itself. It is the pure in heart who see God; and the hearts that strive to see God become pure. The last and highest result of prayer is not the securing of this or that gift, the avoiding of this or that danger. The last and highest result of prayer is the knowledge of God—the knowledge which is eternal life; and by that knowledge the transformation of human character and of the world.

But our question here is a very limited one. In view of what nature is, can such prayer be effective in determining the only thing that is open to us to determine and that is worth determining; the course of our life, the course of the civilisation whose present movement is upon the earth? If reality is what we have come to believe it to be—a society of spiritual beings, with nature as a form of that self-communicating activity of God in which spiritual society has its origin and its life—the answer is plain. If the life of the universe is thus the life of a spiritual society, and to that life nature through all her system is organic, prayer is in accord with the intrinsic reality of things; in accord with the intrinsic reality of nature itself. What is really going on in all the actual process of the world is inter-communication between God and His created spirits. Such inter-communication is the reality of all the activities which make up the history of the world. It is the one concrete activity in which, whether the finite agents know it or not, and whether they play their parts worthily or unworthily, all particular activities have their being and their significance. Directly or indirectly, worthily or unworthily, all events that happen—not only decisions and devotions and aspirations in the heart of man, but all those things that we call natural,

> Fire and hail, snow and vapour;
> Stormy wind fulfilling his word,

—are elements in such a process of inter-communication. And the essential thing that God is seeking to bring about, as at once the fulfilment of Himself in His creative activities, the fulfilment of man, the fulfilment of nature in man, can only be that that inter-communication, dark with man's unconsciousness, made into tragedy by man's sin, may be lifted to the level of conscious and affectionate communion, the communion of the Father with the family of His children. But that is what prayer is; a communion conscious, searching, personal, intimate. It is religion at its clearest consciousness of itself; which is to say, it is our very life, our very being, at its clearest consciousness of itself. It is in such communion, it is in the life of which such communion is the inner aspect, that man is most truly faithful to the divinely originated and divinely intended reality of his own being and of the world's being. It is in such communion and such life that man most truly realises himself by making himself most truly an organ in the self-fulfilment of God. So that to ask whether prayer is effective is like asking whether it is effective to be alive unto God; effective to realise one's true being and to fulfil one's divine vocation. In fact it is only when we fall unconsciously into the mistake of regarding prayer as something external to the communion of the Christian man with God—or into the still more radical mistake of regarding that communion itself as something external to the essential life of humanity and of nature—that we raise this question of the effectiveness of prayer at all. It is like asking whether it is effective for reality to be real, or for life to live. The essential will of the Christian man is that in all the ways of the world God may fulfil Himself; in pursuance of that will, the Christian man gives his loyalty to those causes of human welfare in which the heart of man gradually has been learning to articulate and make definite its longing for God and for good. When such a man brings before God all things of his life—all the things his heart fears, all the things his heart desires—the doubt is not whether such prayer is effective; the doubt is whether there is in the world any other permanently effective force than such prayer and the life that is lived in the spirit of such prayer. The energies of which prayer is the type or the spirit, are the only energies capable of anything that from the divine or eternal point of view can be called real achievement at all. And that not in some abstract or exclusive sense, but inclusively and concretely. What we commonly think of as effective forces—masses moving in space, energies, ambitions, passions—are appearances, the reality of which it is the long and slow struggle of humanity to apprehend; and when that reality of them is apprehended, the reality of the system in which they have their being, it consists in spiritual purposes articulating themselves into a world. In such a world, the laws of effectiveness are in the last analysis laws of spiritual effort and spiritual achievement; and in spiritual effort and achievement prayer is in a central place. It is to emphasise but one of the many sides of this, to say that if there is a preaching which has power to save, a preaching which is creative of new life and leads toward new heavens and a new earth, it is the preaching whose end, as George Herbert says, is praying; and praying can be its end only as prayer is its beginning; only as it is the expression of souls that have their life with God.

These, however, were special problems, discussed in order to bring out more fully the significance of a general position; the position that the history of the world is a spiritual process, and nature a factor therein, as a form or medium of the divine self-communication in which is given to man his life and growth; and that there is thus a unity of the religious and the rational consciousness with regard to nature. They are one, not in the sense that the Christian consciousness has necessarily a correct detailed science of nature; but in the sense that the view which reason takes of the ultimate character of natural facts, is in harmony with the way in which the thoroughly Christian soul receives to itself, and sanctifies, the natural facts with which and in which we must live our life, if we are to live in this world at all; with which and in which we must have a communion with God, unless God has a lower place in His own universe than the Christian consciousness takes Him to have.

To-morrow we have to consider, though it can be only in the way of brief suggestion, that gravest and saddest problem of our life, which in all our difficulties is the root of difficulty. The ability to cast light upon it is to all our theologies and philosophies the article of standing or of falling.

IV

FREEDOM, SIN AND REDEMPTION

The view now before us is that the soul of man has its origin and growth, and the history of which the soul of man is the author, the basis of its possibility, in a self-communicating activity on the part of God. It is a view of what, for want of some better term, must be called the organic connexion of God, the soul of man, and the natural world; the soul of man a self-impartation, under whatever limits, on the part of God; the natural world the medium of that impartation. So that we are *in principle* one with God and with His world, sons of God, even though prodigal sons; we are potentially—not actually—at one with God and with nature. And in the fact that there is such a potentiality for us to make actual, lies our eternal hope: our hope of a life that time and death cannot defeat; our hope—if we have brought ourselves to a place where our faces are turned away from God—of salvation.

How this view is held implicitly in religious feeling and faith, how as so held it operates in practice, we have already seen. Here we are concerned with it as an hypothesis of reason, a way of accounting for the actual form and course of our life upon the earth, our many-sided life in time and with nature. As such an hypothesis, it is accepted on the only ground on which any hypothesis, not subject to complete experimental verification, is accepted: it holds the facts together in a single intelligible view. It cannot be "proved," in the sense that we should get outside of our experience, and look down upon experience to see which of the views about it is true. Such proof is out of question. But up to the point which we have now reached, this view of the possibility and the universal relations of our experience, meets the only test applicable to such views, the test already cited from Mr. Bradley: it holds together and it holds the facts together. It is self-consistent; and it makes the facts of our experience more intelligible than they were before, by showing how they go together in a single reasonable system. That there are difficulties does not necessarily close the case. In this region of inquiry there can, in our life upon the earth, be no view without difficulties. The question of accepting or rejecting a view of this kind is not so much the mere question, Are there difficulties in it? Rather the question is: By giving up this view, will the difficulties be lessened—or increased?

The view now before us does seem, up to this point, to "hold together" the facts of our life. It makes intelligible to us how our spirits—certainly not their own creators and sustainers—come to be. It makes intelligible to us that continual increment of our being which is the development of our consciousness and our growth in experience, giving us an adequate source both of our increase in being and of the "external" or "natural" conditions under which, in knowledge and in practice, that increase takes place. Above all, it meets what, so far as we have now come, is the central difficulty of theories about the source and universal relations of our experience: it shows how, alike in the intellectual and in the practical aspect of our life, that increase in our being takes place as we actually apprehend it to take place; by growth from within, by the exercise of free or inner energies, and not by external or mechanical necessity, such as holds in the case of a "thing" merely manufactured, or of a "mode" altogether determined by its place and connexion in the system of the modes of a unitary Substance or Being. Upon the view that we have our origin and our continuance of life in a reproduction of himself, a continuous self-communication, on the part of an Absolute Spirit, we can understand how our experience is what in our consciousness of ourselves we find it to be; not merely a series of feelings and sensations, determined in their succession and combinations by some alien or impersonal necessity; but an active process, animated from within by implicit but effectively operative ideals, in whose operation we apprehend an objective world and have continual commerce with it; the commerce, intellectual and practical, which, as industry and science, as morality and religion, is the history of our civilisation, and in which the capabilities of the spirit of man are by that spirit's own energies gradually realised. So far as we have come, then, this view seems to make intelligible how our experience is possible. To repeat once more the enumeration which I have already repeated so often with the purpose of making it clear that the view before us is concrete in its principle and not abstract, it makes intelligible to us how science is possible, and art and morality and religion; and all that ordinary life in which art and science, morals and religion, the mastery of nature and the devotion of the self to goodness and to God, are already present, but present in unsystematic and uncritical form.

But how far does this go? Does it extend to all the great main factors of our life? Of course we cannot look for the complete rationalising of all the particular facts and events of our life, by this hypothesis or any hypothesis. But leaving that aside as demanding a perfection of knowledge possible only to God, we must still ask whether the view now before us rationalises—holds together in one intelligible grasp—all the great constituent factors of our life. I think it does; and does so *prima facie;*—with one appalling exception. That exception is the central difficulty of this view of the world and of every view of the world whatsoever. It seems to break the back of every possible hypothesis; because it seems decisively and absolutely to shiver the unity of the real world, and thereby to destroy at one stroke all possibility of any such view of the world as is craved by reason through all its being and is implied in any religion in which men give their hearts to a supreme God. The conflict between good and evil seems a strife between absolutely antagonistic principles in ourselves and in the order of the world. Such a division seems, as was said, to break the back of the theistic view of the world; seems in fact to block the way against every possible unitary and synthetic view of the world and to drive us to some form or other of that intellectual despair in which we give up the belief that the principle and energy of the universe is one and supreme, spiritual and righteous, and admit that it is either a non-moral energy, so that the greater half of our life is illusion; or is dualistic—a power of evil co-eternal with the good; or is simply inscrutable.

In the presence of this difficulty many attitudes are taken up. One of the most common, and certainly one of the most admirable, is that of the man who has no solution that he can present to his intelligence, but who has no doubt about continuing to put his trust in God. He does not affirm that there is no solution; nor does he deny that his own faith in God implies both that there *is* a solution, and that it lies in a certain direction and not in others. But he sees no possibility of making the solution intellectually clear to himself, and feels that he must be content to stand fast with his trust in God. For him it is good to lay hold upon God, even though the hands that reach up to God are "blind hands of faith."

Apparently similar to this, but in reality immensely different, is the position of those who declare, simply and roundly, that the problem is insoluble; radically and finally insoluble; so that the attempt to deal with it is at once profitless and presumptuous. This dogmatic attitude—the attitude of the man who will be a theologian but is determined (whether he puts it to himself in this way or no) to evade the theologian's gravest intellectual responsibility—ought at least to be seen in its true light. It implies that theology as a whole is impossible. For it throws over into unintelligibility the central and fundamental questions of theology: the purpose of God in His creative activity; the relation of that purpose to the present order of the world wherein evil is real; the fulfilment of it in the process of human salvation. It is true enough that many mystics, many saints, have made—not by implication, but openly, expressly, and with indignant rebuke—this same denial of the possibility of theology; and have done the world service thereby. But after making that denial, they did not go on to build up systems of theology. If we are to be students of theology at all, it is a matter of scientific integrity not to evade the attempt to deal as best we can with this hardest and saddest of all questions; however miserable in the way of insight be the result. And for us at the present point that obligation assumes a special form: we have a view of the world before us in part, and must ask whether it can complete itself by casting any light upon this ultimate problem.

Some light, I think, we may look for. We are justified at any rate in regarding the problem from the outset with hope rather than with mere despair; justified by reasons which are compelling just because they are elementary. In the first place, no matter how terrible the pressure of the facts of evil and sin, we cannot give up the belief in the unity of the world. To give up that belief is to give up the fundamental instinct and principle of all science, all philosophy, all theology; of all thinking whatsoever, even of that which seeks to establish scepticism. It is to make a surrender which we are really not capable of making. And if we imagine that we have made it, and have given ourselves up to scepticism—scepticism with or without limits—really we have not made it. Our minds go on working as they worked before, with this principle of the unity of all facts in a single system as their fundamental category. It is but putting this in another form to say that scepticism—the theologian's as well as any other—is intrinsically self-contradictory. It knows the nature of things well enough to know that the nature of things cannot be known. In the act of setting limits to knowledge, it transcends the limits that it sets; in denying the power of the mind, it relies on the power of the mind. And as with scepticism, so with that arrested step on the way to it—dualism. Neither the man of natural science nor the theologian can say, without destroying in ultimate analysis the fabric of his own thought, that there are two eternal principles of the world-order, one good, the other evil or indifferent to good; two gods, one good, the other an evil power over against God, able to interfere decisively with the work and plan of God and to hold in its grip to all eternity the children of God won from Him by that interference. But that is putting the matter negatively. The positive side of it is seen in the actual working of this intellectual and spiritual compulsion in the minds of men through all their generations; the actual working of it in their faith, in their scientific labour that has never acknowledged defeat, in their institutions and the continuity of their effort after civilisation. Good men and thoughtful men in their long succession upon the earth really hold—or rather, hold to—a solution of the problem of evil. On the theoretical side, the fact that science and philosophy and theology maintain their effort at all, and for ages have maintained their effort, indicates that neither this, nor any other, of the chief factors and elements of our life is felt to constitute a hopelessly insoluble problem. And—what is immensely more important—on the practical side the position is the same. The fact that morality and religion govern our life at all—the fact that they hold their power over us even in the absence of anything like an absolute overcoming and destruction of evil—means that good men, religious men, though they may never have formulated intellectually their belief, yet really hold the belief, really live and work in the belief, that the problem is *not* insoluble. And the goodness here in question, or the religion, is not that of the men alone who make the great ventures of the human spirit; it is that common goodness of common men which is to society its preservative force, its broad-based and enduring strength. Furthermore, unless an absolute separation is made between the intellectual and the practical nature of man—and with the man who makes that separation absolute, no common ground of argument is left—it is an absurdity to hold that a problem can be solved in the practical life, but is insoluble theoretically. A problem that can be solved in the practical life cannot be completely and decisively hopeless for the intelligence. The theologian who should see men standing face to face with this last sad mystery of their life; and with no scruple, but feeling himself indubitably and splendidly in the right, should urge upon their wills and affections a way of salvation; but then should forbid to their intelligence the reflective possession and use of the principles involved in that salvation:—such a theologian surely is unfaithful to theology. We separate religion from reason, and reason from religion, if we declare (what the experience of innumerable men vindicates us in declaring) that Christian love and faith enable men to solve in the practical life the problem of evil; declare that there is a grace of God which makes that practical overcoming of evil—of evil where, as sin, it is most truly and grievously evil—to every man a possibility, a duty, a vocation; and then declare that the problem of evil is hopelessly insoluble. And the lack of unity with ourselves becomes formal contradiction, if we declare the problem of evil thus utterly hopeless, and then go on to lay down a systematic soteriology; for the doctrine of salvation cannot be systematically clear—nay, must be altogether obscure—if the ultimate nature and significance, if the eternal relations, of that from which we are to be saved, stand wrapped in a darkness absolute and impenetrable. To put it conversely, a systematic soteriology has implicit in it the assumption that the problem of evil can be solved and that a certain solution is the true one. This is a consideration binding upon those who believe in the possibility of theology, as a systematic insight into the ways of God with man. It is not a compulsion upon all the hearts that love God to give up their trust in God, unless they are able to formulate that trust into a satisfactory theology. It means that our nature is not so divided as to compel us to a choice between the intellectual insight of the theologian and the love and faith of the saints. If we were compelled to that choice, we should do well to take as our own, even in this sadly narrowed sense, the ancient prayer that God would make us to be numbered with His saints. But there is a greater hope: that such a choice is not inevitable; that the Christian religion may appeal, as to the heart of man, so to his reason, and as to his reason, so to his heart; so that the whole man, and the whole life of man, may in that religion be drawn to God.

