The ETERNAL CHRIST

JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

The Eternal Christ

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Studies in the Life of Vision and Service

By
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To My Mother

SUE GREEN NEWTON

A sweet Christian Mystic
Who first taught me of
The Eternal Christ

Foreword

THESE studies speak for themselves, dealing as they do with great themes in a popular manner, and, it is hoped, with some glow and colour. They are meant to aid those who are bewildered by the voices of the age, and its whirling eddies, by showing that the realities of faith are still real, abiding, and may be trusted. Each man has his point of view, his vision and his dream, but these great truths are ours in common, though we may see them from varying angles. They unite us, and should draw us into one vast communion of vision of service, that each may share the faith of all.

What is truly religious is ultimately reasonable, but reason alone is not enough. Those who have had an overwhelming sense of spiritual reality did not have any other faculties or any other facts than those may be aware of who have no such assurance. It is as a man thinks, and unless we think of religious truth religiously, from the inside, it must ever seem dim. One grave defect of our age is a lack of definite purpose and method in the culture of the inner life, which of itself is quite enough to account for our penury of

faith, without resort to intellectual doubt. If these little essays induce a sweeter mood, or a deeper habit of heart, they will be of aid to those who would live the life of faith.

All through there is a recurring emphasis on the lives and teachings of the great mystics, in the belief that, as those mighty spirits kept our faith aflame in other and darker ages, so they may help to renew and make more victorious the faith of our day. For the rest, once assured that what the prophets see is there, we may rejoice in the Unity of Faith and speak its melodious language, and by the Culture of the Soul attain, it may be, to fellowship with the Eternal Christ, whose we are, and whom we should serve while it is day, ere the night cometh.

J. F. N.

Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

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The Prophetic Vision

Is what the poet, the seer, the prophet sees there? If so, why do not all see it? If not, what does he make it out of?

I

WHAT PROPHETS SEE

IS what the prophet sees there? Soon or late every thinker must come to terms with this question, else it will confront him at every turn of the road. He must face it squarely and answer it, if he can, without taking anything for granted; for when we assume what most needs evidence we have always a feeling of insecurity and a hollow sound beneath our footsteps. As all must see, such an inquiry goes down to the roots of faith, and if the answer here suggested does not satisfy all, let it be kept in mind that the final answer lies beyond words, and is a victory which every man must win for himself.

Our argument for and against in such matters is but the echo of a deeper debate, and the reasons for faith, ample as they are, persuade, when they persuade at all, by the aid of processes profounder than logic and unshakable by it. When a man loses faith and wields the logic of denial, some acid in his soul, distilled of we know not how many ingredients, has dissolved the pearl of great price, and he speaks to a deaf ear who

hopes by logic to win him to faith again. No more could Newman follow the path whereby, midway in life, intellectual difficulties ceased to be spiritual doubts, and he arrived at an assurance of faith never afterwards disturbed.[1] The process which alters the inner life of a man, melts his bias, and disposes him to faith, is complex, and we can no more analyze it than we can fathom the deep heart of man.

Hence the exceeding delicacy and difficulty attaching to a study of this nature, and the error of regarding it as merely an adventure in philosophy. Faith has nothing to fear in the open court of philosophy, and perhaps as little to hope for, unless it be to show that the path to reality lies elsewhere. One need not shrink from the most searching criticism, though one may well despair of putting the highest reasons for faith into the form of a syllogism. All that is asked is that the critic come to the inquiry with a mind fine enough to feel the issues involved, which include not only the faiths of religion, but the vision of the poet and the value of science as well.

But let us first ask, What is it that poets, seers and prophets see? To them it is given to behold, with varying degrees of lucidity, an unseen world of spiritual reality, a realm of light and

[1] "*Apologia Pro Vita Sua*," by J. H. Newman, Chap. V (1865).

truth and beauty whence come all compelling inspirations, all inward renewals, all intimations of things to be. The reality of God, the sovereign authority of the moral law, the worth of the soul and its citizenship in the unseen, the spiritual basis of life and society, the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty—these are the things of which they bear witness. With one accord they proclaim that life is spiritual activity and intelligence; that the underlying and almighty reality is the living God; that the visible and tangible world is but a shadow, or a symbol, of the real; that the human spirit is akin to the Eternal Spirit, and may participate in the absolutely real life of the universe. They hold, or rather they know, that man is a citizen of two worlds, using the scenery of one to make vivid the ineffable truths of the other; and this insight, if valid, is the supreme gift of man. Listen and behold:

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. About it stood the seraphims; each one had six wings; with twain He did cover His face, and with twain He covered His feet, and with twain He did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory. And posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and

the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. . . . Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."[1]

"But Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. . . . And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."[2]

"Then Paul stretched forth his hand and answered for himself: At midday, O King, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art Thou, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus

[1] Isaiah vi. 1–8. [2] Acts vii. 55–60.

whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee. . . . Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." [1]

Add that exalted day in the life of St. Paul, when he was caught up into the third heaven, knowing not whether he was in the body or not, and heard things of which it is not lawful to speak. Add the strange and stately visions of the prisoner of Patmos, adumbrating in vague apocalyptic forms the shadows of things yet to come, to an accompaniment of majestic music. Add, also, the whole array of Christian saints and heresiarchs, including the greatest—Bernard, Loyola, St. Francis, Santa Teresa, Joan of Arc, Luther, Wesley, Fox—to all of whom came visions, voices, and open windows of divine surprise. Recall how, as with St. Paul, words sounded in their inner ears—sometimes new and commanding words, sometimes words old and familiar, but with new and dynamic meanings. Augustine, in a garden at Milan, heard, "Take up and read"; Francis of Assisi, "Get you no gold nor silver nor brass in your purses, no wallet

[1] Acts xxvi. 1, 13-19.

for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff"; Suso, "My son, if thou wilt hear My words"; Luther, "The just shall live by faith"; Tauler, "Stand fast in peace and trust in God"; and Jutta received her call from familiar verses in the Psalter. When one remembers these men and women, and others like them, the lives they lived and the wonders they wrought, their spiritual discernment and magnetic speech, one can agree with Thomas Carlyle:

"These are properly our Men, the guides of the dull host which follow them by an irrevocable decree. They are the chosen of the world; they had the rare faculty not only of 'supposing' and 'inclining to think,' but of *knowing* and believing: the nature of their being was that they lived not by hearsay, but by clear Vision: while others hovered and swam along, in the grand Vanity Fair of the World, blinded by the mere Show of things, these saw into the Things themselves, and could walk as men having an eternal lode-star and with their feet on sure paths. . . . Such knowledge of the *transcendental*, immeasurable character of Duty we call the basis of all the Gospels, the essence of all Religions: he who with his soul knows not this as yet knows nothing, as yet *is* properly nothing."

What is true of the prophets and seers is true, in less degree, of their kinsmen the poets, though in this study attention is naturally fixed on the

former. The witness, for example, of the genius of Shakespeare[1] to the spiritual meaning of life is overwhelming; which is the more remarkable from the fact that he is not professedly, perhaps not consciously, a teacher of faith, but an artist portraying with glorious vision the pageant of our human life. When, therefore, his insight, by its very depth and veracity, becomes a testimony in behalf of spiritual reality and the moral order of the world, all men must listen. Truly did Henry Morley say that his dramas form *A Lay*

[1] All Drama has to do with Divinity. In the early plays of Shakespeare the Divinity actively intervenes all through the play, as, for instance, in *Romeo and Juliet*, where the action is everywhere visibly decided by an Unseen Power behind, less than by the human agents. Often things are within a very little of going right, when they are upset and turned awry. That is the first stage: visible interference of Divinity, and absolute conclusion of the action within the play. The second stage is seen in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and other plays, where human purposefulness is more evident, though not so as to prevent the action being wound up within the play. There the Divinity appears, as in Greek drama, at the end, adjusting judgment for an action with which it had more or less to do. But by the time we reach the great tragedies the scene has become too involved to be thus neatly adjusted and closed, and the Divinity is pushed to a position in the Beyond; as in *Hamlet*, and especially in *Othello* and *King Lear*. If the play were all we should have to take sides with Iago against Desdemona. But the play is not all; it shapes for something Beyond, and we are purged and exalted by the outlook, assured that in the hands of that Divinity all will be well. Here is authentic prophecy of eternal things. ("Shakespeare: A Study," by Darrell Figgis, 1912.)

Bible, adding, "of dogmatism he is free—of the true spirit of religion he is full." As Goethe said, while we cannot put our finger on the word of the solution, he does seem to solve all our riddles and fulfill all the dreams we have ever had about the destiny of man. Read any of the great tragedies and testify if the final impression be not a mood of chastened wonder, of serene confidence, of death-defying hope. Here, of a truth, is deep and wise insight:

> "Such incense as of right belongs
> To the true shrine,
> Where stands the Healer of all wrongs
> In light divine."