Nay, there has been more than such a greater hope. There has been a greater actual history in which that choice has not been inevitable; in which the Christian religion has appealed, as to the heart of man, so to his reason, and as to his reason, so to his heart; in which the whole man, and the whole life of man, have in religion been drawn to God. In that life with God, on the one hand sin has been overcome in the power of love and faith; on the other hand the ideas that have lain implicit in Christian practice have gradually made their way to consciousness, and have constituted for the intelligence at least the beginning and promise of a solution of this ultimate problem. So that instead of saying that the problem is utterly insoluble; instead of saying that the faith in which the church undertakes the conquest of the world, and in which every Christian man endeavours to make the will and the way of God prevail in his own society, is a faith, strong it may be, but blind, a reaching out of desperate hands that can but grope in the dark; instead of saying that the work which the church, with such long and passionate devotion of intelligence, has attempted to do in constructive theology, is a labour lost;—instead of all this, we ought rather to say that the spirit of man, in the individuals and races where it most does itself justice—above all in its highest and clearest possession of itself in Christian love and faith—holds implicitly the beginnings of a solution; beginnings that are at least promising enough to enable both our intelligence and our faith to meet undefeated this last appalling question of our life. And the insight thus held in the activities and devotions of religion has not failed of some measure of explicit formulation. The Christian church, in its work of bringing human practice to the highest possible level, has never been *merely* practical; had it been so, it had made the greatest of practical failures. Rather it has been, in the very nature of the case, at once intensely practical and intensely reflective. In spite of the dogmatic spirit, in spite of the atrophy not of charity alone but of intelligence, which arises when the high faith that trusts God and welcomes all truth is gone and in its place have come unworthy fear and unworthy hate—in spite of these, the Christian church has been the home of a rational reflexion as penetrating, as critical, as intent upon truth, as any reflexion that ever has had its being in the courts of pure science. As critical, as penetrating, as truthful in spirit; and better provided; for the thoughts with which it worked were not *mere* thoughts, beating their wings in the void; they were the moving ideas of a great experience. If we are to become possessed at all of ideas and categories by which we can conceive the universal relations of the experience which is our life, where *should* those ideas be suggested to us, where should they dawn upon us and develop to awareness of themselves, if not in the active consciousness which is religion; the active consciousness in which our experience is concentrated into the acutest sense of its own meaning as a dealing with God, and into the endeavour to fashion the world according to that meaning?

When we ask, then, about the actual status of this problem—when we ask how mankind actually has faced, actually is facing it—the evident reply is that the Christian mind, from its beginning and in the very nature of its life, has had in implicit possession and to some extent in explicit consciousness, ideas which constitute at least the beginning of an answer. These form the last step, or ultimate synthesis, in a view of the world which on the one hand lies implicit in the religious consciousness, and in which on the other hand the rational consciousness has, so far as I can judge, its satisfaction and its rest. It is only in the light of this last step that that view as a whole, or any part of it, appears in its full significance as an attempt to apprehend the universal relations of our experience and to make clear how such a thing as our experience upon the earth is possible at all.

The chief of these ideas I must now attempt, as best I can, to set down. As we go on to consider them, we should first recall the insights of which they are the extension and completion: the insights already before us concerning creation and God's expression of Himself in creation. The universe—that whole of reality in which our experience has its being—is a spiritual society: God, the supreme or absolute spirit, who acts altogether from Himself, and in all that He does fulfils His own nature in its spirituality and freedom; and the lesser spirits, His children, to whom He gives rise by some communication, however limited, of Himself. The society or family of those lesser spirits it is, which is in the proper sense of the word God's creation; a creation gradually being realised or achieved by a continuous activity, a continuous free and spiritual activity, of self-communication on the part of God—the unceasingly creative grace of God; a self-communication and creative grace of which nature with its orderly uniformities is a medium or form or method. Above all—unless we are to be atheists in our very theism—we must think of God in creation as acting out His own nature and in that sense fulfilling Himself. This does not mean that God exhausts His nature in the temporal process of the world of human experience; it does mean that God's actions proceed from His nature, and to their own extent express that nature. In other words, we must not think of some central nature in God, which lies inert, while His creative activities leap forth arbitrarily from some source other than His own nature. Sometimes we do fall into that way of thinking; and in doing so, miss the deepest and most vital significance of the theistic view of the world. We think of God as the external creator of the world, and are satisfied with that because it meets our polemic need—enables us to confute the sceptic or the materialist. But we pay the penalty in views of God which are slight and poor, instead of rich and profound, a vital and all-transforming light of life. We are so intent upon refuting the opponents of Christian theism that we fail ourselves to work out the positive significance of Christian theism. We forget that in thinking of the world as God's creation, we must think of God as acting out His own nature in the work that He does; as expressing and fulfilling Himself in the creation that He creates. We reduce God in our thought to the level of a poor artificer, working upon alien materials and bringing about a result to which His own nature is indifferent. But when we remind ourselves that God cannot be indifferent and external to His own work; that in creation He is seeking to realise an end worthy of Himself—worthy of Himself in the deepest sense as proceeding from and expressing His very nature;—then a pathway of light, a pathway unspeakably difficult but still a pathway of light, opens up through this gravest question of our life. The successive steps in it we have now to consider.[1]

A

First of all, the creation in which God can thus fulfil Himself must be a creation of free and spiritual beings, able to grow up into God's likeness, into devotion to His will and purposes, into that communion with Him in which heart answers to heart and love to love. As a man in the life of his home, if one may use an analogy imperfect but significant, truly fulfils his nature, not in the mere walls and chairs and tables he makes, but in the growing human and spiritual perfection of his sons and daughters; so God truly fulfils His nature, not simply in masses moving in space, not in the development of animal organisms simply as such, but in the gradual reproduction of His spiritual perfections in a society of spiritual beings; a society devoted, alike in its individual hearts and in its righteous order, to God and to goodness. But even here, in justice to the voiceless things about us, we should remember the qualification earlier made. In the man's home, all that the stone and the wood are capable of, any dignity of austere line or grace of perfect form or kindliness of rough and homely art—nay, the mere brute strength of walls and floors—is sanctified by the life to which it conduces. And that not externally; the human life is, in a sense, in the very wood and stone; it has in them a medium of its realisation. In the same way, but more deeply, for here all is organic and nothing is accidental or external, nature has its great place in the life of the City of God; whether we think of the long natural history in which we have our birth and a manifold determination of our growth; or of the magnificence of intellectual design, through our many-sided communion with which intelligence is developed in us; or of the solemn beauty which is our strength, and in extremities of fate when we have done our best and all is lost, joins itself with memory to be our consolation. But this does not take away what is here in question; it only shows us how vast the process is. When we see that the communion of God with His own includes the whole of nature, we have to say, as before, that it is only in a society of free spirits who by communication of Himself become like Him, that God can realise the purpose which expresses, and in that sense fulfils, His nature.

---

[1] With the pages that follow compare Fairbairn, *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, pp. 132-168—a discussion to which I am deeply indebted.

But from such a view of the relation of God to His own creative activity a consequence follows. The created society in which God can thus fulfil Himself, cannot be one whose members have a perfection, in the upbuilding and maintaining of which they themselves have had no part. However splendid the apparent perfections of such beings might be imagined to be—beings so good that their goodness has no source in their own wills—such perfection would be no perfection of individual spirits with whom God could hold communion, in that deep and moral sense of the word communion which alone is appropriate here. The bearers of such a perfection, passive recipients of it from without, would be morally nothing better than puppets in a magnificent but shadowy play; they would be modes of the divine substance rather than spirits made in the image of God—spirits in whom God reproduces Himself, so that they have life in themselves. But the communion of God can only be with spirits that thus have life in themselves, and can reach up toward the divine life, spirit answering through the struggle of ages to the call of spirit, men seeking God, and God imparting Himself to man in that communication which is not only the blessedness of the creature, but must be also some part of the blessedness of the Creator. At the point of view of an account of human nature in which man appears as simply a mode of the divine substance, even Spinoza could not keep himself. In the existence of the individual as such a mode he saw the bondage of man; and sought as the way of deliverance some means of rising above that existence as a mode. Still less can that point of view be held by the Christian teacher, to whom religion means a continuous and living communion; the living soul of man, through enlarging days and with gathering freedom, walking with the living God.

So that in any creation in which God acts out His own nature, and in that sense fulfils Himself, the created beings must be, actually or potentially, free spirits. Only in the real labours and genuine impulses—it may be, genuine struggles and sufferings—of such spirits can that divine purpose be realised for which alone creation is worth undertaking. If the purpose and end of creation be the blessedness of communion between the spirit who creates and the spirits that are created, then, no matter how inchoately or under what form of potentiality, the Creator must communicate enough of Himself, in and as the nature of those created spirits to make communion possible. And among the qualities of the nature of God thus communicated to us, in the reproduction of Himself which is our creation, there must be, in the measure of the limited but growing soul of man, the fateful quality of freedom. The student of ethics, and the student of psychology, find reasons to believe in human freedom; reasons derived from the consideration of that self-organising character of experience to which reference was made in the second lecture. The theologian—the exponent of the religious consciousness—accepting those reasons of the ethical student and the psychologist, adds to them this still graver one: that not in any mechanical order (even though the mechanism could somehow be conscious and in that sense spiritual) but only in the life and the affections of a society of free and moral beings, can God realise an end which is a worthy expression and fulfilment of Himself.

But consider what that means. It means that the very idea and fact of creation, the very nature and idea of the divine creation of the spirit of man, involves the possibility of the profoundest of all tragedies; involves the possibility of an upward or a downward way, which, when realised by men as they gradually enter into possession of themselves and make themselves their own masters, becomes the actuality of obedience or disobedience, sin or righteousness. Without this true spiritual dignity of freedom, man could not be the object of God's communion. But what is always and inevitably the case, is here preeminently the case. That which is man's dignity, is also his danger; that which is his height is his peril; that which makes man capable of God makes him capable also of his fall.[1]

---

[1] With regard to freedom it was possible in the text of the lectures to refer only to the central and vital theological consideration; the consideration that freedom is necessary in created spirits in order that God may in them be able to secure a true fulfilment of Himself and of the purpose in which He expresses Himself. But the theologian's belief in an all-organising purpose of God should be the deepest of inspirations to the study of man's empirical life and historical development. The theologian, as a theologian, is really concerned with all the arguments and points of view that have come forward in the age-long contention about human freedom; whether those that assert a necessity, from God's point of view, for or against a freedom of man; or those that in our

B

What we have so far, then, is this: if mankind is to be a society, or part of a society, in the communion with which God can realise Himself, there must be, however slowly it develop itself, a genuine freedom of man; and thus at least an abstract possibility of good and evil. Without that insight there is, I think, no way to truth or to light upon this question. But it is only the first step; the cruel and bitter centre of the problem lies still before us. What we find in the experience of humanity is that the process in which men, whether as individuals or as a race, become originally involved in sin, is not at all a process in which a being of developed mind and developed will

---

empirical life find evidence such as inclines one toward, or inclines one away from, a belief in freedom.

The arguments against freedom are of two leading types. First, there are what may be called metaphysical arguments. These are based in views concerning the universal relations of our experience—views concerning man's place in the total system of reality; the Stoic view, for instance; or that expressed by Spinoza in his doctrine of the bondage of man. Arguments of this kind fall in two directions; as based in views of the relation of man's experience to God (Augustine, for instance, on the side of his doctrine which has been historically most influential); and as based in views of man's relation to nature (naturalistic determinism in many ancient and modern forms—Professor Huxley's suggestion, for instance, that man may perhaps be the cunningest of nature's clocks).

Secondly, there are psychological arguments; arguments based in that view of experience which arises when inquirers, whether Locke, or Hume, or men of our own day, assume that the whole psychological reality of experience can be brought to light by a purely analytic method; the method of reaching certain simplest constituent elements and (explicitly or implicitly) treating these as though they existed in their own right, and by their own nature and laws determined their combinations and successions, which are our experience.

To the first of these classes of arguments, the only adequate answer lies in some more penetrating view concerning the universal relations of our experience. The view of nature, for instance, stated here, in stands in a clear field and there makes in clear light his choice between good and evil. In helplessness we begin our life, and come only gradually to be ourselves; and in that gradual coming to be ourselves, long before we are capable of clear and deliberate volition, we are already involved in the sin of the race. We acquire—nay, long before we were born there were prepared for us—passions, instincts, habits, which altogether naturally and altogether easily become the matter, the body, the concrete filling, of our slowly growing will, and as thus taken up into our will, become our sin. What we were naturally, we tend to become deliberately; and thus there is in us original sin—the sin which comes by nature in the sense that nature, inno-

general terms in the second lecture and with more particularity in the third, leads to a theory the opposite of naturalistic determinism; while the whole view—a very ancient one—of God's seeking a fulfilment of Himself in the devoted goodness of man, leaves no place for what Cudworth called "theological fatalism." To the arguments of the second class—to-day the really critical and dangerous ones—the answer lies in considering the true character of our experience as (both in its aspect of intelligence and in its aspect of practice) self-organising and thus self-determining. That consideration, which not only removes psychological determinism but establishes, or rather is, a constructive doctrine of freedom, was touched upon here in the second lecture. It is a Kantian lesson, though Kant was not the first to teach it, and may be found worked out in many modern books; see, for instance, in Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics* the discussion of *the freedom of man as intelligence,* §§ 74-84, and of *the freedom of the will,* §§ 85-153.

It is perhaps advisable to add a sentence, in order to guard against a possible misunderstanding. We have seen that the whole order of reality is present *totum simul* to the divine intuition. And the whole order of reality means not merely a section cut through the temporal course of the world. It means that whole temporal course; that whole concrete content of time, which is nature and history. But then it is asked: Does not this altogether preclude freedom; does it not involve that every human action is predestinated? The answer, however, is surely plain. Not to stop here upon the assumption which underlies cent when taken abstractly or in itself, becomes sin in the will of man. It is most true that in this there are infinite varieties of kind and degree. It is most true that some men are so involved in the evil of the world that it is only by a convulsion, a radical and catastrophic spiritual change, that they enter into the Christian life; while others have been so brought up in Christian homes that they have never felt themselves outside of the church, never felt themselves aliens from the Kingdom of God, but have entered upon the Christian consciousness as morning deepens into day. And it is most true that such homes are at this hour the deepest need of the Christian church, and of the general society of mankind. But when all

such an objection, the assumption that God must be ignorant if man is to be free, it is enough to point out that the objection, taken as it stands and without regard to its underlying assumptions, radically misapprehends the whole position that has been before us. It is, we say, the fundamental faith both of scientific work and of the common life that reality is a single system; a faith which continually is being vindicated. And that unity, that single system, is not abstract but concrete; that is, it takes in the whole of nature and history, the whole content of the world's temporal course. But that drove us to a doctrine, not about freedom, but about time. We had to set aside what is often, and very uncritically, taken as a matter of course; the realistic view of time. The fact that the world has a history in time (is a succession of events) *and yet is a single universe,* we had to account for by the view that the only power or principle that can make possible such a thing as a world with a history in time, which yet is one world and not a series of disconnected universes, is an eternal consciousness; a consciousness which, knowing perfectly its own works, has the whole course and content of time present to it in a single intuition (see pp. 120-124, *supra*). In other words, the true account of time is not the realistic account which makes time a sort of independent container, holding both God and man (which is to make time itself the Absolute). Rather, time as a concrete history is the inner organisation, the inner content, of eternity. Eternity is time taken as God possesses it; that is, as a whole. To say that God's knowledge of the world is an eternal or complete intuition, is to say that God knows reality perfectly where this is said, the fact remains that by nature there is that in us which we must overcome in an overcoming so radical as to constitute a new birth. For some men, in God's strange way, the tragedy is unspeakably profounder and more appalling than for others; but in its greater or lesser measure it comes upon us all. The very order of the world in which we enter upon our moral being is such that the tendency to sin is an original tendency of us all. And not a mere abstract tendency—that were no serious matter—but a tendency confirmed and made actual in habit and instinct, in wild passion or self-seeking disposition, before as individuals we reach moral accountability

we men know it only imperfectly and progressively. This whole view of time is, in fact, a special side of what is expressed in the general statement that God is the Absolute Spirit; the Absolute Spirit, not in the preposterous sense that He is independent of the relations in which the existence of a created world places Him, but in the significant and important sense that He is the source of His own relations; is the self-determining source of the world, and knows perfectly the world which thus He constitutes.

But that view of time leaves the whole question of freedom open. Such a view of time is simply the altogether unavoidable doctrine that to God time is a single whole; else God is not God—the content of time to some extent escapes Him. But the question about freedom is the question of the way in which that content of time is organised. Are its highest laws what Kant called "laws of freedom"—laws of which the agent recognises a source within him, and which he lays upon himself, so that morally he "has life in himself" and is to himself at once lawgiver and judge; or are they what Kant called "laws of nature"—laws, that is, of mechanical action as distinct from the spiritual or teleological action which leads itself on by conceptions of some better state of affairs which is to be as the result of the action itself; leads itself on, as we commonly say, by ideals? To answer that question, the only way is to examine the evidence. In such examination of the evidence, the key to the whole situation lies in the nature of man himself as "practical reason"; and as I have just tried to point out, many types of inquiry are needed if the investigation is even to begin to be adequate; not only psychology, but metaphysic and theology. Into that, however, I need not go further; the one point here at issue being that at all. History has no record of any purely human life in which that tendency has not been in some measure realised. There are no exceptions; sin, by nature's way, passes upon all mankind.

The literature of religion and of human confession—above all, the New Testament—is full of the recognition of this saddest and hardest of all the facts of our experience. To the New Testament, man is lost in sin; God's way with man is essentially a way of salvation. Saint Paul, in statements that are cruel until the cruelty of his universal condemnation passes over into magnificence of hope—Saint Paul shuts up all men in sin; he views mankind as one in sin, as

it is a grave misapprehension to suppose that if there is an all-inclusive divine intuition of reality, the laws of the events present in it must needs be laws of mechanical necessity; to suppose, in other words, that the completeness of the divine consciousness of the world involves that the world is unspiritual and undivine, a world whose members have no essential life in themselves, and so are incapable of real communion with the God from whom they come, and in whom they live and move and have their being.

I may be permitted to refer here to another matter which concerns not only the question of freedom, but the argument and form of expression in these lectures as a whole. We have no term to express the relation of self-distinguishing and self-determining spirits to one another in the social order which we call the universe; whether the relation of finite spirits to one another, or the relation between them and the Absolute Spirit. In lieu of such a term, I have used the word *organic;* a word which in this use must be taken as conveying a suggestion rather than a statement. How inadequate to the relation here in question that word would be, if taken strictly in its biological sense, has often and rightly been pointed out; for instance by Dr. McTaggart (see *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology,* specially § 190 and § 197). I should add, however, that I refer to this essay of Dr. McTaggart's only for its bearing upon the use of the word organic; not for its argument that to anyone who has entertained the ideal which Hegel defined—an absolute and ultimate ideal—"society, as it is, or as it can be made under conditions of time and imperfection, can only be external and mechanical" (§ 202); a position which surely is extreme.

having a solidarity in sin, so that whatever judgment, or whatever grace, waits upon sin, all mankind is gathered together under it. But there is no need to cite the New Testament evidence in detail; it is enough that the Son of Man knew Himself as being come to seek and to save that which was lost. Let me, however, in connexion with that, stop for a moment upon a contrast, old but perennially instructive. We saw that if God is to fulfil Himself in a life of communion with His children, these must (however gradually) be made free, and so must have at least the abstract possibility of good and evil. But what we have just seen is that with such an abstract possibility we cannot stop; it is only the beginning, not the end, of the matter. There is, however, a type of thinking which does stop at that point. It sees a man, a free being over against God, standing in a reasonably fair and open field, and making in that field his choice; so that when the choice is once made and settled, man has nothing to do but to accept the final and absolutely correct divine judgment upon it. Such a view, when it appears as plain Deism, we all repudiate; giving due tribute of admiration to the sturdy morality which often went along with it, but pointing out that it knows virtually nothing of the great New Testament doctrines of sin and grace—in other words, comes only to the outer edge of the Christian consciousness; falls thus short because of a primary defect of apprehension, a failure to know the heart of man as it is, a failure to grasp the actual facts of man's experience and history. The trouble is that the view which we repudiate often comes creeping back into our own theology. To take what is virtually a Deistic view of God's judgment upon our sin, and then to turn to a legal theory of atonement as a way of escape from the hopeless difficulties thus created, is perhaps the hardest to guard against of all the mistakes to which Christian theologians are exposed.

At this point, however, it is with experience as present and historical fact that we are concerned; it is because it sets actual fact of experience out in clear light that I have referred in this connexion to the New Testament. Whatever else it is or is not, one thing the New Testament *prima facie* is: it is (what Deism is not) a profound recognition of the actual constitution of our experience. It interprets us men to ourselves; and thereby it has determined the course of our history upon the earth. But let me carry this one step farther. Among the doctrinal commentaries on the New Testament there are none like experience and history; there have in fact been few deeper—or sadder—obstacles to the vivid understanding of the New Testament, than the habit shown by many of its sincerest believers, of falling into panic whenever experience, whenever history, whenever science, draws near. We have already had to notice a scientific opinion for which there is much evidence: that the long natural history of man, before man was as yet a self-judging moral spirit, prepared for him a fateful inheritance; an inheritance of many-sided instinct and appetite, absolutely indispensable to a life upon the earth—without it mankind would perish in a day—yet the material of fearful moral struggle, and often of fearful moral loss. But not to dwell again upon that, let me turn to a second chapter of these modern studies. Modern historical science, as it slowly rolls back the darkness that once lay over the early stages of the growth of human civilisation, deepens with every successive day the impression that what was described a moment ago in the "small letters" of the individual life—the involution of man in evil, before he has come to anything that can be called developed reason and developed will, so that the developing will in confirming, as to some extent it must, its own natural content and disposition, becomes in greater or lesser measure a sinful will—has taken place also in the "large letters" of the history of the race. It is a fearful vision opens before us, as the social order of the most primitive peoples now in existence is investigated; and as, in the earlier literature and customs of the races that have borne the world's highest civilisations, survivals are found of a similar order of life. Simply to say that it is an order of bestiality is to miss the point. It is something unspeakably more awful than mere bestiality. It is the state of mankind which has been described by saying that its members have the reason of children, but the passions of grown men. Reason has dawned, and in its dawn has broken up that old complete control of instinct which kept the animal races, each in its own kind, from a mere chaos of natural passion and from that swift self-destruction of the race which in such chaos of natural passion is inevitable. The natural inhibitions of instinct are no longer a final power—they no longer work unfailingly like laws of nature; the chaos of natural passion has come; or rather, it is now a possibility, and the possibility would be realised were it not that the new principle—reason or self-consciousness—which wrought the beginning of the ruin, works also the beginning of the cure. Human society is saved from self-destruction by that first of the social works of reason known to the student of history; the arising of an ironclad body of custom which saves human society from self-destruction, by a most rigid regulation of a few of what may be called the natural elements of social life. It is an order of life which has risen above the animal; but has, as yet, nothing of the achieved glory of the spiritual. That is why a modern man, with the spiritual and religious causes of human civilisation deep in his heart, revolts in horror from it, as he does not revolt from the merely and guiltlessly animal; revolts in horror from it even though he can trace the social necessities in which its customs arose; can see in those primitive marriage customs a dawning of reason as a power of social organisation; can see in all that dark superstition—those hideous devices to meet hideous fears—a dawning of reason as a religious principle. Undeniably it was a step upward; but that race bears a fearful burden, and carries forward with it a fearful inheritance, which in its upward way has to be led through such stages. The hideousness of those manners and those morals—what an abominable history it was for the spirit of man to have come up through. And with what profound power it must have done for the collective race of man what now comes perpetually to light in the individual life; fastened upon the human soul, in that sad infancy, many of the instincts struggling sub-consciously against reason, many of the passions, many of the habits, that now we wrestle with in agony as our sin.

It is not that these historical studies and hypotheses give us a complete genetic account of human experience and of the sin which is in human experience. The deepest root of sin is not natural passion; but another and a profounder power, which grows in wantonness, in refinement, in cruelty, as civilisation grows. The deepest root of sin is selfishness; and our present knowledge of the natural and social history of man does not constitute an adequate empirical account of how the principle of selfishness has come to be bound up with, and involved in, the very character of human individuality; of how the human individual has come to distinguish his own good from the common good of mankind, and thus to introduce into the life of mankind the root and principle of disorganisation, the root and principle which issues in the separation of social units and classes from one another and from God. But those studies go some distance, they furnish some steps, in such a genetic and empirical account.

And even at the risk of disturbing the proportion of topics, I dwell upon those contributions of natural and anthropological science to theology. It has been, one does not know whether to say our great folly or our great misfortune, to regard such studies as hostile to the New Testament. But so far from this modern scientific faith about the empirical course of man's history, and the ancient New Testament faith about the universal sinfulness of man—so far from these being hostile faiths, they are correlative and mutually supporting. The New Testament is concerned with the result: mankind is lost in sin—the mission of its Lord is to seek and to save that which was lost. That is the thing which for religion is here and now important. But those scientific and historical inquiries—though their authors intended no such contribution—furnish to the thoughtful student of the New Testament an insight into some of the empirical factors and forces through whose working that result has come to hold true for every adult human will. The light is little enough indeed; but in this desperate problem every gleam of light is to be welcomed. In any case we must keep clear to ourselves that the three great points of view are correlative and not hostile: that of science and history, dealing empirically with the genetic process of the "making of man"; that of the New Testament, concerned immediately and practically with the result—a race lost in sin; that of theology and philosophy inquiring into the relation of all this long natural and social process, and of all this its sad result, to the nature and purpose of God—the nature and purpose which, we must believe, animate all that creative activity by which the history of the world is made possible.