But our chief concern here is with the prophets, who are the real leaders and lawgivers of humanity—those winged minds who, by their longer flights, lift their fellows out of the low vales of doubt and fear to larger outlooks. They influence the race profoundly, genetically, creatively, touching it as with a wand to finer issues and nobler endeavour. They admit us to a communion of vision and a fellowship of the truth, making us sure of God, sure of the moral order, and surer of "that newer fashion yet of immortality," which flashes in all their visions. Our highest life, to be of worth, must be thus related to reality; and if the human soul is untrustworthy in its loftiest hours, all the music of life falls to a

lower octave, and faith and hope alike decline. Either what the prophets see is there, or they are the dupes of splendid, but none the less pathetic, dreams. So, without further preliminary, let us proceed to our inquiry—taking the questions in reverse order.

II

IS IT THERE?

WITH these shining names before us we hardly dare ask: If what the poet and the prophet see is not there, what do they make it out of? It implies that, so far from reaching the highest truth, the insight of genius and the vision of the saints are as futile as the flicker of a firefly in the night, and that all faiths are only *Guesses at the Riddle Existence.* Such seems to have been the position of Goldwin Smith in his later years, though he recalled tenderly and gratefully the beauty and nobility with which faith, in all elevating and benign religions, had dignified and embellished the life of man.

Here agnosticism becomes pensive, grave, and sad. It ponders regretfully over the fact that the visions of poets and mystics are only delicate networks of dream, woven of the sweetest things in human thought and aspiration—wistful outlooks of spiritual longing; shapes of our high desires projected by the soul into its sky: as travellers in the Hartz, ascending the Brocken, are in certain atmospheres startled by the apparition of a shadowy figure—a giant image of themselves, thrown on the horizon by the dawn. Some gentle soul muses until, in a fevered mood, the fire of imagi-

nation burns, and there is a light kindled of the fusing of the powers into an ecstasy. Then follows the regret, paralyzing enough, that it is only a flickering human flame after all, and that we are left in the dark. One has a right to be sad at the thought that our highest and purest visions come to naught, and that the longest pilgrimage of the soul sends it back baffled and empty-handed. Surely, if we are defeated here, few other battles are worth the winning.

To George Eliot, after her maturity, Christianity was a thing of ineffable loveliness, but only a fable—a tale told by dreamers, full of beauty and pity, but signifying only the vain hope of man. Nor is it a matter of doubt that "the vacuum at the heart of her faith," as a most sympathetic friend and critic has described it,[1] marred her

[1] "Nineteenth Century Teachers," by Julia Wedgwood (1909). Nor does this in any way belittle the stately, grave, and beautiful genius of George Eliot. As Watts-Dunton has said, she was the only imaginative writer of her time who saw life through the lens of the new cosmogony, and fearlessly told what she saw; and her place in English literature is secure. Besides, in her delineations of character, in her profound divings into "the abysmal depths of Personality," such as resulted in portraits like those of Donnithorne, Dinah Morris, Romola, Maggie Tulliver, Tessa, she displayed her strength of hand—a strength which only the great masters display. While in the painting of Bulstrode, in "Middlemarch," she entered into worthy competition with those few masters of tragedy who have ventured to use passive murder as the tragic mischief of drama. (Introduction to "Silas Marner," by Theodore Watts-Dunton.)

outlook upon life, and especially her portrayal of human love; for if the life of man be a thing apart from the highest reality, love is wingless. When love looks downward, whether for good or evil, her power is high and sure, though not so sure, perhaps, as in what Watts-Dunton called her probings into the deep sophisms by which the soul of man shelters itself from the assaults of conscience. But when it looks upward, with few exceptions her power ebbs, and sometimes seems to depart. Mark, too, how her idealists fail, not in combat with dragons, but amidst the trivialities and mishaps of every day. Her knights of holy causes do not fall by the thrust of a spear; they break their necks by the stumbling of a horse. Even Savonarola, in "Romola," failed, self-deceived by that "shadowy region where human souls seek wisdom apart from the human sympathies which are the very life and substance of our wisdom." As a result, the Black Friar, whose protrait should have been the focus of her artistic power, is dim and almost lifeless; but even he is more vivid and rememberable than the impossibly ideal hero of "Daniel Deronda." There is here no desire to use George Eliot to point a moral or adorn a tale, but the inference from her life is obvious and impressive; all the more so when we recall her assurance of the trustworthiness of the moral instincts. Despite her loss of faith, perhaps because of it, she was attractive to

the men of the Hamlet age in which her lot was cast, as she must always be even to those who detect the vacuum in her faith. When, in "The Lifted Veil," she holds that the uncertainties of faith are a part of our moral discipline, her insight is sound; but we need not therefore doubt the vision of those who behold what is dark to us.

As a fact, nothing is more certain from a study of the lives of the prophets than that they do not make their visions, but are made by them. When we see effects, similar to those ordinarily produced by habits, springing from a single radiant hour, a solitary text, or a sermon aglow with white light, and continuing through long years, amidst trials by land and by sea, against odds unreckonable and obstacles the most formidable, we seem to hear the sound that bloweth where He listeth. Often this wonder is wrought amid dazzling light; sometimes in awe, solitude and quiet; but from it, as from some hidden source unguessed before, issue rare powers of insight, action, and endurance. From timid, careless, or even wayward men they are changed into champions of truth and right, rebukers of kings, and justifiers of the ways of God to man. As certain trees of the wood with tremulous leaf announce the coming breeze before others give sign of movement, so these prophetic souls are presentient of events far distant, and of the remote

triumph of justice. They do not make their revelations; they are seers of the divine in history who, while divining the trend of the curve of destiny, interpret the dumb indignations and vague forebodings in the general conscience.[1] Or they are mystics, whose crowning grace is a gentle and solitary air that seems too mild to give forth such vivifying energy, but whose lives mark new dates. These have an inward stillness which makes them victors in any plight, since they can at any time return to their quiet or, better still, abide in their quiet through the tumult of war. Withal, they have a strange strength both to do and to bear, and joy and peace rise from their hearts like fragrance from a rose, like music from running water.

When, therefore, a glib rationalism implies, if indeed it does not assert, that all this is moonshine, it is permitted us to ask what better seeds have been opened by its bright and sunny logic? It can inspire self-culture, but not self-sacrifice, and as such it can never purify the mixed heart of man and move it to high, heroic endeavour. About all it can do, apart from balancing probabilities, is to produce dainty minor poetry, which is but mingled query and protest, and attempt to satisfy the longing for the eternal in a sad joy in the things which are ephemeral.

[1] "Bases of Religious Belief," by C. M. Tyler, Chap. V (1897).

Marcus Aurelius was a saint of rationalism—a lonely, lofty, lovely soul, pure and piteous, but pensive and forlorn of heart. The power that rejuvenated the world came not from his "pale stream of philosophic pity," but from the Manger and Cross of One whose followers sang hymns in the catacombs, over which the chariot of Aurelius rumbled. If, according to that same rationalism, every effect must have an adequate cause, is it not akin to the absurd to intimate that the force—a burning and shining force it was, though housed in a frail little man—that planted Christianity in Europe, and altered the map of the world, came of a fit of fanaticism on the Damascus road? Enthusiasm there was—a blinding light and a melting voice—but when we recall that scene, and others of like kind, somehow the words of Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist, come to mind. In a remarkable discourse on *Enthusiasm*, he said:

"The devotional enthusiasm of holy and sincere souls has not at all been taxed in all this discourse. There has not one word, all this time, been spoken against that true and warrantable enthusiasm of devout and holy souls, who are so strongly transported in that vehement love they bear towards God, and that inexhaustible joy and peace they find in Him. For they are modest enough and sober in all this, they witnessing no other thing to the world than

what others may experience in themselves, and what is plainly set down in Holy Scriptures, that the kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost—to such enthusiasm as this, which is but the triumph of the soul of man inebriated, as it were, with that delicious sense of the divine life, I must declare myself as much a friend as I am to the vulgar, fanatical enthusiasm a profound enemy."

If it be said that this lofty and calm certainty is merely a feeling, the evanescent dream of rapt and solitary thinkers, there is the strange fact that the dream has come regularly to all sorts and conditions of men in all ages, and that the dreamers have been, for the most part, gifted with the most subtle and searching intellects. With a great cost obtained they this citizenship in the kingdom of vision, as we learn from the story of their heroic and dedicated lives, to read which is to recall the words of Conington, uttered just before he passed away: "Now is the vision complete—this is how they see in heaven."

III

EYES THAT SEE NOT

OF like kind also is the second question: If what the poets and prophets see is there, why do not all see it? As a disclosure of the low level of religious experience this is melancholy enough, but in so far as it is used to discredit the highest life of the spirit it is futile. All the highest achievements of man may be discredited by the same arrogant and blind judgment. No doubt the majority prefer ragtime music to the sonatas of Beethoven, but that does not invalidate the vision of the supreme musician. When Darwin, as he confessed, lost his interest in Shakespeare, by reason of too much grinding at physical facts, he did not thereupon conclude that Shakespeare is a valueless book. As a wise and frank man he admitted the atrophy of his artistic sense as a defect to be regretted, a penalty of specialism, which assuredly was too costly a price to pay.