But to return to the argument. The first point in it was that without a freedom of man—and hence at least the abstract possibility of sin—the divine purpose could not be realised in man. But the point now before us is that God imparts our freedom to us in such a way—by such a creative method—that by the time our will is developed it already is involved in sin. And that is the bitter and critical centre of the whole problem. "Could not," we ask in the agony of our souls, as we alternately cling to and shrink away from the sin which is ourselves, the evil which has been in the history of the race, and now is in us as a very self of ourselves—in us as a self of ourselves, and in the world as a principle which makes whole areas of human society to be a horror of suffering, a horror of uncleanness—"could not God have given us freedom in any other way than this way, which seems to defeat the very gift that is given?" Granted that our life must have a centre in itself if it is to be truly and deeply a life of communion and co-operation with God; granted that we must in a certain high sense be masters of ourselves and authors of our own fate, if we are to be children of God; why should we be led to such possession and mastery of ourselves through a history which so taints us to the heart that to all eternity life can never seem quite right again; never seem again quite clean or sweet? Why must God's communication of Himself as the soul of man swing down through so low an arc of nature and natural passion? Why must the conditions of our life be such that mankind has had to pass through the revolting moral systems of primitive man; and why such that each individual man, in his own age and station, must make his way up through a similar process—involving in many cases a horror of moral taint unspeakably worse than any inheritance of the passions of primitive man? Would it not have been far more God-like, if God in communicating Himself and making possible a spiritual society and a spiritual history, had made us such that, not as passive, not as moral puppets, not as modes of the divine substance, but as free spirits answering in the energies of their own free life to the grace of God, we could have maintained unsullied the being that God gave, and unbroken the communion with Him that He intended? As it is, every individual man now upon the earth has entered into the tragedy of free will before he has attained the reality of free will itself. But could we not have been made free in such a way, that if the tragedy of freedom came upon us, it would at any rate come only after we had entered into the reality of freedom, and by our own choice brought the tragedy upon our heads?

He is a hard man who can keep his mind from this cry of souls that loathe the evil in which at the very dawn of their moral consciousness they find themselves entangled; this cry of souls that feel the life they have from God to have undergone before they could control it an irremediable disaster and ruin, a taint so abhorrent that eternity upon eternity of pure and high achievement would not wash out the hateful stain. Yet the theologian can scarcely do other than insist on distinguishing two questions, and on confining theology chiefly to one of them. The one question is: Taking the order and the history of our life as these actually are, can we see a divine idea and purpose in them? That is the question to which the theologian must in the main keep himself. The other question is: Granted that God in creation is realising an idea or purpose, why did He not take some better and less painful way of realising it? If He would give us freedom, why must He develop it gradually in us in such a way that, alike as individuals and as a race, we are entangled in evil before we can resist it? It is not fair to say, indeed, that questions of this second type are altogether useless; sometimes the putting of them leads indirectly or by suggestion toward light. But, as a rule, questions concerning what might have been if things were not what they actually are, cannot usefully take a leading place. What the theologian, the student of philosophy, the man of science, all alike have to do is to take the facts of experience as they are, and try to give the best account of them possible. And for the theologian, giving the best possible account of facts means seeing in them the realisation of a divine purpose and in that sense a self-fulfilment of God. It may be there are created beings, free, and yet not subject in our way to moral development. Mediæval theologians thought so, and attempted to discuss the nature of such beings; but what they really discussed under that head was a nature involved in our own present experience; the nature of the pure or absolute reason implied in the development of reason in us. The theologian must take human life as it is, and as it has been in its past course upon the earth; and taking it so, he must penetrate as he can into the relation of its fundamental order, its fundamental constitution and conditions, to God and to the creative activity and eternal purpose of God.

We must face our difficulty, then, as it stands. God's purpose in the creation of man, so we must continue to say, is such that for the realisation of it man must be made free, and sin and righteousness, therefore, both possible. But the way in which God actually does communicate to man the capabilities of a free spirit is such that the scale is toppled toward sin; for it is such that when men come to the age of developed will, they are already involved in evil in this deepest of all senses, that they have its impulses within them as part of their own nature; and this nature, being acted out and confirmed in will, becomes sin. And thus the human world comes to stand in sin, and sin is in it as a universal; that is to say, a principle of the whole historical and social order of mankind, so that there is a unity and solidarity of mankind in sin. So far as can be gathered, either from a general consideration of the order of our life, or from the observation of empirical fact, it is impossible for any human being to come to adult life—the life of developed intelligence and will—untouched with sin. And that not merely in the sense that all men must suffer the effects of the sin that is in the world; but in the deeper sense that, with whatever variations of degree, they receive sin as a principle of the will.

Appalling as this difficulty is, there is one refuge from it which we must not take. We must not view the essential order of our life, the order of the world in which we enter upon our moral being, as from God's point of view indifferent or accidental. To do that—to leave God and God's plan out of the explanation of the essential conditions of our life, the essential constitution of our world—is that worst of atheism, the atheism which masks itself under religious names, and seeks to honour God by ascribing the mastery of the world to some other power. Having come to the belief that the only creation worthy of God, the only creation in which there can be a real self-fulfilment of God, is a creation of beings capable of coming, soon or late, into communion with Him in the things which are His moral nature and thus of forming, with Him, the social order of a divine family; and having seen that such a creation involves the giving of freedom to man; we must now further believe that the particular way which God takes of communicating to man his being as a free spirit—namely, all this strange history, one side of which is that natural passions, and many processes and instincts of the life below reason, are taken up into a rational soul, and in that soul become at once the basis of a practical life and an infinite moral danger—is no mere accident, no mere matter of an indifferent divine will, arbitrarily and externally creative, flinging humanity for no special reason, and hence with incredible cruelty, into the long tragedy of its struggle upon the earth. Rather there must be some divine necessity in it; I do not mean any mechanical necessity, but the necessity of a divinely reasonable plan, seeing an end worthy of God to be realised and this as the true way of its realisation; the necessity which means that the given procedure—the procedure which we human beings know as the order and the tragedy of our life—is no accident, no fatalism, no arbitrarily chosen way, but on the contrary is rooted in the central and essential deep as of God's wisdom so of His love.

From that there is for the Christian theologian—nay, surely, for any thoughtful man—no escape. God's strange way in the constituting of the world and in the making of man cannot be accidental to God Himself. It *must* have in it some necessity of divine reasonableness and divine purpose. And when from the point of view of such a belief we look upon the world of our experience, there dawn upon us innumerable particular insights which do not "prove" the belief, indeed—it cannot be proved—but which do exemplify it and make it more convincing. These are the insights, dwelt upon directly or indirectly by Christian writers of every age, into the disciplinary power alike of physical and of moral suffering. The soul draws its larger life from the cruelties of nature, from the shadow of death, from the grief of separation between souls that love one another, from temptation and the vigil against it, from the struggle, never coming upon the earth to final victory, against gigantic powers of evil that seem to trample down the world. But there is more than that. At this point one supreme consideration, central to Christian thought from its commencement, becomes relevant; relevant in so fundamental a sense, that any discussion of the problem now before us which does not culminate in this consideration cannot properly be called a discussion of the problem at all. Before turning to it, however, I must point out that one further step is possible in the statement of the question itself; a step to which many a soul has in its agony been driven. God's way of constituting the world cannot, so we have said, be accidental to God Himself; cannot be external or foreign to Him; so that the world must have in God a ground of necessity for being constituted the way it is constituted. But for many a man—for many a Christian man—the trial of faith is too hard. The way in which the world is constituted; the order and character of its history, and the way in which in that order mankind enters upon life; and all that has thus come to be; the sin that is a very part of ourselves; the social order filled with self-perpetuating wrongs—oppressive and treacherous cruelties of the strong against the weak, unspeakable degradations made inevitable for many of the poor; all that state of mankind summed up in Saint Paul's terrible words, all the revolting history which lies behind that state of humanity and goes we know not how far in making it possible;—if such a perilous order of the world and so fearful a realisation of all its perils, was involved in the divine creation, would it not have been better if God had not created at all? If it is true that the tragic possibility of good or evil, obedience or disobedience, sin or righteousness, is involved in the very nature and idea of the only kind of creation that is worthy of God; and if it is further true that the possibility of sin involved in this, was to be no mere abstract possibility, but one so terribly realised in the life of the earth that no man born into that life could escape it; then is creation really worth while? Would it not have been better, in order absolutely to prevent sin, for God not to have created at all?

That is what the question about evil comes to, when we consider, not some imaginary situation, but the situation in which we human beings actually are involved, and the experience which is actually our life. The answer to it must be the answer from God's point of view; for both the creating itself, and the administration of the sinful created world, are God's action and God's responsibility—though not God's responsibility in a sense which leaves us no responsibility. It may be objected that we cannot attain to answers from God's point of view. With the reverence toward God and with the sense of the frailty of human thought, implied in such an objection, every sensible man will wish to associate himself. But the objection itself, as an expression of Agnosticism—even though it be the implicit Agnosticism of the too hasty advocate of God, destroying the foundations of religion in his anxiety to vindicate God against man—cannot pass unchallenged. Against it one must urge that in ultimate analysis the true answer to any problem whatsoever, practical or theoretical, is an answer from God's point of view. The human mind, in virtue of its origin, is the potentiality of such answers; toward such answers the long and struggling development of human insight and human goodness, whether in science or morality or religion, is a movement. The declaration that the divine point of view is unattainable by man involves, for instance, the declaration that the righteousness of God is inaccessible to man except in ways which leave man no longer a free spirit and his righteousness therefore of no value to God. And to the question now before us the answer is, in one sense, very plain: the fact that God actually has created, shows that from the divine point of view creation is preferable to non-creation. Yet such a statement is the form rather than the matter of an answer. It gives a decision without showing the articulation and inner reason of it, and hence serves better to close a discussion, or to silence an opponent, than to convey real enlightenment. Let us turn rather to a consideration which has in it no such logical compulsion, but, I think, very real enlightenment. To the question whether, when the creation of a spiritual society involved such an appalling natural and moral history, it would not have been better if God had not created at all, there rises up in every wholesome man's heart an answer as soon as he hears the question. From all that is deepest and best in himself, he swiftly concludes to the attitude of God. And specially from two things. First, with all the moral handicap under which he began his life, and with all the tragic possibilities of good and evil in his actions and decisions, he still would choose his life rather than non-existence; he recalcitrates against the very thought of the absolute extinction of his own free being. And the man who, in that deep sense, clings to life, cannot consistently give his voice for the opinion that from any point of view, God's or man's, nothingness with the absence of evil would have been better that creation, with evil in it for men to overcome; not petty evil for petty wrestlers, but gigantic and appalling evil, for the overcoming of which and in the overcoming of which men must become like God Himself and rise to a strength like God's own strength; coming to be the heroic and conquering sons of God, yet kept in humility because to overcome evil they had first to overcome themselves, and to live unto God they had first to die unto themselves. But secondly, if to that man the power were somehow given, guiltlessly to save the infant children in his home, by an instant and final annihilation of their being, from the terrible possibilities of good and evil, of righteousness and sin, that wait upon them as the hidden energies and passions of their nature unfold, his decision would be the most swiftly made of all human decisions. For his children who are guiltless now, but can by no possibility remain guiltless if they go forward into the years, he would choose life.

So far, then, there is some light upon this last and most terrible of the problems of our experience. I do not mean to exaggerate the extent of that light. No man can look upon the brutalities and cruelties of this world, upon the deep injustice of our social and industrial order, upon individuals and classes that are ghastly wrecks of humanity, upon the established ways of strong men to wealth and power, of which such wrecking of humanity is the inevitable outcome—no man can look upon these without feeling himself well-nigh driven to silence. But the theologian always must remember that theology is the intellectual interpretation of religion: and what religion means is precisely this, that men have faced the things which seem fitted to drive them to despair, and in the presence of those things they have not despaired, have not doubted of God, have not been driven to that silence which is the only serious one, the silence of heart and of hope. To be religious at all means to hold, whether with clear consciousness or no, to the faith that in all His works God is both supreme and good; and in the power of that faith to rise above practical hopelessness. And when religious men would hastily condemn us to intellectual or scientific hopelessness, one can only urge what already has been urged; that if a thing is practically true, is the supreme and inspiring truth of the practical life (as religious faith is to religious men), it cannot be scientifically false; and that the theologian who asserts such hopelessness, and then proceeds to doctrines of grace and salvation, contradicts himself formally as well as really.

C

Two steps of the discussion are now before us. In the first we saw that any creation in which God can fulfil Himself must be in its ultimate outcome—must be late or soon, however gradual the creative process—a creation of free spirits. In the second we turned to the actual process in which God is communicating such free being to the soul of man, and found ourselves in presence of a remarkable—nay, an appalling—natural and moral history whose course and order are such that man enters upon his life of moral accountability already involved in sin. Standing face to face with that, we found that we had no choice but to regard creation, terrible as its facts are, as nevertheless God's creation, and as from God's own point of view preferable to non-creation.