If we do not appreciate great music, we may honestly admit the fact; but we need not do so with complacency, or with conscious superiority. Such a confession, however honest, is no occasion for vanity. Instead, the fact that music is

loved and enjoyed by so many fine minds ought to be evidence to a reflective mind that there is a whole world of beauty from which, for some reason, he is shut out. By the same token, the experience of power and joy, healing comfort and victorious living, derived by so many from communion with God—extending over all ages, among all peoples, and in all religions—ought to induce in any man, not smitten with irredeemable vanity, a sense of wonder, if not of regret, that he knows too little of what it all means. Instead of regarding the saints as celestially entranced dreamers, and the prophets as pilgrims of a visionary realm, he may well be urged to aspire to some glimpse, however dim, of their all-conquering vision. All men are aware, vaguely though it may be, of a serene and upper world whence come airs and floating echoes which "convey a melancholy into all our day"; and surely we should be willing to listen to those who explore that enchanted land, though they speak, as they must often speak, in language cryptic and symbolic.

Of course, there are in this sphere, as everywhere else, Gradgrinds and Peter Bells. Dickens has etched Gradgrind in "Hard Times"—perhaps because to such a man life must be a hard time—and we know the lot of that unfortunate little Gradgrind who was so often forbidden to wonder. But Peter Bell, in the Wordsworth poem, stands

as an ideal of the prosaic, visionless man in a world full of poetry. Of him we read:

> "A primrose by the river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more."

Why was not Peter Bell right? What more did the poet see in the flower? If we were poets we should be the better able to say; but for one thing, the poet must have seen that the primrose did not stand by itself, but was an expression of the heart of nature, and that the universal life bloomed in it. It may have been a symbol to him of we know not what gracious and graceful things, something akin to himself, only far more simple and pure. At any rate, all this, or nearly all, was as real as what Peter Bell saw, and far more beautiful. To Peter Bell a flower bed would have meant only so many plants, and nothing more; while to Tennyson a single flower in a crannied wall brought near the awful mystery of God and man, suggesting the indefinable and haunting beauty which hallows the earth and transforms it from a lumber-yard into a temple. Nor does the horn-eyed stupidity of Peter Bell render invalid the authentic and revealing vision of the poet.

Space does not permit an inquiry, profitable though it might be, into the clouds which befog spiritual insight. How far physical states mar the

vision of the soul; in what ways sundry misconceptions of religion interfere; why so many fail for that they do not fulfill the conditions of faith; the inevitable limitations and fluctuations of our nature —these and kindred questions would take us far afield.[1] The wonder is not that men have misgivings, but that they have any faith at all, so little care do they take to keep alive in themselves those experiences out of which faith grows, and without which it is so easily and so often imperilled by doubt. As in the Holman Hunt painting, *The Light of the World*, when the Living Truth knocks at our doors, weeds are there, the cumber of neglect, and the accumulated hindrances of sloth. If a musician who wished to know Beethoven studied him as little as we study the masters of the spiritual life, he would never touch the hem of that singing robe. One does not find in the early days of Phillips Brooks the same mighty faith that swayed his later years, when it seemed that Christ lived in him, moving in dignity, pathos, and beauty. That faith came slowly, amid sorrows and trials like our own, with temptations and misgivings. But the great assurance came at length, and he knew what he was talking about when he spoke of God and the soul, and their eternal life together; he knew the deep things and the strange paths and

[1] "The Seeming Unreality of the Spiritual Life," by H. C. King (1908).

the floods of great waters. No; it is not the absence of reality that underlies the doubts of men, but the absence of that venture of faith, that culture of the soul, which makes the reality vivid and persuasive.

What a fund of instruction and inspiration there is for us in the lives of the saints—or in the Letters of Fénelon and Francis de Sales, to name two manuals of the spiritual life—yet how little use we make of it. Too often we regard the saints as eccentric psychics, or else think of them after the manner of Cotter Morison who, in "The Service of Man," admitted that saintliness is the one marvel of this mortal world, but held it to be a distant and inaccessible glory baffling us by a beauty impossible of attainment. The saints are indeed men and women of genius, whose lives, marked by experiences of splendour and terror, fill us with wonder and awe. Not more so, however, than the great poets, who set to music those dim dreams, those vague yearnings, which well up in every human heart, but which so few can ever express. And the very fact that they find response in us, though it be only a sweet sadness of wistful longing, shows that they do but lay hold upon forces common to us all, and walk at high levels the same path which we may follow in the valley. Where the saints have genius, we have each a little buried talent, some greater, some less; and while we may not follow their grand

stride along the Mystic Way, the path to a more vivid insight, and a more joyous realization, is assuredly open to us.

"We are, then, one and all the kindred of the mystics; and it is by dwelling upon this kinship, by interpreting—so far as we may—their great declarations, in the light of our own little experience, that we shall learn to understand them best. Strange and far away though they seem, they are not cut off from us by some impassable abyss. They belong to us. They are our brethren; the giants, the heroes of our race. As the achievement of genius belongs not to itself only, but also to the society that brought it forth; as theology declares that the merits of the saints avail for all; so, because of the solidarity of the human family, the supernal accomplishment of the mystics is ours also. To be a mystic is simply to participate here and now in that real and eternal life; in the fullest, deepest sense which is possible to man. It is to share, as a free and conscious agent—not a servant, but as a son—in the joyous travail of the universe: its mighty onward sweep through pain and glory towards its home in God." [1]

[1] "Mysticism," by Evelyn Underhill, p. 534 (1911). This noble book does what has long needed to be done—it sifts and digests the whole literature of Christian mysticism with sympathy, discrimination, and sanity; and the witness of that shining tradition to the reality of unseen things is as impressive as its

To be sure, the ordinary sensualist cares for none of these things; he eats and drinks, for to-morrow he will die; he has not reached the level of serious concern about ultimate reality. With such it is hard to reason; they must be left to the tragedies of life in which even the most careless and frivolous are involved. But there is a host who really yearn for a higher and truer life, some of whom are always seeking without finding, and all of whom live in shadows and in shallows, far below their privilege and duty. We are all inspired, said Fénelon, but our mode of life stifles it; and the strange thing is that we think our mode of life of more value than the vision. We hear afar the murmur of those voices which would tell us the meaning of life, but rarely do we shape them into mortal speech—and thus we die, with the sweetest song within us left unsung.

disclosure of the methods of the spiritual life is practical and vitally suggestive. The author finds in the mystic experience the key to all the higher life of man, whether it be that of the artist or musician, striving to catch and fix some aspect of light or melody, or of the man of science, purging his intellect that he may look upon the secrets of life with innocent eye. The appendix, giving a historical sketch of European mysticism from the beginning of the Christian era to the death of Blake, is a roll-call of names that shine like stars to light a heavenly pathway.

IV

THE BASIS OF FAITH

AT last we may at least approach the real question before us: Is what the poet, the seer, the prophet see there? And on the very threshold we are met with a flat denial of the possibility in man of spiritual insight, or of any knowledge of reality at all. Such a denial, of course, is not new, and it is less radical and thoroughgoing in our day than it was in earlier times when men dared to go to the length of their logic. Nor is it altogether an evil, but may conceivably be needful as a prod to the advance of thought and the broadening of faith, as the criticism of the sophists opened the door to Socrates, as a barren deism prepared the way for Methodism, which "fell on the dry heart like rain." Had it not been for the negation of Hume, there would have been no opportunity for the fruitful philosophic recovery which we owe to Germany. Never, it would seem, does the new and deeper emotion shed its fertilizing waters to any renewing purpose until the east wind of doubt has swept over the soul.

Hence the recurrent world-phenomenon of

doubt in our day, when, as Clough said, "it seems His newer will we should not think of Him at all," unless we can arrive at some profounder insight. The older thought which it questions and criticizes may seem to go down utterly, but it

> "Decomposes but to recompose,
> Becomes my universe that thinks and knows."

How confidently the old denial is now put forth, with what irony and disdain, may be heard on all sides, though it has lost much of its former audacity. After this fashion it tosses the spiritual world aside as not only unknowable, but indeed quite useless:

"The universe upon this view (whether it understands itself or not) falls apart into two regions; we may call them two hemispheres. We have on one side phenomena; in other words, things as they are to us, and ourselves so far as we are anything to ourselves; while on the other side are things as they are in themselves and as they do not appear; or, if we please, we may call this side the Unknowable. Our attitude towards such a divided universe varies a good deal. We may be thankful to be rid of that which is not relative to our affairs, and which cannot in any way concern us; and we may be glad that the worthless is thrown over the wall. Or we may regret that reality is too

good to be known, and from the midst of our confusion may revere the other side of its inaccessible grandeur. We may even naively felicitate ourselves on total estrangement, and rejoice that at last utter ignorance has removed every scruple which impeded religion. Where we know nothing we can have no possible objection to worship."[1]

While this statement is somewhat extreme, for sake of emphasis, it exhibits all the more vividly the basic contention of agnosticism; which is, that we can know only the shimmering appearances of reality as reported by the senses, behind which "things in themselves" lurk beyond our ken. It may be admitted that these recurrent waves of scepticism are caused by the failure of

[1] "Appearance and Reality," by F. H. Bradley, Second Edition (1903). Those who wish to follow the various aspects of agnosticism, which takes almost as many shapes as Socialism, may find them duly set forth and examined in an essay by the late Prof. Robert Flint, entitled *Agnosticism* (1903). It is not the province of this essay to follow the difficult mazes of epistemological criticism, and indeed there is little need to do so after the work of Dr. James Ward in his lectures on "Naturalism and Agnosticism" (1899). As a philosophy, agnosticism is simply intellectual bankruptcy, and therefore at odds with "right reason"; but as a fact it is more often only a mood of spiritual adversity, useful in preparing the way for a restatement of theology; though sometimes it is only a labour-saving device to escape the toil of thought. In any case, it is a house built upon the sand, unable to endure ordinary weather, much less a Pentecost with its rushing mighty winds.

theology to express the common spiritual experience, and as such are not without value. Whether this be true or not, we have here a definite dogma which closes the doors upon those dark ways of thought in which the fact that we are men and not animals mysteriously compels us to tread; and it closes more doors than one. Despite the repeated warning of Mr. Balfour,[1] which seems not to have been heeded, the agnostic thus renders not only religion, but all science of every kind, illegitimate and illusory. Less consistent and ingenuous than the agnostic of old, he endeavours to pass off his dogmatic negative inferences as, forsooth, *scientific;* whereas, in the parlance of the countryside, he is all the while sawing off the limb on which he is perched. Though he may wish, for this reason, to grant immunity to science, it is of no avail. Having doomed religion to hopeless ignorance, he must, by the same logic, honestly applied, send science to the same limbo; for, if we cannot know reality, the man of science can only busy himself in arranging, systematically, a series of kaleidoscopic appearances, which may be, for aught he knows, elusive and lying dreams. To such lengths does this dogma go, carrying good men with it, and involving all at last in absurdity.

But why, it may fairly be asked, attach to appearances the delusive sense of concealing, rather

[1] "The Foundations of Belief," by Arthur Balfour (1897).

than the honest sense of revealing, reality? How did these men learn, and by what reason do they infer, that reality has a habit of wearing masks with intent to deceive? Does not the very idea of appearance, in order to be intelligible, imply, as Lotze pointed out, not only a being or thing which appears, but also, and quite as indispensably, a second being by whom the appearance is perceived? Do we not in all cognitive experience, whether sensuous or intellectual, come into immediate contact with objective reality, of the existence of which we have in experience an irrefutable witness?[1] Why should appearances not be reality? Nay, what else can they be, unless, after all, nothing really appears, and we are spectators of an empty show? How can reality appear, shine forth, and yet remain unknown and uncapturable by those to whom it appears? How do we know that it is an appearance of reality, and if we can recognize the appearance of reality, why can we not know reality itself? Or, must man stare at the universe in dumb and perpetual bewilderment, as at a book of hieroglyphics the lexicon of which has not been found? Is not the very statement of such a thesis its sufficient and final answer, requiring no argument to refute its failure?

It need hardly be said that this question,

[1] "The Presentation of Reality," by Helen Wodehouse (1910).

raised by Kant, has been answered since his day; but it is worth while to point out the path whereby man finds his way to reality, both seen and unseen. The poet sees, or thinks he sees, a spirit of beauty in nature, and communes with the invisible Artist revealed there; but he is powerless to prove his vision because he does not see the flower or the sunset from the inside. There may be spirit in all things—in the flower spirit dreaming, and in the animal spirit waking—but the poet could not convince a sceptic, though he might pity him as a blind man in an art gallery. While physical science may come upon forms of matter of almost ethereal delicacy, fine almost to spirit-fineness, it can only walk in the outer court of reality. Unless we have a key to the inner temple we cannot open, cannot enter, cannot know what lies behind. One thing, however, man does certainly know as a reality from the inside, and that is himself—that he is a living, conscious, thinking, loving, hoping spirit—and that is his key to the reality of the world in which he lives. We have, thus, in our own being, authentic knowledge of reality, and may be assured that the poet is not "an idle dreamer of an empty day," nor the saint a follower of a wandering marsh-light in a bog.

Without this knowledge of the reality of our own mind, all knowledge, of anything within the mind, or of other minds, or of the external

world, is impossible, and intelligence is a blank and science a dream. In all self-knowledge the mind faces its own reality as both subject and object, as the knower and the known, and is in direct contact with reality. Lotze accounted it the strangest of all feats that the mind should deny its own existence, at the behest of something which it can know only by means of the knowledge of itself; but from such denial it is estopped, if in no other way, by the laws of its own being. To deny the existence of mind we must first possess a mind, and in order to destroy the validity of thought we must assume that the laws of thought are valid: must use reason to disprove the truth of reason. In the same manner, those who reduce the mind to a series of flitting images fall into a deeper absurdity—a stream of thought without a thinker, which is even more amazing than a thinker without thought. No; it is a fact that we have a mind and can think, and though the world be only a phantasmagoria, none the less we exist. From that fact there is no escape, and its meaning, if we attend to it, not only gives us a glimpse, but opens the way to the deepest reality.

Long ago St. Augustine urged this contention, both in his "City of God" and in his essay on the *Trinity*,[1] as did Descartes in his famous epi-

[1] "Yet whoever doubts that he himself lives, and remembers, and understands, and wills, and thinks, and knows, and

gram, *Cogito, ergo sum;* but its implications, in view of the natural history of man, have not been emphasized, and they are as authentic as they are profound. If man be the child of nature, as science insists, then the spiritual evidence of his being is all the more impressive, since there must be in nature not only life, but consciousness, intelligence, thought, love, hope—a delicate, dreaming, beauty-loving spirit—else she could not have bequeathed such qualities to her child. Admit that man evolved from abysmal depths, "mounting through the spires of form,"—through mud, mist, and fungi, through long reptilian æons, through the wild war and play of the animal world, "red in tooth and claw"; follow the ascent of life, from its lowest depths up the long path to the summit of heroic achievement and saintly devotion—and the cumulative disclosure is simply overwhelming. No wonder Lord Tennyson, standing beside the cradle of a child, and seeing as in a vision whence that little life had come, and what it means, burst into triumphant song. If one would see the history of the soul in a flash of white light, let him read "*De Profundis*," and he will either join in the great hal-

judges? Seeing that even if he doubts, he lives: if he doubts, he remembers why he doubts: if he doubts, he understands that he doubts: if he doubts, he wishes to be certain: if he doubts, he thinks" ("Trinity," Book X). "'What if you are deceived?' For if I am deceived, I am." ("City of God," Vol. I, p. 468.)

leluiah chorus at the close, wherein faith has wedded fact, or sit in dumb wonder at the mystery of his own being.

In the same way, he who studies the moral life of man will emerge from his inquiry with a new sense of "these awful souls that dwell in clay." Men are distinguished from brutes, as Coleridge said, chiefly by a power which discerns good and evil, and even the most frivolous man must be smitten mute by a voice speaking within his own soul urging him to follow a moral ideal. Like music, it seems to deal directly with the reality of which it speaks,[1] at once a prophet and a priest, and still more a hint of the origin of the soul. The facts described by the word Conscience, which, as its etymology signifies, means "knowing together with," are very wonderful, and they have a far-reaching meaning. Man is aware not only of an outer world and of a world within, but also of another world which

[1] "The cognitions we gain through the ordinary exercise of the Senses are perfectly analogous, in their mode of origin, to those which come to us through the moral faculty. In the act of Perception we are immediately introduced to another than ourselves that gives us what we feel; in the act of Conscience, we are immediately introduced to a *Higher than ourselves that gives us what we feel:* the externality in the one case, the authority in the other, the causality in both, are known upon exactly the same terms, and carry the same guarantee of their validity." ("Study of Religion," by James Martineau, Vol. I, p. 27, 1888.)

appears to have no tangible existence—an Ideal World. He cannot reduce that higher, invisible world to definition, but it is so real in its power over him that, in comparison with it, he is always condemning the world in which he lives. That is to say, he is able to conceive of a world better than this world; and while the action of that ideal world is not felt in the same degree by all men, traces of its influence are at work in all. When a man complains against the injustice and pain of this world, he must have in mind some other world with which he compares it, else he would not complain at all. When he is conscious of sin he feels himself falling short of some ideal of being to which, however, he has never yet attained. These facts, known to all men, make our human life a wonderful mystery, showing, as they do, that we are linked to a transcendent realm which surpasses the things we see and realize.

Whence came this Moral Ideal which sits in judgment upon us, and will not let us rest? If it be said that man created it, we have still the inquiry not only as to what he made it out of, but whence came the suggestion of it? Those who try to explain the moral sense as being simply a deposit of habit, a legacy of ancestral fear, or the persistence of old dreams of ghosts, defeat themselves. Instead of explaining it, they are only tracing its history from dim beginnings, leaving its origin and meaning a

mystery; and the further back we push it the more impressive becomes its witness to the moral order which it proclaims. As Maeterlink said in his "Life of the Bee": "If the bee is indeed to be credited with none of the feelings or ideas which we have ascribed to it, shall we not very willingly shift the ground of our wonder? If we must not admire the bee, we will then admire nature; the moment must always come when admiration can be no longer denied us, nor shall there be loss to us through our having retreated, or waited." Just so it is with those who seek to discredit the evidence of the moral sense by reciting its natural history, and its apparent variability in different stages of moral culture. So far from weakening its force, they make plain the fact that the moral law is woven into the fibre of the universe, and the time comes, as with the bee, when we can withhold our admiration no longer.