But those two steps lead us to a third step. They cast some light upon the question why, in a world created by a God who is altogether goodness, sin should be not merely a possibility, but a thing apparently made inevitable, as a quality of the individual will, by the very order of the life into which individual men are born—the very way in which the individual will comes to be an individual will. But however much or however little light they bring, they form the beginning rather than the end of the discussion. For if creation involves such tragic possibilities, and these are only too terribly realised; while, at the same time, to God creation is preferable to non-creation; then—as we may say in our human way of putting it, in which we bring forward one by one factors that to God are present eternally, present *totum simul*—creation itself sets a problem for God; or rather, God in creating sets a further problem for Himself. Consider the situation. To God creation is preferable to non-creation; speaking not from any mechanical point of view, but from the point of view of the demands of God's own nature, creation *must* take place. Yet it involves for the created not merely the alternative between righteousness and sin, but that alternative in such a form that for man at the beginning of his life the chances are against him; alike in the individual and the race, his will takes on its habits and tendencies long before there can be any union in him of developed will with the developed intelligence that has clear vision of the meaning of life and of its choices. And the result only the long ages of human sorrow and human repentance can interpret; only the degradation and the mortal agony of all this world. But if that be the situation, is that situation God's last word? Must there not be something more than all that in the order of the world—

the order of natural and historical conditions—which God institutes and in which we men live our life and work out its issues? Surely there can be but one conclusion. The world is God's world; we are His children; the whole existence and growth of our experience, including all our power of asserting ourselves in good and in evil, is possible at all only through His communication of Himself. So that the sinful assertion of the will of man, while it is a fact, is not the whole of the fact. It takes place in a divinely constituted order, whose God we cannot think of either as an absent, or as a defeated, God. He did not make His world to cast it away, an irremediably tainted thing. He did not give life to His innumerable children, only in order that they might be led to defeat the purpose which He had in their creation. Sin, then, cannot be the ultimate word of His creative work; neither nature nor freedom nor sin can be that ultimate word. In God's relation to His world, and in His administration of it, there must be something else; and that something else must be, in the experience and history of mankind, the central and essential thing, only in relation to which can either nature or freedom or sin—or anything that is in man's life—be seen in its true meaning. We are driven to look for a process of the overcoming of sin; a process instituted divinely and eternally, and placed in the order of human history as that central thing by reference to which every constituent factor and element in human experience has its genuine significance, and apart from which all things human are but shadows of themselves, if not shadows that mislead. If the possibility of sin is involved in the very bringing into existence of any such thing as a genuinely spiritual society; and if among the created beings there is a race, such as that of man, in which the possibility is only too sadly and only too certainly realised, so that sin passes on like a natural inheritance from generation to generation and thus is original to the race:—then what we must look for from the goodness, from the justice and grace, of God, is surely clear. The God who upon His own initiative gave to those spirits their perilous being, and who, moreover, is the creative and constitutive source of that whole order of the universe in which they work out their fate, will make that whole order of the universe in its very essence an order of redemption; an order whose fundamental forces are directed against sin for its overcoming. But in a free spirit the overcoming of sin cannot be brought about by forces that act mechanically or eternally; a being governed by such forces is, like one of Spinoza's modes, capable neither of sinning nor of being saved from sin. The overcoming of sin can take place only through the winning of the loyalties and devotions of the sinful heart to that which is the opposite of sin; to God and righteousness, to love and truth. So that what we must believe about the heart of things—about the real order and constitution of the world, the real order and constitution of the nature and the history in which we have our life—is that it is on its negative side an order directed to the overcoming of evil; on its positive side an order constituted for the winning of human hearts, through filial love, into the likeness of God. In a word, what we must believe is what the New Testament, in many different ways and from many different points of view, continually impresses upon us as the reality of the order and the history in which we have our life: not so much a desperate quest on man's part after God—though that, too, would have its truth—but rather God's seeking of man. And in all this—all this sin of man, all this salvation of man—man is both the individual and the race; the race, and in the race the individual; the individual, and through the individual the race. For no man's salvation, in this world or in any other, is made perfect, until the social order in which he has his being is an order of righteousness; an order in which none is wronged, none is oppressed, none is made a mere means to another's ends, none has the ways of spiritual growth closed against him; but all men serve the good of all, so that any success to any man means an increase of life and of the goodness of life to all.

We should mark a further consequence of this view of reality as in its ultimate truth a process of redemption, a process in which God seeks to save men by winning their hearts back to Himself. It was said a moment ago that freedom—the freedom in which we sinned and in which nature in us became sin—could not be the last word. Yet in the redemption which *is* the last word, freedom is not destroyed. God's winning of the hearts of men back to Himself from their sin, means that they enter upon a higher freedom, the freedom of unity with God. In that higher freedom, positively they take the will of God as their own will, and act it out from their own free centres of life. Negatively—if indeed the distinction between positive and negative is not here inappropriate—they do what is in them to overcome and undo the evil of the world; the evil they themselves wrought deliberately or thoughtlessly, in their own earlier and perverse freedom; the evil that, like a part of the system of nature, hands itself on from generation to generation, acting as a universal or social power and involving individual men in it before either their intelligence or their will is sufficiently developed to enable them to make adequate resistance. So that the freedom which means a unity of man with God, means that man becomes a sharer—an agent—in God's work of redemption; the work in which evil is overcome not by negation, not by annihilation of the sinful soul, still less by a merely legal forgiveness, but by winning that soul to love and devotion toward God and toward good. The principle of freedom, the principle of redemption, the principle of religion, are one and the same thing; the love of God, and in that love the unity of the will and the work of man with the will and the work of God.[1]

---

[1] The whole of Hegel's immense and overbearing, yet profoundly valuable philosophy—the whole of his idealistic interpretation of nature and history—might with some justice be called a single elaborate exposition of this idea of freedom as that in which man (the individual and the race) becomes truly himself by making himself at one with God.

The idea that the truly devoted man becomes a sharer or agent in God's redemptive work, which I have mentioned here only in connexion

It is only putting what we have just seen into other words to say that just as we are driven to it, when we attempt to consider, from God's side, the problem of our life, so are we driven to it from our own side; for the relation of God to man's life, and of man's life to God, is one and the same relation from whichever side we attempt to trace it. Yet let us give a moment to the latter way of taking it. Consider once more the course in which, before we know it, we are all of us entangled in the ways of sin. Consider how man, the individual or the race, while he is still a helpless child and before his day of clear and distinct volition has come, is already involved in evil habits; and with what terrible ease and certainty these become the content of his developing will. And consider that the order of the world in which this is possible, God created and not we. Does not this unspeakable tragedy of man, in a world whose order God constituted, give man a claim upon God; a claim that God should seek and should lift up the child, not merely fallen, but *thus* fallen? The question may sound bold. But, as was indicated a moment ago, bold though such a question is, there is one great book of religion which from

---

with the question of freedom, deserves on its own merits and for its own sake a primary place in the teaching of the church. It is a fundamental idea alike of the New Testament and of the Christian consciousness; but has been greatly neglected. There is a very telling statement of it in the closing section (pp. 199-219) of Professor Lyman's *Theology and Human Problems*. Compare, also, Professor William Newton Clarke's account of the "sin-bearing" of God and of Christian men (*Outline of Christian Theology*, pp. 341-360); and a remarkable passage in Professor Royce's *The World and the Individual*, Second Series, pp. 390-392.

beginning to end is a recognition of it, and in that sense may be said to welcome it. As it has been the business of Christian preaching from the first days of the church to declare, the New Testament is not so much the book of man's seeking God, as of God's seeking man. It is the book of God's love and God's grace; the book of the mission which our Lord had from the Father to seek and to save that which was lost. We do not depart from the New Testament point of view when, even in the very shame and agony of our sense of sin, we let our natural sense of justice have its way, and insist not only upon our own responsibility but also upon the responsibility of God. God's relation to man and man's relation to God is a case of fatherhood and sonship, where the father is the absolute source of the child's soul; where the father is the absolute source of the system and constitution of things in which the child's soul has its gradual entrance upon its being and upon the exercises and activities of that being; and where the father has all power. All power:—with one fundamental limitation which is implied in the very nature of God's creative activity, and is the true key to the present problem; a limitation, we should mark, which is not external to God, because God is Himself the source of it. In determining Himself to create, He determines Himself to this limitation; so that even in thus limiting Himself He is truly infinite—truly infinite as opposed to that false or empty infinity and omnipotence which abstractly can do anything whatever because concretely and actually it does nothing in particular. That limitation is that God must not (or "will not"—in this connexion the two words mean one and the same thing) do anything, even in order to save His child, which decisively takes away His child's freedom, and so makes that child a mere "thing" or "mode" enduring a fate which he himself has not worked out. And the reason why we cannot think of God as decisively taking away His child's freedom, even to save him from committing sin, is that in so doing God would defeat His own purpose in creation; the purpose of giving being to a society with whose members He can have real communion—communion of thought with thought, of heart with heart, of love with love, of purpose with purpose.

We must think, then, of the real order of the world, the order in which our common life has its meaning, as an order of disciplinary and redemptive grace; a social order which is an order of salvation; a process in which, by the discipline, by the generosities, by the affections, of a dispensation of grace, God wins the hearts of His children to Himself; reconciles them to Himself—reconciles the world and all things to Himself—and so is establishing that City of God for whose dear sake creation, with all that creation involves, was undertaken, and nature in all her processes instituted. This we must think, even though among those processes of nature, along with the heavenly beauty that lifts up the heart of man, and along with the soul of magnificent reason that exercises and develops reason in man, there go also the tragic passions that have prepared for themselves, apparently through long ages of developing mind and life, a seat in the divided heart of man, so that in that heart God and nature seem at war. When we face the last sad mystery of our life, and when in facing it we remember that it is a mystery which does not and cannot exist independently of God, but on the contrary has its being within a divinely constituted and divinely administered world, we must believe that the love which created does but love the more deeply when the created beings realise the tragedy possible in their creation; loves, and in loving saves; but just because it loves, will not save by any method that breaks down the freedom, the true spiritual individuality, in that sense the independence, of the soul that is to be saved. The will of man, evil by tragic succession of nature, sinful by deliberate self-seeking, is overcome, not by annihilating it, but by winning it to its true allegiance; winning it to the surrender which is no mere negation of life and will, but means finding in the love of God the supreme and all-inclusive impulse of a most practical life. It is only so, that sin can be overcome in a truly spiritual order in which all souls are of eternal value to the God who by an impartation of Himself gave them being. To the man who thus has given to God the love of his heart, and taken the will of God as his own will, nature and her laws stand fast; and yet all things have become new. The grace of God which thus, in the secret places of man's heart, in the visible institutions of his society, in the sacramental ministrations of little children, in the discipline, the consolation, the solemn beauty, of the natural world, perpetually is at work, drawing by tenderness and by severity his heart to the heart of God; and the order of redemption which by this grace is constituted:—these are the true inwardness of the natural order, and the temporal history, and all that constitution of things, in which man has his being, lives his life, works his work, sins his sin.

It has been my task—it is every thoughtful man's task—to consider the outlook of the Christian consciousness upon the fundamental or eternal order of our life, and to bring that outlook into connexion with our rational consciousness of the world, in the endeavour to gain some glimpse or suggestion of the unity which is at once the presupposition and the desired goal of all intelligence and of every religious heart; the spiritual unity of the real world, and of the soul of man in and with that world. We began with the strange and mingled scene which is our life and common experience upon the earth: all this daily labour in which our bread is gained; all this intercourse of quiet eyes and thoughtful minds with nature; all this growth of science and art; all these struggles and achievements of the moral soul of man, called to good, solicited by evil; all this shaping of life into social and political organisation, in institutions, in civilisations; all the turning of the heart of man in repentance, in transforming faith and love, toward some greater heart of love eternal in the changes of time. With these things, and with the long history of humanity in these things, and with that remarkable and startling history which preceded upon the earth the history of humanity in these things, we had to begin. Putting ourselves at the point of view of the rational consciousness, we tried to make clear to ourselves how such things could be; tried to put them all together in one intelligible order in the view of which reason could find rest. And what we have finally been brought to, is, I will not say a belief to which the religious consciousness also comes, but the belief in which it has its very being. The reality of the world of our human experience; the reality, that is to say, of all this infinite length and complexity of the physical and natural histories in whose wonders of sheer beauty and sheer reason, considered simply for themselves, God may indeed have a creative joy, but whose story we do not fully tell until we say that they come at last to consciousness in the freedom and the moral struggle which are our human life; and the reality of that moral struggle itself and of the divine communication of freedom which renders it possible;—the reality of all this is the grace of God; the grace of God animating a history in which by strange and deep and stern processes of the failure of man and of his rising again, there is brought into being a society whose members can have with God a communion in the things that are His own nature—righteousness and reason and love. In the grace of God the whole order and process of the world is a process and order of redemption; a bringing of man from sin to his divinely intended unity with God, with nature, with himself, through experiences of struggle with himself and with nature; experiences of repentance and remorse, of faith and love and hope, such as agitate man's nature to its inmost places of devotion and of decision, unlock and develop its hidden powers silent in the sleep of nature, and yet give to man's communion with God and to all his achievement upon high places of the spirit, the infinite and pathetic depth known by the prodigal returning; known by those who have sinned greatly and greatly have been forgiven, and from whom, through all the greatness that is to be, boasting is taken away.

With this idea of the order of the world as an order of divine grace and redemption, the system of natural and spiritual things in which we have our being and under whose conditions we live our life, is seen, with all its fearful divisions and antagonisms, to be no chaos, no dualism or pluralism of irreconcilable forces, but what reason demands it to be—an order one and intelligible. It is one and intelligible in that through all its structure and process, including whatever most tries and baffles us, reason and righteousness and love are supreme; the righteousness and reason and love of the God who is the Father of our spirits and the source of the whole of nature; and who is seeking, through ways that we would not have chosen, to make us free, but in our freedom one with Himself in those very characters of reason, of righteousness, of love; one with Him in these, and thus one with Him in His eternal life. Such a life of man from God, and such perilous freedom; such a grace of God over against our sin; such a salvation of man and such eternal life;—these, whether we consciously recognise them or no, are the inner principles of our religious life; and to reason, if it can accept them, they give a way—I think the only way—in which its demand can be satisfied; for, in their light the apparent tragedy and moral chaos of our struggle upon the earth is seen to have meaning, to have purpose, to have rational unity.

With this view of the process of reality as a process of spirit and of salvation, my task is ended. Yet in a very deep sense all this is only the beginning of theology. Having seen that we can make the order of the world intelligible to ourselves only by viewing it as an order of saving grace, we have next to study man's history upon the earth as the actual movement of that redemptive process. Here all the historical disciplines of theology open before us; open before us in the widest sense in which they can be taken. On this historical side of his work, the theologian has to consider the religious consciousness of mankind as a growing consciousness of sin and of salvation from sin; he has to consider the shaping of that history by priest, by lawgiver, by prophet, and by the forces in the heart of man which these at once express and arouse from sleep; he has to deal with the literatures that slowly gathered form and are instinct for ever with the passions and the life of the religion in which they arose. An altogether lesser place, but still an important one, he has to give to that later literature of creed and symbol in which the same religious consciousness attempted—usually under stress of external forces and hence with grave injustice to itself—to work out its own intellectual or scientific interpretation. And not this alone. In the things that are called secular, in the movements that have been fateful for humanity and its civilisation, still more in the natural forces and influences that work perpetually in the life and upon the heart of man—forces of nature and natural affection, of hunger and cold, of suffering and hope, the daily light of the eyes, the daily labour of the hands—the theologian must seek as he can for a hidden wisdom, a saving power of God such as makes salvation the inner reality of the whole of nature. But in all this historical work of the theologian, one thing is central; central and thus in the deepest sense first and fundamental. That is his never-finished consideration, in a multitude of historical studies, of the determinative place taken by the founder of Christianity; studies whose significance we see only when we remember that in spiritual things to determine is to create, so that Jesus in having the determinative place in human history stands central to the whole detailed process of the making of man. The historical disciplines of theology, with their centre in the New Testament, have to trace the actual course of mankind, and of the making of mankind, upon the earth; the actual process in which our life—our thought, our morality, our religion, our whole intellectual and practical consciousness of the world and of ourselves—has come to be what it is. And that process, to the man who seeks from the point of view which we have now reached to regard it as a whole, is in its essential movement nothing other than a process of grace and redemption; a process in which sin is overcome; and overcome in the only way possible in a spiritual order—by the winning of the will of man back to unity with the will and the way of God. What Jesus, in His supreme place in the actual course and movement of human history, stands for, alike in His own consciousness of Himself and in the œcumenical consciousness of His followers, is grace and redemption; the love of the Father, and the return to Him of the sinful children who have awakened to the reality of that love. Of that redemption and return Jesus is not only, by revealing light, the prophet; He is also the accomplisher; the accomplisher through hope and love. His nature, as at once God and man, brought near to the heart of man, cast down before God, the hope of salvation; for it showed the possible union in one nature of the divine and the human. And when He, the Son of God, took it upon Him to be the Son of Man, took it upon Him to suffer and to be tempted and to be lifted up upon the cross, what was revealed in that life and in that death, was God, the author of our human lot, participating in its sorrows; so that the tragedy of man's life was seen to be not man's tragedy alone, but a tragedy which God also had submitted Himself to undergo, in order that at the last He might have about Him children and the love of children—the innumerable people of the Jerusalem which is on high and is the mother of us all. The heart of man—if we may permit ourselves to dwell upon that aspect of the infinite deep which is easiest of apprehension—the heart of man lost its anger against the God who gave to man a tragic fate, subjecting him through nature to sin; lost its anger, and saw that God is love, and that His love is at the heart of all things; and so was won to God again as to a Father and a home. So it was that the kindly Son of Man, in drawing all men unto Him, drew them not to Himself alone, as simply to an individual saviour who suffered for man and thus won man's love; but drew them also to the Father who sent Him, and was in Him reconciling the world to Himself.

Theology, then, means nothing less than the total movement of human history, read—so far as its outlines can be recovered—in the light of its intelligible unity as holding together in Christ, centring in His mission, and being thus in the unity of a divine plan a single intelligible system. And this means that Christ is the centre to nature as to history; for history and nature form one reality. It is only too true that in this our insight into the meaning of details is most strictly limited. We "see not to the close," and hence we cannot tell how this or that detail of nature is related organically to the mission of Jesus, to salvation, to the redemptive process of the world. Yet, as must be pointed out in a moment, some things we can see: how natural ministrations surround Christ's central work, co-operating with Him because, as we must believe, they too were created in Him and through them He works His work; natural ministrations—the affections of home and society, the solemnities and consolations of natural beauty, nay, even natural evils of pain and cold and hunger and the inborn inequalities of men. But here our concern is not with the details but with the general fact that as with history so with nature: by viewing it as the movement, or as organic to the movement, of a redemptive process which has its visible and determinative centre in the mission of Jesus, we can see it, more clearly than in any other way or from any other point of view, as a single intelligible system, a system which has the unity of a divine plan. And with that we can go back to an earlier formula and give it a deeper meaning. Nature, we said, rises to consciousness of itself in the human soul; in man and man's civilisation, in man's labour and science, morality and religion, the principle which is at work in nature reveals itself more clearly; to put it in a useful formula, nature reveals its reality in man, and in that sense "spirit is the truth of nature." But now we see that that statement, true as far as it goes, does not go far enough. We must now say that it is in Christ that nature comes to the true consciousness of itself; in Christ that nature reveals its true and eternal principle. In that profounder and more searching sense, spirit is the truth of nature. But the two senses of the statement do not stand apart in radical separation. The one is, if I may so put it, both the source and the fulfilment of the other. The Son of God is the Son of Man; that which is revealed in Christ is the potentiality of man, the hope of man, the goal toward which the salvation of man perpetually must move. Nature, we may say, is rising to consciousness of itself in man and in man's civilisation; but the consciousness does justice to itself only in Christ and in the spiritual histories to which Christ gives rise. Spirit is the truth of nature; but the truth of spirit is Christ and that ideal Christian consciousness in the progressive realisation of which lies the hope of man and of man's society.

But I must make clear one thing which this reference to the historical disciplines of theology does not mean. It does not mean that we first work out abstractly a Christian philosophy, involving a philosophy of history, and then turn to the actual movement of history to force that scheme upon it and thus to declare that the movement of history is the movement of a divine process of redemption. On the contrary, the ideas in which this Christian philosophy of history culminates are ideas which the history itself has brought with it. Just as philosophy does not stand outside of experience, but rather is experience coming to more thorough self-consciousness, more thorough awareness of its own nature and meaning and implications—is, in a word, experience sinking deeper into itself and interpreting itself through an insight into its universal relations—so the Christian philosophy of history is not something that arises outside of history, and then forces its scheme upon history. It is something that arises in history and is history interpreting itself; is history becoming conscious of its own meaning. Nor could philosophy of history—one might as well say simply "philosophy" or "theology," since there is no philosophy or theology which is not in ultimate significance philosophy of history—very well arise in any other way. As was said earlier, it is in the practical life, where our consciousness is most intensely and penetratingly in touch with the reality of things, and where reflexion when it at last arises is deepest and most searching, that the great ideas which interpret the world to our intelligence are most likely to be suggested. When we give way to the notion that it is the procedure of theology and philosophy to take leave of life in order to understand life, we miss the nature alike of life and of theology, alike of experience and of revelation. To put the matter summarily, it is in experience—in experience, of which theory and practice, action and reflexion, are the correlative and inseparable aspects—that the interpretation of experience must arise. And so it is here. The Christian understanding of history as being in its essential and vital movement a process of grace and redemption, a process in which sinful hearts are reconciled and brought to a unity of affection and of purpose with the Father's heart—the only overcoming of sin that can mean anything in the realities of a genuinely spiritual universe—this Christian understanding of history, which in its organic principles it is the perpetual task of theology to bring to clearer consciousness of itself, and to consider as fulfilling the demand of man's whole nature, rational and religious, has arisen in experience and as explaining experience; it has arisen in and as actual historical experiences, and in its turn has determined the further course of experience and of history. It is only in this, indeed, that the final meaning appears of the statement made in the first lecture that at the end of the discussion we should be brought back to the historical disciplines of theology from which at the beginning we set out. That statement can now be put in this better way, that we have all along been concerned with the material dealt with in those historical disciplines; have been trying to penetrate more deeply into the nature of that material than can be done simply by taking its matters of fact in detail; have been seeking to grasp the general nature, the universal or eternal relations, of the experience whose detailed facts the historical disciplines of theology set forth in the temporal order of their occurrence. The history which now is enacting upon the earth—the history of which we have to say both that men are making it and that it is the present stage in the making of man—this present history or experience of man has been led up to, and in that sense made possible, by the history which preceded it; the history whose determinative persons and events are those of the New Testament, and which, with its centre and eternal principle in those events and persons, has moved onward from the beginnings of human time as the concrete course of a redemption in which sinful man, won to the love of God, overcomes his sin. To recover the facts of that history—so far as they are recoverable—and to make them living to us, is the business of theology as historical. But to ask after the nature of the principle which in all this history has revealed and is revealing itself, is the business of theology as philosophical. It is with the latter—no new thing, but an old and never-ceasing labour of the Christian mind—that we have here been concerned; and if, in working together at that ancient and perpetual task, we have had any success at all, we can turn with deeper intelligence and a deeper appreciation to the study of the history as history, dealing with its detail of facts and events as any scrupulous historian would, but seeing in those events and facts, when taken as a whole, a bringing near of salvation to the race of man, and in that sense the establishing for man of eternal life.

Our work has thus been, in a sense, a clearing of the gateway into the historical studies of theology; specially for those who, if they are to be religious, must have their religion not in hostility, but in reconciliation and alliance, with modern thought and modern science. Yet not for those alone; for surely one need not be in trouble of mind to make positive insight a thing of value—a help in the deepening of life. Nor must we push too far the metaphor of clearing the gateway into historical study. For if what has just been said is at all true, theology as philosophical and theology as historical—or, if the terms be preferred, philosophy of religion and history of religion—are correlative. The theology or philosophy without the history (to adapt to this use a Kantian formula) is empty. And the history without the philosophy is blind; though this case is never quite realised; for we all carry a philosophy within us; clearly or confusedly we have a sense of the meaning of our life and of the meaning of the history in which our life has its being. Indeed, I might sum up our work here by saying that it has throughout been concerned with our sense of the meaning of our life; and with that sense where it is acutest—in the affections, the contemplations, the activities which are religion. To make clearer to our own minds the sense of the meaning of life which moves in Christian hearts, the sense of the meaning of life which has its being in all Christian love of God and all Christian devotion to the welfare of men; and to see in that sense of the meaning of life, when made explicit, the fulfilment, so far as in a developing experience is possible, of the fundamental demands of reason; so that in the holding and practising of it, our nature is at one with itself and we have the true unity of experience:—that has been our task. It is in the attempt to perform that task that we have come to the various views which now are before us as a single interpretation of life, all whose parts must stand or fall together: the view that reality is a spiritual society, in which God seeks to fulfil Himself in communion with His own; that creation, including the whole of nature, is the gradual process of the bringing into being of such a society; that the form of reality is therefore history; that the concrete content of history is a process of redemption wherein sinful man, won by the reconciling love of God in its innumerable ministries of order, of equity, of grace, becomes in achieved freedom of spirit the loyal son of God; that the supreme revealer and supreme accomplisher of redemption is Jesus Christ, whose appearance upon the earth was the critical and determinative point of human history, the visible centre in which the divine plan of the whole is brought to light—brought to light in a love which achieves the purpose that it reveals.

I should be glad to be permitted to set down two further remarks. The one is connected with the œcumenical doctrine of the Person of Christ, as the historical individual by whom and in whom our salvation is brought near to us; the other with what in the older language of theology was called "general redemption"—the attempt of the theologian to see in the whole process of reality the working of the principle which, on the œcumenical view, eternally is summed up in Christ.