Other things may be open to debate, but the moral sense of man is so unmistakable, so peremptory, that there have been few to deny it. Man did not create his moral world; he cannot destroy it. Nor can he by any ruse escape it. It is the law of the world written in his heart, and that is why the great masters of tragedy, from Sophocles to Shakespeare, have shown how the very stars fight against the evil doer. Besides a general sense of something better, man is aware of a particular and persistent obligation

that he ought to be something better than he is. Debate the matter how he will, when the argument is over and he is quiet, back comes that haunting feeling; and he has learned that to resist that prompting is to break up in a most painful way the inner unity of his life. So exquisitely delicate in its poise is the moral nature of man. Trifled with, it is capable of indefinite stultification. Properly guarded and obeyed, it gives authentic tidings of a life that is beyond the stars. For, when a man puts all excuses aside and asks his own soul what kind of goodness is required of him, the answer that comes back is an amazing one. He learns that there is no limit to the goodness demanded—that, in fact, the moral sense is the pressure upon him of the Infinite, and that it widens out to an angle which, if followed, points always to something better, always to something higher up. At first glance this seems discouraging, but when he reflects that after this plan his life is ordered, it is permitted him to interpret it as the will of the Eternal:

> "By all that He requires of me
> I know what He Himself must be."

With this witness of Duty, "strong daughter of the voice of God," must be joined the revelation of human love, the more properly so when we recall the great Shakespeare line:

> "*Conscience is born of love.*"

Human love may seem to begin in passion, as a flood in the brain and a fire in the blood; but it does not end there. Instead, it rises from the dust, spreads its wings, and becomes an inspired sylph prophesying of "a Love divine all love excelling." More than an idealization of the woman by the man, of the child by the parent, of friend by friend, it is an insight into the awful beauty, worth, and meaning of the soul. There is the discovery in the beloved life of an ideal embodied, yet unembodied, and a disclosure to the lover of an ideal within himself, giving to his being exaltation, refinement, and dignity. Then follows the discovery of the ideal in humanity, who are in one degree or another lovers like himself; and the logic of it is that the universe is the home of the Ideal—that somewhere, everywhere, a soul of Love lives in it. When we ask the genesis of all the love that softens, sanctifies and glorifies the life of man, that spirit which, one with the human spirit where it dwells, bears authentic witness of an Eternal Love whence all human love comes, and whither, at last, it returns.

Consider what this means—the transfiguration of life into a scene grand beyond all power of poet-thinking to conceive; delicate beyond all human tenderness; lovely beyond all human dream. It suggests that we are in the hands of One who is ever uttering Himself in the profu-

sions of nature; who welcomes the simplest thought of truth or beauty as the return for the seed He has sown upon "the old fallows of eternity"; who rejoices at every faltering response to the age-old cry of wisdom in the streets—the Lord of hosts, the God of mountains and seas, and the Friend of little children. Surely this is holy ground on which we tread, an enchanted world in which no one should live an unlovely life, and none need fear to die. When Love hath told its story, we have assurance, doubly sure, that those who walked with us and have vanished from our side have gone into the keeping of a Love greater than we can know—a Love that hath within it the secret of unknown redemptions. This it was that moved Emerson to write that entry in the *Journal* of his sorrow:

"When I think of you, sweet friend, wife, angel Ellen, on whom the spirit of knowledge and the spirit of hope were poured in equal fullness, when I think of you, I am sure we have not said everlasting farewells."

Thus, the principles of thought, the promptings of conscience, and the prophecies of love unite to confirm the ancient, high, heroic faith of humanity. That faith, never wholly overborne, facing the mystery and the dark, undaunted by disaster, undismayed by death, unaffrighted, unbreakable, dreaming dreams and pursuing visions, sets its star as high as thought

can fly. Life tries it, death tests it, sin beshadows it, and yet it is victorious. When doubt deepens faith becomes more profound, and out of the blackest tragedies of life it rises with a song of triumph. So it has been from the time the oldest book in the world was written, and so it will be until whatever is to be the end of things.

V

THE PATH TO REALITY

SO, without taking anything for granted beyond the fact that we exist, we have abundant assurance of the reality of a moral and spiritual order, and of our citizenship in it. We are a part of reality, and that reality, as we find it in our own being, is spiritual activity and intelligence, in which we may participate to the utmost of our capacity. Though we know only in part, and that a tiny part, yet our knowledge is real as far as it goes, and not a mere guess at an inscrutable riddle.

No man, not Sophocles himself, ever saw the whole of life, though Matthew Arnold affirmed that the great Greek "saw life steadily and saw it whole." Of even Shakespeare, near as he seemed to come to it, that was not true. Nor was it true of the greatest of the saints, who confessed their limits with all humility, as, for example, in the exordium to the "Confessions" of St. Augustine, which is indeed, as Mallock called it, "a Magnificat of contradictions": but his words are alive and aglow with a sense of the divine reality. Agnostics we must all be, by the very conditions of our thought, if by that is meant

that we do not know the whole of reality; but absolute nescience is an absurdity. As Coleridge sang:

> "'Tis the sublime in man,
> Our noontide majesty, to know ourselves
> Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole!
> This fraternizes man, this constitutes
> Our charities and bearings."

No doubt this has seemed a long and difficult way of arriving at the question before us, but it is the way we must travel in this troubled age. So profound has been the unsettlement of faith in the last fifty years, that one must make sure of each step he takes, intellectually, or the men of our time will not follow. Unless it is shown that man is capable of spiritual knowledge, he cannot receive any revelation, nor will he listen to any. Since, then, we have this witness that the world of spiritual reality is there, because it is also here within ourselves, we are prepared to listen to the poets, prophets, and saints, who point to higher realities and lead the way. Our thesis has to do with the art of spiritual culture, which Morley has described on a stately page as something more than mere belief, more than a correct theology—an inner grace and habit of soul, an achievement of experience, by which, though still toiling amid earthly appetites, the spirit, purifying itself of these, learns to dwell in

living and confident communion with the seen and unseen good. Of that fine art the saints are the masters, beckoning us to follow on to where "the melodies abide of the everlasting chime," whose sweet tones are drowned for us in the din and hum and confusion of our hurrying life.

After a long, patient, discriminating, loving study of the lives of the saints and prophets, and especially of the great mystics—after making due allowance for human frailty, eccentricity of temperament, historical environment, and personal equation—three things must impress themselves upon the student. And the first is the fine and lofty sanity, the delicate and divining sagacity, of these friends and helpers of those who would live in the spirit. Of a truth Carlyle may say that, if any one is beside himself, it is we, not they: we who are tossed on reef-strewn, mirage-haunted seas, trying to accomplish a "circumnavigation of hope," whereas they have entered the haven of Truth. When we would know what the human soul may become, while yet on this bank and shoal of Time, we have only to look into their lives, where the baser passions of our nature are subdued to the service of the spirit, resulting in a vision of God which nothing can dim, an indifference to earthly lot which makes them master of it, and a still depth of power which gives to their simple words a

strange and compelling charm. They have, besides, an inner grace of soul, a secret of strength and quietness which the learned and worldly wise know not, and withal a joy as of those who see life from the inside and speak from the centre. Thus :

"Ruysbroeck was a humble Flemish priest of the fifteenth century. None the less, in the order of genius the uncultured Ruysbroeck, as a theologian, and consequently as a philosopher and a poet, is as far above Bossuet as Dante, for instance, is above Boileau. Face to face with the mysteries that shroud God and man, Bossuet seeks, argues, and, so to speak, gropes; Ruysbroeck knows, describes, or rather sings, and contemplates. This illiterate mystic of an obscure age finds himself at home in the sublime as in his own sphere; he speaks of what is familiar to him; the wise doctor of the world remains without. Bossuet does not enter, he does not open, he does not see. Bossuet spins words, Ruysbroeck pours out streams of light. It seems as if Bossuet were that mighty wind which was heard in the Upper Chamber; the brief words of Ruysbroeck are the tongues of fire, living and enlightening flame."[1]

One who reads for the first time the visions, locutions, and revelations of Santa Teresa, without knowing her and the story of her life, might

[1] "A Mediæval Mystic," by D. V. Scully (1910).

well be staggered. But when one comes to know what manner of person she really was—a woman of purest Castilian blood, of brilliant intellect, of rare literary genius, of humour as delicious as that of Cervantes; a cool-headed business woman; a psychologist of amazing lucidity; an organizer and leader—one begins to see that she was not, as so many think a saint must somehow be, an inflamed enthusiast who retreated from the world to follow a visionary life. No; she was a truly noble, sweet and sane soul, prodigal in her gifts, prodigious in her activities—a woman wearing upon her forehead the final consecration of great genius, in worldly not less than in spiritual affairs, dowered with that exaltation of personality which catches up the pedestrian qualities into a white light and conquers by heavenly beauty and practical capacity—out of whose profound life of prayer came answering visions and voices. One who studies her life, character, and spiritual accomplishments is almost sure, if not hopelessly biased, to imitate her severest critics in her own day, who began by doubting and ended by believing and following her.