First, with regard to the œcumenical Christology. The characteristic difficulties of the modern mind in accepting the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son, have their roots in modern intellectual history and can be discussed on their own merits; but in the doctrine itself, there is no intrinsic or philosophical difficulty. There is, in fact, less difficulty in it than in something to which we have here already been led. In the attempt to make intelligible to ourselves how we can be capable at all of the many-sided experience which is our life, we have been driven to believe (though we could not present the process to ourselves under any form of imagination) that God reproduces Himself, under limitations, in and as the human soul. The doctrine that God reproduces Himself eternally in a Son who shares all His perfection, moves under far less difficulty than that. It is far easier to think of a perfect spirit reproducing himself in a perfect spirit than to think of him reproducing and realising himself in imperfect spirits and a troubled history. In fact, the question how the perfect God can give rise to the imperfect soul, the tragic and sinful history, of man, is precisely the heart of difficulty in all the difficulties of theology and philosophy. But the œcumenical doctrine of an eternal Sonship is not merely easy in the sense of having no intrinsic difficulties. It is a doctrine toward which we are driven by grave positive considerations. For on the one hand (as already Plato had seen) we are compelled to think of God as essentially self-communicative; in the language of the creeds, as essentially generative or begetting. It is of the essence of good to be love and to communicate itself. To put it negatively, it is impossible to think of God as a Deity solitary, inert, idle; such a God would be no God. It is equally impossible to think of Him as exerting Himself in any activity which is external and indifferent to His own nature. And the activity in which He thus puts forth, thus expresses and fulfils, His nature, must be one in which late or soon—some such qualification we must make in order to leave all possible scope for the idea that God has a joy in the physical order of the world for its own sake—He brings into being spirits who can respond to Him; can have communion and intercourse with Him in those things which are His very nature. That, in fact, is the key to the whole question of the creation of man, and the relation of man's life to God; it is the clue or guiding thought of the whole view of the world which here we have been following in outline. But when we accept that view of the world; when we feel convinced that the life of man (however little insight we as yet have into the complete divine interpretation of the details) has its being in God's communication of Himself, and is, in the sense earlier defined, an organic part of the self-fulfilment and experience of God;—when we have accepted that position, a problem still haunts us. When we have learned to think of God as seeking a realisation of Himself in the spiritual history of mankind and of whatever other finite or "created" spirits there may be, the question returns: Even though such spiritual histories have their organic place in God's realisation of Himself, yet does not that realisation demand far more than such histories? For let us recall what we have found ourselves compelled to believe about human individuality, and about the history which is its development. The growth of human individuality means that each of us comes to be a particular self, occupying a particular place and station in the universe, because each of us, while limited to his own place and station, yet in that place and station is animated by the principle of the whole. It is because the individual, with all his limitations, is thus animated by the principle of the whole, that he can make his life a continual ἐνέργεια ψυχῆς; can continually energise from the point of view of the whole; can make his very limitations a means to his own development and the world's development, by more and more apprehending them in their relation to the total or objective system of reality and hence as ways of life rather than denials of life. But by the very terms of the case, this animation of the individual is the animation of a part by the principle of the whole; the animation of a limited life by the principle of the system or society in which it has its being, so that the limited life is not a *mere* individual, but is able, in thought and conduct, in judgment and influence, to take the point of view of the whole society or system of which it is a member. To state the matter more in detail, reality, in its objective or eternal truth, is the total temporal process in its unity in and for the creative consciousness of God. Our growth in knowledge means our increasing apprehension of that reality; a reality of which we ourselves are organic parts, so that the more truly objective our thought becomes, the more does it constitute a true self-consciousness. Our growth in knowledge, in other words, is the gradual building up in us of an eternal consciousness, a consciousness which in the true form of its idea would be a complete or absolute intuition. While our total or practical growth, so far as it is truly moral or religious, means also the formation in us of an eternal consciousness; a character and a will which in the true form of their idea—that is, as they are in God—are eternal. All this growth, all this formation in us of a knowledge, a will, a character, which so far as they are true are eternal—the fact, in one word, that we have individuality at all, and in that individuality are capable of growing in truth and goodness and likeness to God—is possible because, while each of us as an individual is a very limited part of the whole, yet each of us is implicitly animated by the principle of the whole; by the recognised or unrecognised indwelling of God. Yet all that does not make us adequate objects of the divine communion, in the sense that in our history, or any number of such histories, God could have His complete realisation of Himself. The fact that eternity is the total content and process of time in its unity in the consciousness of God, does not close the question. With regard to the object of the communion of God, it is the content of eternity (the nature and character of the spirits that have their life in its temporal process), and not the mere eternity, which is the important matter. And when we consider the nature and character of man, or of any spiritual race that has its life under similar conditions, we see at once the limitations which now make us, and apparently will make us for ever, inadequate (in the sense indicated a moment ago) as the objects of the communion of God; limitations that may be suggested by the two words, time and function. First, the limitation with regard to time. God is in no sense in time. He has time in Him. He possesses time as eternity; in one complete grasp or intuition He presents to Himself the whole concrete content of time. But we, while we have time in us as a synthetic form of our consciousness, and only so are able to be spiritual individuals, capable of apprehending our life and the life of our race as a history and development in time, yet have time in us, not intuitively or in completeness, but only under the limitation which is expressed by saying that, while we have time in us, we are also in time, and receive our life under the form of development. The growth of our individuality in all its aspects of labour and affection, science and art, morality and religion, while it is a gradual entering into possession of that which in its true being is eternal, yet is itself, as the very terms indicate, a process in time. And not that only; but there was a time when we and all our race were not; and it is at least conceivable that our life will never lay aside the form of time and of development. It is but stating the matter universally, rather than merely with regard to time, to point out that, while we indeed have the principle of the whole in us, yet it is in such a way that we are incomplete individuals within the whole. The ideals which animate us through the presence of that principle in us, are, when we become clearly conscious of them, ideals of the absolute: the knowledge which would need no more revising—the knowledge which in its transparency and systematic completeness would be a single intuition of the whole of reality and thus would be eternal; the goodness which eternally is real in God as God's own character. But it does not follow that we are ever completely to realise those ideals. As we have seen, the validity of our effort after knowledge and goodness and likeness to God, does not involve that *we* should completely realise that absolute intuition, that eternal character. It does involve, first, that those ideals should be true of reality—should be completely or eternally realised in God, who is the source whence they are communicated to us; and secondly, that there should be open to us, either the complete realisation of those ideals, or (what we must take to be actually the case) the possibility of moving for ever, in a progressive life, toward that complete realisation; becoming more and more like God, yet never entering upon that absolute likeness which, according to the œcumenical theology, the only begotten Son has eternally.[1]—When we turn to the second of the headings suggested a moment ago, it is really the same point in a different form of statement. While the principle of the whole is in us, so that we are animated by that sense of the whole without which there could be no spiritual life, no life of science or morality or religion, at all, yet it has so individualised itself in each of us, that each of us is only a very small fragment of the infinite whole. For every human individual there go with the limitations of time, limitations in function, and thus in quantity and quality of spiritual being. Each of us has a specific quality which no other individual in the universe quite has, or can have; if nothing else, mere differences in particular experience would bring that about. And each of us, thus endowed and differentiated, has a station to fill, a function to perform, which no other quite has. Our specific quality and function—what makes us to be definite realities, having definite and assignable places in the one system of things—is in that sense our limitation. Nor can we conceive any transcending of *that* limitation. Our powers and energies, as we fill our particular stations, may immensely increase; but we always shall be filling particular stations within the one system of things. That is to say, no individual after our human type, no individual created in time and through a temporal process, can be adequate to the communion of God. His true life, indeed, is communion with God; and we must even believe that God's communion with him is part of God's blessedness; but he is not adequate to that communion in the sense of fulfilling it. Nor would any sum or system of such individuals be thus adequate; a system and history of incomplete respondents would not make with God the perfect communion in which each side is adequate to the other. What is demanded is an eternal, an eternally perfect and divine, individual, and the eternal generation of such an individual by God; God who, therefore, eternally is Father. And the doctrine of the eternal begetting of the Son—nay, the whole doctrine of an eternal Trinity in God—surely meets that very demand; so far, at any rate, as our minds can make any way in this question at all. Eternally there is a society in the Godhead; eternally the activities and affections of a spiritual society in which each of the members is to the others an adequate object of love and communion. And if it be urged that such a question lies beyond our field; that when we have made our history, our world of experience, intelligible to ourselves by viewing it as a part or factor in God's realisation of Himself, we have not to go on to ask what more is required for God's complete forth-putting and realisation of His nature;—the answer is that such an objection forgets the unity of existence where most it ought to be remembered; forgets that the God who is seeking a realisation of Himself in human history, the God who deals with man, and by reference to whom all human problems have their ultimate solution, is not God in some abstract part or aspect of His nature, but God in His total nature. Though man be but a small part of God's care, yet the God who cares for man is God in the completeness of His being, and with His complete realisation of Himself in view. Hence it may well be pleaded that the profound and speculative theology of the œcumenical fathers and councils—however unhappy it may have been in its subjection to the intellectualism of the degenerate Greeks, and to the technical terms and the unethical mind of that intellectualism—yet was guided by a sound instinct. If God be in a real and ethical sense—and there is no sound metaphysical sense which is not also real and ethical—a Trinity in Unity, then the whole order of natural and historical conditions in which every common man lives his common life has somehow the stamp of that fact upon it, and is what it is by reason of that fact. The Trinitarian doctrine, whatever else it is or is not, is not a remote abstraction; if it is true, it is the truth of our common life, and of the history which has been the course of our common life upon the earth.

---

[1] Cf. *supra,* latter part of note to p. 124.

Let me insist upon that. All the truth there is, is the truth of our common life; and our common life needs, to make it intelligible, all the truth there is. To the view of human nature and of human life, involved in such doctrines as those of the Trinity and the Incarnation, men sometimes object, not on the specific ground already discussed, but on the general ground that such a view is too far-reaching—looks too far out into mystery and into eternity. But surely the answer is obvious. For such a thing as our life is, no explanation can be too far-reaching, too difficult with endeavours to see into eternity. Consider what manner of thing our life is; how tremendous the opposition in it between good and evil, between light and darkness; how fearful the gulf that opens up in the midst of the fairest things we have or can achieve. When people demand a view of life that shall have none of these difficulties, none of these endeavours to grasp the principle of eternity, I have but to open my eyes for one half-moment to the actual life before me; to our civilisation which condemns multitudes of its citizens, not merely to poverty, but to meanness of spirit; to any Christian home shattered by the inexplicable wickedness of one of its members; to any child depraved by reason of his parents' sin—condemned, in Professor Royce's striking words, to a "fatal and unearned baseness"; to any human being who receives from the wrong-doing of another that which is worse than all physical pain, an "utter and inevitable corruption," an "endless moral degradation"; to all the perpetual turning to self-destruction and to degradation of the many-sided powers that seemed given for the making and perpetuation of a world of good;—I have, I say, but to open my eyes for one half-moment to these things, to know that the demand for a theology which has not to concern itself with God's way in eternity, is a demand that has never appreciated the force of its own problem. When we consider the human experience which it is the business of the œcumenical theology, the business of all theology and of all philosophy, to make intelligible, the one real difficulty about these theologies of the eternal is that they are not difficult enough, not deep enough, not far-reaching enough. Have they found, even in eternity, anything deep enough and wide enough to be the explanation of so fearful a mingling of good and evil as the life and history of mankind on the earth? We are all clear, I think, how high is the place we must give to reason; even to reason as the procedure of the exact understanding. We all know well enough the truth of the saying that no man ever went about to break logic but in the end logic broke him. Yet if we were somehow shut up to a choice between the theology of the *Aufklärung* and that of the Mystics, the mere facts themselves of life would compel us, in spite of the measure of truth in the Enlightenment, to turn toward the Mystics. We talk impatiently about the difficulties of theology. We forget that the supreme difficulty is that wonderful and fearful thing, our life itself.

I do not mean, indeed, to suggest that the œcumenical formulation, or any theological formulation possible in this life, is an absolute finality. It may very well be that in some life to come, with clearer eyes and profounder intelligence, we shall lay aside the present form of our theology. But if so, I cannot free myself from the feeling that it will not be to retreat to some simplified theology, such as the Enlightenment, with its vigorous but narrow understanding, demanded; it will be to advance to something still profounder than the theology which, upon the earth, the church apprehended; something that will combine a still greater elevation of God above man, with still greater intimacies between God and man, between the divine nature and the whole course of human and cosmic history; something that will thus be a confirmation or fulfilment of the œcumenical theology, rather than a withdrawal from it. In any case, no theology that knows its own task, and knows the life of man, can do other than reach out into eternity. The difficulties are far-reaching; so must the answers be. And in a Gospel which builds itself upon the idea of an eternal Son of God who became the Son of Man, and is the centre, the organising principle, of the whole scheme of human history;—in such a Gospel and such a view of the world, I think we have the synthesis, the whole of truth, of which man's perpetual spirit of Enlightenment on the one side, and his perpetual Mysticism on the other, are the sundered and shattered fragments.

What I had to urge, however, was that if we accept the view needed to make our common life intelligible, there is, in the doctrine of the eternal begetting of the Son, no intrinsic difficulty for reason; but on the contrary the satisfaction of one of its gravest demands. And if it be said that the real point of difficulty lies not in an eternal relation of Father and Son within the Godhead, but rather in the question of the relation of Christ, the eternal Son, to Jesus who had a human growth and thus a development in time, the answer is as before. In such a relation, or such an identity, between an eternal being and a being who has a growth and development in time, there is at least no greater difficulty than is involved in the position which we have already been compelled to accept in order to account for our ordinary experience; the position that God who is perfect and eternal, the Absolute Spirit of the world, reproduces Himself under limitations in and as the imperfect and developing soul of man, and so makes that soul in its imperfection capable of being animated and put under obligation by the idea of the whole; the idea which operates in us as a growing ideal of perfection, an ideal of a truer and a better which imply an absolute truth and an absolute good. The fact that we could not present to ourselves under any form of imagination a process in which an Absolute Spirit thus gives rise to developing individual histories in time, the fact that we could not in any sense comprehend such a divine activity of self-communication as God comprehends it in exercising it, was in the one case no argument against the belief that such a process actually does take place, when we were driven to that belief in order to make intelligible to ourselves how it is that we are capable of experience at all. Nor, in the other case, if historical facts require, to make them intelligible, the belief that the eternal Son of God became incarnate as Jesus of Nazareth, is the belief ruled out by our inevitable inability to understand, as if from within, the exact spiritual process involved; an inability set out in light once more—if in this I do not speak with too much unkindness of a discussion supremely valuable for its insistence upon the unity and integrity of the consciousness of Jesus—

by the attempt of perhaps the most admirable theologian of our day to work out a psychology of the Incarnation in terms of the subliminal self.

This answer to an objection should not be pushed farther than it can go. The two cases, just set side by side, are not strictly parallel. Both, indeed, are cases of the relation of an eternal being to a being who has a growth in time. But the one consists in the fact that the Absolute Spirit makes Himself the source and home of lesser spirits; the fact that God, an eternal person, reproduces Himself, under limitations, in the growing personality of man. While in the other case the personality is one and continuous; Christ, incarnate as Jesus of Nazareth, is one person with Christ the eternal Son. But there is at least no greater difficulty for reason in the one case than in the other; no greater difficulty in the ancient Christology than in the account we have just been compelled to give of the possibility of our ordinary experience. Indeed, if there is any difference, it is the Christology which is the easier. For in attempting to account for the possibility of our experience, we have had to believe that God reproduces Himself in a soul which is capable of sin and actually becomes sinful; whereas the humanity of the incarnate Christ was, at the very least, a sinless humanity. If I were to venture upon any positive suggestion at all, it would be one stated only in the most general terms; but in those general terms faithful, I think, both to reason and to the habitual language of our Lord in the New Testament. This, namely: that the explanation, the possibility, the ultimate basis, of the relation between eternal and temporal involved in the Incarnation—the relation between eternal and perfect deity, and a growing human personality—lies in the Father; and being in the Father, it was not foreign to the Son but was His life of life. For, as we have seen, what renders the life of man possible is a reproduction of Himself, a communication of Himself, on the part of God. The ideal principle of humanity, that is to say, is eternally in God; in that sense the divine nature contains eternally the human. The nature which in God is absolute, is eternal, is perfect, is in man potentially; in man as that true or ideal self of himself, against which he sins perpetually, yet the presence of which in him is what makes him a being capable at all of the salvation which ultimately, as the life of devoted service, means likeness to God. But if the ideal principle of humanity is thus in God eternally; if the divine nature contains in that sense the human; then the eternal Son of God, in becoming incarnate as man—true or ideal man, not sinful man—did not go out from Deity into some alien realm; did not assume a foreign type of consciousness; did not add a second and disparate nature to His eternal nature. Rather, He was true to Himself; true to that which, since it is eternal in the Father, is to the Son the principle of His being and the life of His life.