And the next thing that strikes the student, as he recalls those shining lives, is their scrupulous, sleepless vigilance against anything resembling illusion or unreality. All of us know, for example, how Augustine suspected the witchery of music, for fear its sensuous appeal might in some

fashion becloud the clear vision of the soul, and lead him to mistake feelings for the divine facts of the Gospel. In a memorable passage[1] he tells of "that one moment of knowledge" which he sighed after so earnestly, when the tumult of the flesh is silenced—hushed the phantasies of earth, and the fancies of the imagination; every tongue, every sign, and whatsoever exists by passing away; only the inner ear open to Him who created it, that He alone may speak, not by it, but by Himself; that he might hear the impalpable murmur of His voice, not by fleshly tongue, nor angelic voice, nor sound of thunder, nor the obscurity of a similitude; but "might hear *Him*—Him whom in these we love—without these, like as we two,"—mother and son at the Ostia window. How startling are his words when, after submitting his experience to the most terrible of critical tests, he cried, "O Lord, if I am deceived, it is Thou who hast deceived me!" So, too, in the "Life of Santa Teresa," written by herself—a book "perfumed by the winds and flowers of heavenly places,"—we see, again and again, how careful, how relentless, she was in her self-criticism, lest her imagination betray her. Catherine of Siena—gay and loving as well as austere; pitiless to herself, while full of reproach for demanding too much, spiritually, of others; a mystic with a genius of common sense—has left us a

[1] "Confessions," Book IX, Chap. X.

code[1] by which she tested the authenticity of her visions, and Newman himself could not have been more merciless in analyzing his soul than was she. This is the constant and characteristic attitude of all the great mystics, who were not visionaries but men and women of vision, who had no wish to found their faith in unreality.

Nor should we forget—how can we forget?—that they were, all of them, practitioners of "the presence of God," men and women who pursued spiritual culture with a passionate and persistent intensity; and they were granted a rich reward. Love of God, though the most commanded virtue, is, apparently, the rarest among men, who usually mistake for it a kind of solemn awe in the presence of Infinity. At least it often seems to be so in our debonaire and complacent age, despite its exaltation of sociology into a sort of religion. But when we turn the pages of the mystics we meet a different air, like the vernal wind which Dante felt touching his temples when he entered the middle Paradise, bringing perfume and bird-song from the forest of Chiassi. Through their writings is wafted a lyric joy of happy fellowship with God, an exalted delight in communion with Him, subdued, always, to a

[1] "Catherine of Siena," by E. G. Gardner (1909). Also "St. Catherine of Siena and Her Times," by the author of "Mademoiselle Mori" (1910), than which it would be difficult to find a historical biography better done.

cleansing and healing humility in His presence. Their voices are of many keys and tones, and their visions are of different degrees of vividness and value, but with one accord they report the same ineffable reality. As Jacob Behmen said of himself, they claimed no special gift or grace which may not be enjoyed by all who will devote themselves to it, and follow on to know the Truth in its beauty. If it be said that there are sane and reasoned philosophies whose content differs in no wise from what the mystics behold, the reply is that what the philosopher discerns afar off, in a series of apparently contradictory definitions, the mystic knows as an intimate reality, by realizing and transmuting it into a radiant life. Even when judged pragmatically, as is the fashion of the hour, their vision is attested as authentic by its fruits in moral purity, intellectual beauty, and spiritual character, as well as in the arts of benign service to man which so busily engage their hands.

If the old saints seem far off, hidden in dim mist, and associated with ecclesiastical orders alien to our own, then let us study the prophetic experience of Lord Tennyson—how, at the end of long vigils of thought, there came lucid, luminous, triumphant visions of God and the fashion of things to be. It must always be a matter of wonder, if nothing more, that, in a poem written in 1840, that poet-seer foresaw the approaching

clouds of doubt, forefelt the agony and travail of faith, and fought out in advance the battles of the next sixty years. Moreover, the persistence of his poetic gift in all its glory—a marvel scarcely rivalled since Sophocles—made possible the emergence in him of forces which must always have lain deep in his nature, but which the luxuriance of his early fancy obscured; and in his later years he became a forthspeaker of "those greatest, those undiscoverable things which can never be wholly known but must still less be wholly ignored or forgotten." [1] The secret of it lay in his gift of sincere, still, almost trance-like vision, which he himself has described in a passage in the "Ancient Sage," so far as it can be told in words, and in which many of his greatest lines seemed to flash into his mind perfect. Here was a man of the world—though assuredly not a worldly man—to whom the unseen order was more real than the solid earth, and who was more a citizen of the kingdom of heaven than a subject of his own queen.

As to the nature of those heavenly visions and voices, to which the saints were so sweetly obedient, it is enough to say, with Archbishop Alexander, that all things awful, wondrous and beautiful, that are according to the analogy of faith, we may receive with grateful hearts. Questions

[1] See the remarkable study of "Tennyson as Prophet," by F. W. H. Myers, in his volume entitled, "Science and a Future Life" (1893).

as to the objective and subjective have, in this sphere, no meaning whatsoever. What becomes of this distinction in presence of the fact that in God we live and move and have our being—He in us, we in Him—we ourselves a part of the very reality which, in these lofty spirits, becomes incandescent with light and beauty? If the visions of saints were shaped and coloured by the forms of faith and thought current in their age, so is all religious experience of whatever kind. When wise and sane men, and women of bright-eyed sagacity, inebriated with the strong wine of no fanatical contagion, but calmly reading or quietly meditating, tell us that they see angelic forms and hear voices of comfort and command, we must ascribe their experiences to the unsealed eye of the pure heart. If there be any virtue in prayer, any vision in purity of heart, any power in the promises of the Bible or of our own nature, then their visions are among the sweetest verities of life.

Yes; what the poet, the seer and the prophet see is there; for they were there and knew for themselves and not for another. Either all the apostles, martyrs, saints, and mystics were mad, "with an incredible coincidence and collaboration of delusion," or—the thing is simply true. With some of us the pressing question is not as to the objective reality of the visions of St. Paul or of Santa Teresa, but why there is in our own lives so little of like vividness and victory!

The Unity of Faith

Is the difference of phraseology in the expression of teaching the principal difference between the Christian ages?

I

THINGS WHICH DIFFER

SO intricate a question, if rightly pursued, would require not only a survey of the whole history of dogma and the church, but a depth and delicacy of insight to which few can lay claim. No such high task is here attempted, but the more modest one of following, so far as it can be traced, a unity of religious experience underlying the multi-coloured dialects of faith. Since religion is a life, that fact promises variety of form, colour, and expression —its varied shapes emphasizing a fundamental unity, while adding infinitely to its picturesqueness and beauty.

Any study of this kind touches, of necessity, upon many things about which men hold varying and perhaps conflicting opinions; but as it is an inquiry into the nature of our differences, not into their validity, it may be discussed quite frankly. Some may take issue, at the outset, with the answer given to the question, as tending to blur what should be kept clearly distinct; and others will chide because it does not go far enough. In any case, should the reader disagree

it is open to him to adopt the attitude of the Turkish cadi towards an inquisitive English traveller: "Oh, my Lamb! seek not after the things that concern thee not, and be not over-exercised about them. Thou camest to us, and we welcomed thee: go now in peace. Of a truth thou hast spoken many words, but there is no harm done, for the speaker is one, and the listener is another."

The question, as stated, has to do with the language of religion. It asks us if it is not true that the Christian ages of the past—and, by the same token, the Christian churches of the present—have not all along been trying, each in its own tongue, to say the same things? To this question we may give, without hesitation, an affirmative answer, despite much that seems to cry out against it. If on the surface we, like our fathers before us, are divided, often to all appearances hopelessly divided, in the depths we are one. Debate and argument, views and opinions drive and keep us apart, but when we bow in prayer, or climb the stairway of song, we find not only ourselves, but the great household of faith in all ages—men breathing the same aspirations and needs, the same passion for God, the same loyalty to truth, the same joy in one Eternal Hope. It is true of religion, even in its intellectual aspect and expression, that those who go deep enough discover harmonies underlying seeming discord;

but it is more vividly true of our fellowship in the life of the spirit.

Those who have met that bright, unencumbered little book, "Recent British Philosophy," by the late David Masson, will recall a striking passage containing an illustration as homely as it is pertinent to the matter in hand. "It will be a dreary day for the world," he remarks, "when disagreements cease, when there are not even fundamental differences. There is an old Wiltshire song which had this remarkable stanza:

"'If all the world were of one religion
Many a living thing should die;
But I will never forget my true love,
Nor in any way His name deny!'

Now if there is any man among us who has pre-eminently helped to keep Britain from that danger of intellectual death to many which would arise from her being of one religion in philosophy, it is John Stuart Mill."

Against an unnatural or enforced uniformity of opinion, or an equally unnatural indifference, such a warning is certainly valid. Even the scepticism of Mill, so Masson thought, had a place and value in religion, as the party of the opposition has its value in politics—useful as a critic but disastrous when it comes into power. In a slightly different shape the same principle

applies to our various creeds and sects, which some good men are so eager to unite. There have already been some amalgamations, and there will be more, but we are not likely to see all our churches fused into one body. Nor do we desire it. There was unity of that kind for twelve long centuries, and there has never been anything worse. Whenever attempts have been made to make the world of one theology, there have been serious losses, and the common faith has suffered. In every case freedom, tolerance, charity, the confidence that truth will triumph, and many other precious things, have died; and that is too heavy a price to pay for what is after all a misfortune and a folly. Our different modes of thought and worship, in so far as they meet the varied interests, temperaments and needs of men, are among the "living things" which should never die. They have indeed an essence of unity, but it shows itself not less in their variety than in their service to the soul of man.

Arnold of Rugby proposed to unite the sects by law, forgetting, apparently, that our historic religious fellowships rest not simply upon creeds, and are not held together by logic. They are, instead, great communions, united by powerful sentiments of affection and loyalty, and by vital religious ideals embodied in their leaders and imbedded in their institutional life. They are set deep not only in the habits and customs of

centuries, but in the spiritual experience of generations of devout men. If their roots did not go deeper than logic they might be more amenable to opposition, criticism and appeal, but they would also be less significant. Calvinism, which at first glance seems to be a very simple and definite thing, is in fact highly complex. It stands indeed for a certain doctrine of God centrally, but with that doctrine is interwoven a whole system of thought, and, what is more, a certain related attitude of mind towards religion and life. It has, besides, a long history, and through the years there has been formed a psychological and atmospheric deposit, so to speak, which is much harder to alter than any mere creed. So that, while there was point to the thrust of the saucy wit when he said that the trouble with our differing sects is that no one of them is large enough to contain more than one idea, it did not pierce to the deeper reality below.

Of a truth it would be a dreary day should all differences be melted into what Emerson called "a mush of concession," and all churches merged. There are yet fundamental differences which cannot be thus erased. Theology is not a science of shadows, nor did Athanasius stand out against the world in behalf of a phantom. Though he seemed to be contending for a tiny Greek letter, he was in reality fighting for a profound and precious truth, which it were a sin to surrender.

One of the great attributes of man, it has been said, is his willingness to abandon his warm fireside and throw himself on a filmy, intangible principle, even though that principle may seem to others thin, unimportant, and largely unintelligible. As between Athanasius and that liberalism which holds nothing worth fighting for, on the ground, as Renan said, that inasmuch as no one can know anything, there is room in the infinite for each to fashion his own romance, there is but one choice. Perhaps this was what Newman meant when he said that it would be better for England were it vastly "more bigoted, more fierce in its religion than at present it shows itself to be." The day will doubtless come, and it may be close at hand, when a truly catholic creed will be wrought out and a real unity of faith achieved. But if convictions are laid aside, if the hard-won trophies of the past are sacrificed for the sake of union, we shall have not the unity of the Church, but the unity of the churchyard. There is much to regret in our theological disputes, but how many a living thing would die were those debates hushed until, by legitimate discussion, we arrive at some worthy agreement that shall be lasting.

Our different churches represent, most picturesquely, the great debates of Christian history. Arius and Athanasius are with us still, as are Calvin and Arminius, Channing and Ballou, in

monuments of brick and stone—if not in "frozen music," as Goethe described architecture, then in petrified discord. Yet each sect has its own phase and expression of truth, without which it could not be a living thing; for, as Carlyle has reminded us, religions live not by their falsehood, but by their truth. No one can doubt that the Quaker, the Calvinist, the Arminian, the Catholic, indeed every form of faith, has helped to widen the skirts of light, despite their feuds. If then it be true that the chief differences between the Christian ages are differences of phraseology, it holds true, equally, of our various sects, which, as a fact, embody and perpetuate the controversies of vanished times. So far as our divisions are due to local accent and provincial outlook, they may be removed; but the historic Christian communions will abide. Our study has thus not only an intellectual interest in old systems and debates, whereof the din is now almost hushed, but also an immediate and practical appeal in behalf of a more sympathetic interpretation of differing tongues.

What we really need is not a surrender of our separate loyalties, still less an abandonment of principle, but a unity of spirit in the bonds of peace. Such a comity of sects is now approaching; and it will come when the churches cease to exaggerate their peculiarities, after the manner of certain characters in the Dickens stories—

"Mr. Carker" and his teeth, "Captain Cuttle" and his hook, and "Pleasant Riderhood" and his black hair—and set themselves to their common task, each with a sanctified ambition to live better and do more good than its neighbour. This is more than mere tolerance, more than a dilettante curiosity to know the faith of our fellows. It is a recognition of a deeper unity of things which differ, which should enable all who stand dedicated to religion to know religion when it happens to appear in a guise different from their own, and to work as friendly but earnest rivals for a supreme end.

II

THE DEEPER UNITIES

IF this seems to be a digression at the beginning, it is but to emphasize the essential unity of the life of the spirit realizing itself in diversity of form. Just because religion is a living thing—"the life of God in the soul of man," as Henry Scougall[1] described it—renewing itself in each personality, and in each epoch, there can be no such thing as uniformity of thought or experience. But there is, and always has been, an underlying unity of faith and hope.

So it is that each age, like each individual, gives an account of what it has apprehended in its own dialect; hence the variegated history of theology. Wesley saw this, and in the latter part of his life reposed more and more in a feeling of catholic charity, to which his nature always inclined him, adopting as his own the words of William Law: "Perhaps what the best heathens called Reason, and Solomon Wisdom, St. Paul Grace in general, St. John Righteousness or Love, Luther Faith, Fénelon Virtue, may be only different expressions for one and the

[1] "The Life of God in the Soul of Man," by Henry Scougall (1868).

same blessing, the light of Christ shining in different degrees under different dispensations. Why then so many words, and so little charity exercised among Christians, about the particular term of a blessing experienced more or less by all righteous men!"[1]

Here is an answer to our question, all the more satisfying because it sees that there are many gates to the City of God, though we can never forget the gate by which we entered. It implies, what St. Augustine affirmed in words too often used polemically, that what is now called the Christian religion has existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race; and what Channing meant when he said that Zoroaster, Buddha, Plato, and Epictetus had led him up the white marble steps to the Cross in the Christian chancel, giving him their whispered benediction. Not only in the reverent and devout minds of the pagan world, but in others not nominally Christian, it should be easy to discern the Christ-spirit, which we are all endeavouring, each in his own way, to realize in our lives: something which attracts, as nothing else does, with the promise of peace and security of heart amid the dark confusions of time. Surely it should not be hard to recognize that under the categories of an alien philosophy Spinoza was striving to fathom

[1] "Life of Wesley," by Robert Southey, Vol. I, p. 160 (1858).

the facts of a profound religious experience, which meant life to him in time of trial. He was, as Novalis said, a God-intoxicated man, and though his system, even when expounded by so able a thinker as Picton,[1] reads like a foreign tongue, it is akin to the hallowing truth that God is near and not far; within as well as without; in the very heart of His creation; the substance of things hoped for, and the underlying reality of things seen and unseen. Nor can any one deny that the Emerson essay on *The Over-Soul* is but another version of the truth of the over-brooding, indwelling Spirit, which has been the life of the Christian Church and the altar-fire of its pulpit in all ages.

Within the sphere of Christian experience there is the same unity of essence in variety of form, though we may easily go too far, as Schleiermacher and Ritschl seemed to go, in isolating Christian experience from other forms of the religious life. For example: nothing is more certain than that it has been a sense of personal fellowship with Christ which has kept Christianity alive upon the earth, amid errors the most prosaic, the most irrational, and the most immoral. Such a fellowship was the secret splendour of the life of St. Paul, without whose magnificent and ceaseless evangel Christianity might have been slow in making its advent in Europe.

[1] "The Religion of the Universe," by J. A. Picton (1904).

So it has been all down the ages, through a succession of luminous souls, from the midday vision on the Damascus road to Horace Bushnell, who said that he knew Jesus better, far better, than he knew any man in his city. But they err who mistake this experience, unique and wonderful as it is, for the only authentic form of the Christian life. Some of the most deeply, genuinely, tenderly religious souls have not enjoyed such an experience of companionship with the Living Christ, though His spirit was revealed in their lives as the tints are in a rose. Emerson did not,[1] nor Channing, nor Martineau whose prayers, with their blend of love and awe, are heavenly visions where the light of sense goes out and a Presence ineffable blurs the outlines of meditation. Surely all must see that the devout life is the same, however the outlook of the intellect may differ; that Emerson and Newman were akin in soul, and that Wesley and Channing were moved

[1] See, particularly, the "Divinity School Address." Here is, perhaps, the real point of divergence between Evangelicals and Unitarians, their theological differences being only so many shadows of it. Compare the words of Henry Ward Beecher: "Could Theodore Parker worship my God?—Christ Jesus is His name. All that there is of God to me is bound up in that name. A dim and shadowy effluence rises from Christ, and that I am taught to call the Father. A yet more tenuous and invisible film of thought arises, and that is the Holy Spirit. But neither are to me aught tangible, restful, accessible." ("New Star Papers," pp. 197–198, 1859).

by a common and high religious motive. Not only is it the same in essence, but all the richer for its variety of outlook and expression; for, as has been well said, if Emerson were forced to be a Wesley, or a Moody forced to be a Whitman, the total vision of the divine would suffer.