Such a suggestion, however, I cannot attempt in any way to discuss.[1] The one point I had to urge with regard to Christology may be summed up thus. In the first place, the Christian theist—or, indeed, any man whatever who believes in a God who is good and is supreme—has in the ordinary facts of our ordinary life a difficulty as grave as any difficulty of the œcumenical theology, whether in its Trinitarian or in its Christological view. For such a man stands perpetually face to face with the question of the nature of the relation between God in His goodness and perfection, on the one side, and on the other side all this startling moral order and moral history which is to us men our daily life and the world of our daily life. We mistake if we think that the theologian is the only man upon whom fall the ultimate and fundamental difficulties of the interpretation of life. Those difficulties are present in anything that is human life at all, and the burden of them rests upon every one of us when we make any attempt whatever to understand how the experience is possible which is our ordinary consciousness and our daily life. But more than this. The difficulties which thus are forced upon our thought by our ordinary life, are mitigated by the acceptance of the œcumenical theology. For that theology, whatever its technicalities, has its living nerve in the belief that in our actual history upon the earth, the supreme power of the world has concretely and vitally manifested itself as a power of salvation. And as we have seen, it is only in the idea that the order of the world is constituted by God as an order of salvation, that a solution of the supreme difficulty of our life begins to dawn upon us.

---

[1] See the altogether admirable discussion in the late Principle Caird's *Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, vol. II., pp. 100-171.

If the œcumenical theology thus brings to us the idea in which our ultimate problem has its solution, and in which the unity of our world of experience comes into view, it is science in a very deep meaning of that great word; and at the same time it is what science, when it reaches the ultimate or concrete form of its principles of explanation, must necessarily be—a wisdom of the common and practical life. The insight of the œcumenical theology is that the Godhead is a society, a life whose essence is mutual communion; and that the possibility of an approach of man to that communion is shown by the unity of the divine and the human natures in Christ. As such a view, this theology is indeed a far-reaching metaphysical construction; I will not say, a daring venture of thought, for everything in our thought is a daring venture—we live by continually making daring ventures which continually vindicate themselves. But far-reaching metaphysical construction as it is, it is no abstraction. It is remote neither from the past nor from the present of our life on the earth. Not from the life of the past; it is the interpretation of an actual history; the only interpretation that even begins to do justice to the facts of that history. Nor from the life of the present; as has just been said, it makes reality intelligible to us; brings to us the solution of our last problems; brings the ultimate and intelligible unity of our strange and divided world of experience into view; and, as doing this, is of first and fundamental value as science. It shows us how the world of our life—nature and history, history in its struggles, its fearful antagonisms, its slow growth of light upon the darkness, nature apparently indifferent to all that struggle but really forming one order of being with it—can be regarded as a unity; a true and intelligible unity as the progressive realisation of a divine purpose; the purpose of which Christ is supremely the revealer, and in so deep a sense eternally the accomplisher, that the unity of history, as the realisation of a divine purpose, *is* its unity in Him. As such science, the œcumenical theology has its deep harmony with both of the two great secular constructions of science which the modern mind willingly accepts and which are directly determinative of it. The earlier was the Greek attempt to apprehend the unity of the actual manifold of experience, by conceiving one supreme principle which articulates or unfolds or realises itself in the laws and ways of the world; a supreme principle which more and more was exalted above the world, until—for lack of some mediator between that unutterable height and this low world—it became the altogether transcendent God of Aristotle, and at last, with the Neo-Platonists, a God incommunicable. Of that Greek thought, the œcumenical theology is scientifically as well as historically the culmination; it fulfilled the endeavour of Greek thought, as by itself that thought never could have done. The later of the two constructions is the physical and natural science of our own day; the harmony of Christianity, in its œcumenical interpretation of itself, with this science in what modern men take to be the most revolutionary of all its insights—its insight into the unity of all the life of the world, including the life of man—I have already tried to indicate.

It was this character of the œcumenical theology as a great scientific achievement—its character as science, and as holding in science (since it casts light upon our ultimate difficulties) the supreme place—that I wished to insist upon. But one ought always to add that such science is with practical wisdom one same thing. A theology that sees in the purpose of a divine fatherhood the unity of the world's natural and historical order, and in Christ the revelation, and the accomplishment in principle, of that purpose; a theology that thus builds its hope for man upon a God who makes the whole order of the world an order of salvation; and in such idea of God and man, bears within it the inspiration and the perpetual demand to realise a Kingdom of Heaven in which, in the love of God, all men serve the good of all, and no man is to his fellow either a tyrant or a slave;—such a theology is the most practical of all teachings, alike for the individual life, and for a race that has to conduct its civilisation through continual and fateful change.

It was this that I had in mind—both on its scientific and on its practical side—in saying that in the long movement of human thought and life the œcumenical theology has not exhausted its significance, nor been outlived; and that they do well who seek to hand it on to be the light of whatever civilisation is to come. And if it be asked whether this ought not to be said rather of vital Christianity than of an ancient theology laden with Greek metaphysic, the answer is that no theology whatever—not the deepest, not the soundest, not the historically most influential—can in any sense take the place of religion; but that nevertheless theology, in its own place, has its own value. Theology means the organising principles of vital Christianity brought to that systematic intellectual consciousness which is science or philosophy; and the œcumenical theology is this task done with pre-eminent power, and with a true sense of what is central and vital; so that it has commanded the mind of the church by expressing what is deepest in it. And if the principles that are deepest in the Christian mind are seen to be the best science or philosophy we have—are seen to give us, better than any other, a view of the world of our experience as no chaos, but an intelligible unity—then to that extent religion and reason are with each other made one.

The second of the two remarks which I wished to be allowed to make is this. It is in the Incarnation and Passion, the life and death, of our Lord, and in that long course of religious history to which the Incarnation stands as the vital and life-giving centre—

it is in this, we are agreed, that human history reveals its inner character as a manifestation of the saving grace of God. But, that being seen, we must recall something which puts upon us the obligation of a great catholicity. The argument by which we were brought to the belief that God is present in man's life, winning to Himself man's heart, leading man through desperate spiritual conflict to communion with Him—communion deepened infinitely by the struggle through which it is realised—was an argument in which we were attempting to make clear to ourselves the order in which we have our common life. The conditions of our life we found to be such as to issue in one great demand that the whole order of the world, the whole nature and constitution of things, in which we have our life, should be organised by the Creator as an order of salvation. Hence, with whatever force that argument leads us to look in history for a process of the salvation of man, with that same force it leads us to regard the whole of history—nay, the whole of nature and history—as in relation to the process of salvation, and as having in that relation its true or ultimate significance. From that rational compulsion, whether it be weak or strong, one cannot imagine any theologian wishing to escape; one cannot imagine any theologian wishing to argue that the field and extent of the redemptive agencies must be narrower than the extent and field of man's sin and loss. And the very loyalty of the Christian theologian to Christ surely leads him in the same direction; makes him intent upon the thought of the organic connexion of the mission of Jesus with the whole of man's life, with the whole of the historical and natural conditions of that life, and with every genuinely helpful agency that has had a place in the historical process of man's salvation. Saint Paul had no doubt that in the Son of God—the Son of His love—all things were created; that in Him all things hold together. After that great example, teachers of the church scarcely do well to give way to intellectual timidities; as though we did God honour by holding His work within narrow bounds. I insist so eagerly upon this, just because in any such life as ours upon the earth it must remain rather a matter of the spirit, a matter of a man's point of view and intellectual disposition, than of the achievement of any great number of particular insights. We do well, I think, to be convinced that human history, in the true inwardness of it, is organised as a redemptive process; that God's saving agencies are as wide as His creation, and as the need of His creation; that the mind in which He administers all things is the mind which He revealed in Christ, His eternal Word. But the fact remains that we cannot explain in detail how all the various factors in the movement of history have their places in the redemptive work. And that for the best of reasons; we do not—in our present life, cannot—see particular facts in the total system of their relations; and so cannot read them in their divine interpretation. Some things indeed we can see; a certain saving force in social duties of home or state; or in nature, calling man upward by the power of her solemn beauty, her vast intellectual design, her silent depth of consolation; nay, even in what we call natural evils. Out of hunger and cold and sickness, and the sundering of loving hearts by death,

> Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;
> And mighty poets in their misery dead,

has proceeded a deepening of the powers and the affections of men. Out of the natural inequalities of human beings in the social order, compassion has arisen—if any man think it little, let him turn his eyes back upon primitive society; compassion and pity and the grace of forgiveness; hopes and ideals and high passions that are the dawning strength of some more righteous social order yet to be. Such things we can see; and many more; and it is good in such things to see the light of God, though it breaks upon us only here and there in regions where we can but grope in the dark and reach up blind hands of faith. But the unsolved problems are innumerable. If for a moment we think of history rather as a whole of fact than as a temporal succession, what we find, when we attempt to view it as in its totality the manifestation of the saving grace of God, is a vast circle, at the centre piercing light, but outward from that centre immense regions, obscure and hard to read. Yet when we cannot penetrate to a solution, it does not follow that there is none. We see not "to the close." When the darkness seems a sheer and hopeless darkness—when, for instance, we think of individuals and races that have gone their way, after a life sunken in the ugliest forms of evil, with apparently nothing in it that in any worthy sense could be called a saving power—we must say that this is assuredly not the full account of the matter. Here upon the earth, assuredly we are only at the beginning of things.

But from the circumference with its mingling of darkness and light, let us turn back to what for the mind of the theologian, and still more for the religious heart, is the centre. If the view of the world and of history which slowly has been brought to the consciousness of man, and which it has been our attempt to retrace for ourselves in outline—if that view penetrates at all to the truth of things, then the centre to which now we turn our faces, the centre of reality for the religious heart, is the centre of reality for reason also. For upon the view in question, the most reasonable of all things is that in the midst of man's years upon the earth there appeared the Son of God who, being lifted up, draws all men to Him; and by drawing them to Him makes their sin hateful to them, and wins their hearts to that love of God which to those who know it is salvation, and hope, and eternal life.

INDEX

Apologetics, 51, 171, 239-240.
Arianism, 27.
Aristotle, *28n,* 78-80, 110, 147-148, 163, 172-173, 188, 200, 336.
Augustine, 16, *36n,* 163, *273n.*
Bradley, F. H., 103-104, 116, 129, 182, 255.
Caird, John, *334n.*
Christ,
  —the founder of the Christian consciousness, 6-9. Cf. 219-244.
  —incarnate and redemptive, the principle of the unity of history, 37-42, 60-61, 164, 165, 234, 295-308, 308-313, 318, 342.
  —the eternal Son of God, 318-338.
Christian consciousness, the, 1-69 (*see Table of Contents*).
Clarke, William Newton, *301n.*
Cleanthes, 141, 152.
Cudworth, *274n.*
Dante, 184, 185.
Darwin, 173.
Deism, *12n,* 27, 159-161, 278-279. Cf. 329-330.
Eternity and Time, 120-124, 179, 228, 246, 323-324. Cf. note to 272.
Fairbairn, A. M., *268n.*
Faith, 4, *36n; and see* Christian consciousness.
Fichte, 101.
Freedom, 59-60, 72, 156-159, 166, 170, 194, 205, 214, 240-241, 268-272, 299-300, 302-304, 307-308, 318. Cf. 89-109, and 109-144.
Green, T. H., *125n, 274n.*
Hegel, 27, 37, 87, 101, 104, 188, 213, 233, *300n.*
Hume, 99, *211n, 273n.*
Huxley, *273n.*
Immortality, 33-34, 206-208, 254, 342.
Incarnation, *see* Christ.
James, William, 28, 31, 39.
Joachim, 105-106.
Kant, 87, 101, 205, 242, *276n,* 317.

Locke, *273n.*

Lyman, 301*n.*

Luther, *36n,* 163.

Manichæism, 26, 168.

McTaggart, 104, 129, 182, *277n.*

Miracle, 219-244.

Morris, William, 246.

Myers, F. W. H., 25.

Mysticism, 13*n,* 82, 161, 196, 259, 329-330.

Naturalism, cf. 219-244.

Nature, 59, 127, 133, 165, 166-253 (*see Table of Contents*), 312-313.

Neo-Platonism, 336.

Pantheism, 13*n,* 157, 212, 270, 273*n,* 298.

Personality, 12*n; and see* Freedom.

Plato, 28*n,* 80*n,* 96, 101, 120, 131*n,* 144-149, 188, 200, 213, 233, 319.

Prayer, 244-252.

Rashdall, Hastings, 27.

Realism, 81-88; cf. 121-124, 180, 223-225, 238, 275*n.*

Redemption, *see* Christ; and cf. 159, 165, 338-342.

Royce, 124*n,* 301*n,* 328.

Saint Paul, 12*n,* 41, 141, 152, 154, 163, 199, 204, 277, 291, 340.

Sanday, 331-332.

Scepticism, 260; cf. 292.

Seeberg, 140, 174.

Shelley, 189.

Sin, 14, 20-37, 60, 72-73, 120, 160, 165, 202-204, 235, 253, 254-342 (*see Table of Contents*).

Socrates, 108.

Spinoza, 270, 273*n,* 298.

Stoics, 273*n;* cf. 141, 152.

Tertullian, 18.

Wordsworth, 171, 189, 208, 341.

Date Due

1 1012 01009 0316