If Christ be a cosmic and world-redeeming reality, His appeal must be wide enough to include the totality of human life in all its diversity of temperament, aptitude, and aspiration, and not simply one type of mind. As a fact, the life of Christ in the souls of men reveals itself in many forms, through the prism of differing minds —in Wesley a burning white light; in Browning, a series of dazzling visions; in Bushnell, logic tipped with mystical fire; in Brooks, a passionate humanism—but the reality behind all of them is the same "yesterday, to-day, and forever." Happily, the error, so frequent in the past, of making one type of emotional experience the test of Christian life, is not so common now —thanks to the study of the psychology of religion. By such a test St. Augustine was a Christian indeed, as no one can doubt who reads the eight books of his "Confession," but Phillips Brooks was not; whereas the hope of the world lies in its being filled up with men like Phillips Brooks. Solemn, awful and joyous as the fact of conversion is, it takes many forms, nor is it, in any one form at least, the only way to the blessed

life. As Henry Drummond once said, it is the penalty a man pays for the failure to grow spiritually as he ought; and while most men have failed in just that manner, we have to remember that the ways of the Spirit are many. In a matter so indefinite we have no power of analysis, and it were blasphemy to follow with a note-book the delicate motions of the Spirit, who, imaged as a dove, flies unseen in a path of its own. To one man the sense of the presence of Christ comes suddenly, to another slowly, to another dimly, it may be; but all are partakers of a like precious reality—Martineau not less than Maurice—their differing temperaments and casts of intellect forming "a dome of many-coloured glass, which stains the bright radiance of eternity."

Spiritual experience is thus the highest unifying influence, as it is the most liberalizing and satisfying. It gives one the power to understand and interpret many religious dialects, and to discern in the past, not less than in the present, beneath diversities of temperament and training, creed and cult, the foundations of the Church of God—meaning by the Church no sect, hierarchy, or polity, but the communion of saints, the historic fellowship of the seekers and finders of God: "the congregation," to quote old Bishop Pearson, "of those faithful souls here on earth, who shall hereafter meet in heaven." Such a man is

more catholic than the Catholic church itself, open of mind, hospitable of heart, and spiritually fraternal with all who love God and seek to do His will. All churches belong to him, so far as they have any portion of divine grace in their keeping, or any evidence of divine grace in their work; and all books in aid of faith, whether by Augustine or Emerson, Butler or Behmen, Molinos or Maurice. He is at home in every place where men foregather to pray, knowing that the visible Church of Christ is everywhere; in the plain chapel of Martineau or in St. Paul's cathedral; in the tabernacle of Spurgeon and in the Greek church at Moscow; in St. Peter's at Rome, but also in the Quaker meeting house where Whittier and Woolman sat in silence, awaiting the promptings of the Spirit. He does not find it hard to keep an open mind and a kind heart towards all his fellow workers, assured, with Ruskin, that "there is a true Church wherever one hand meets another helpfully—the only holy or Mother[1] church which ever was or ever shall be."

[1] Not even Cardinal Newman, with all his literary magic, has convinced some of us—his admiring students—that the Catholic church is the only church of Christ. There is, as Dr. Denney somewhere remarks, a type of genius which seems made for this task—a daring, paradoxical genius, with something dazzling both in its thought and style to carry through the necessary *tours de force*. It is seen in various forms in Pascal and De Maistre, and in Newman; but how empty their contention is, when that peculiar quality of genius is absent, may be

Socrates made the discovery—perhaps the greatest ever made—that human nature is universal. By his searching questions he found that when men think round a problem they disclose a common nature and a common system of truth. So there dawned upon him, from this fact, the truth of the kinship of mankind and the unity of mind. His insight is confirmed when we set the teachings of the sages side by side, and find, after comparison, that the final conclusions of the wisest minds regarding the meaning and duty of life are harmonious, if not identical. Though shallow minds may wrangle, the deepest minds always concur at the end in the same great truths. The great historic religions have been variations on one motif, differing less in essentials than in point of emphasis, depth of insight, and method of appeal. They used different instruments, with varying tones and keys, but they played the same high music, expressing, each in its own tongue,

seen in "Divine Transcendence and its Reflection in Religious Authority," by J. R. Illingworth (1911). With their doctrine of a visible, God-guided church, we are in fullest accord; but where they are misled, as it seems to us, is not in identifying that church with the Catholic church, but in so far as they identify it with that church to the exclusion of all others. For the same reason the Presbyterian Assembly blundered when it declared the Catholic church to be Anti-Christ, and a synagogue of Satan. Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, made vigorous and able protest against such action, and his arguments are as valid to-day as they were half a century ago. ("Life of Charles Hodge," by A. A. Hodge.)

the one great human experience of fellowship with the Father of our spirits. Religions are many, but Religion is one—to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God.

Towards this great and simple religion—greater than all sects, yet the basis of each—the world is now moving. Forms of faith build and unbuild themselves like summer clouds, but the substance of faith abides. Theologies are but sky-tents where the soul of man rests for a day or an age in its journey from faith to faith. That religion which is the fellowship of man with God is to the passing forms of faith as the sunlight to the clouds, as the sea to the ships that float upon its bosom. Beyond the clouds is the sky. Below the ships is the sea. The clouds will turn to rain and then to mist again, and the ships will pass on out of sight. But the sky remains, and the sea ebbs and flows, symbols of those deeps which call to deeps in our fellowship with Him who inhabiteth Eternity. In the primal sanctuary of the soul, where man is alone with God, faith abides in unity and power.

III

THE HIGHER HARMONY

I

AS in the depths, so in the heights of vision and service, men who are sundered far meet in one fellowship of joy. In times of uplift and insight, when the tides of the divine life run high, the dividing barriers, which move with us like the horizon, disappear, and the unity hidden in diversity stands fully revealed. It was so in the morning of Christianity, when the Church was a centre of radiant and radiating life —rich, warm, dynamic, abundant—before its glowing ideals had crystallized into dogmas; when men of many tribes and nations heard the Gospel, each in the tongue wherein he was born.

This higher harmony is not open to debate, though as regards the early church it has been denied. The effort of the Tubingen scholars to show that our New Testament was the result of rival schools in the apostolic church failed. While it is true that the early church was far from being a scene of uniformity, such differences as appeared were not speculative at all, but largely matters of temperament, method, and personal equation of insight and outlook. With

the voice of the Master still echoing, and the air alive and palpitating with His Presence, no one cared to define a dogma or to formulate a system. When St. Paul attempted such discussions his logic caught fire, his language jarred in the narrow ways of human imagery, and his argument almost invariably ended in a blaze of ecstasy. The victorious might of the infant church lay not in its dogmas, but in its fellowship with the Living Christ, its heroic motives, its quiet and glad enthusiasm, and its all-transfiguring heavenly vision. Any student of that church must be impressed with its freedom from metaphysical dogma, its unity of spirit, and its abounding vitality, which grasped the crumbling classic world and reshaped it.

Also, every renewal of Christianity has meant a rediscovery of those profound realities in which the power of religion lies, as over against the ideas which divide men. If we study the historic revivals we always find in them a more vivid sense of the Love of God in Christ, an unveiling of the might of prayer as the most vital and practical force among men, and a deepening of the moral life bearing fruit in heroic and beautiful philanthropies. Of the revivals of the early church Harnack said truly that they "operated with such purity and power that they bore palpably the stamp of their divine origin," as any one can believe who reads the story of "Fabiola,"

by Cardinal Wiseman, which brings from afar a whiff of the air of sanctity and service which pervaded those morning years. The same was true in the days of Francis of Assisi, who, climbing Mount Subasio, and watching the shafts of sunlight strike the snow-drifts, "felt a delicious thrill, all his being was calmed and uplifted, the soul of things caressed him gently and shed upon him peace." Out of that radiant hour was born a movement, led by "God's Troubadour," which, with its blend of poetry, piety, and pity, redeemed Europe from dead formalism and languorous luxury. Who can forget the foresight and solicitude of Francis for the outcasts, and those smitten with terrible malady—how, with his brethren, he established schools for the leper children, and hospitals for those far gone in the disease?

So, too, in the great revival in the Rhineland, whether in its first stage under Eckhart, or in its second stage under the wonderful ministry of Tauler—a man of divine pity, in whose hands the vestments of an ecclesiastic became "bandages for the bleeding wounds of humanity," and the ropes of the belfry tower cords of sympathy between God and man. Recall the "Black Death" scourge—which drove Boccaccio and his friends to a Florentine villa to tell salacious tales—when the secular clergy fled in panic from the sorely smitten city of Strasburg, leaving Tauler and his converts to nurse the sick, minister

to the dying, and bury the dead. No one need be told what the Wesleyan revival did for England, rescuing it, as Macaulay said, from something like a French Revolution, cleansing its literature and elevating its moral and social tone. Again, the Oxford Movement within the church, despite its later unfortunate emphasis upon things sacerdotal, was a renewed sense of the awfulness of the Unseen ; often austere, sometimes extravagant, but true, enduring, and far-reaching.[1] As Mozley said of Keble and Newman, "they seemed to come forth from a different and holier sphere," and their words, spoken with "an intense stillness," stirred men with longings for a different and holier life. Such tides of the Spirit overflow all dividing walls, like a heavenly Nile, and lift men into an awful yet gracious mystery, where debate is lost in devout wonder.

Ever fresh surprise at the vastness and triumph of Love has been the wonder of such times, and it has found centre in an overwhelming vision of the Cross of Christ. When Bernard of Clairvaux preached from the hilltop at Vezelia, there arose from the sea of faces, it is said, a shout, "Crosses, crosses!"—and the crusade was made. When Daniel Rowlands made his pulpit a smoking and thundering Sinai, he was warned by his friend, Philip Pugh, that terror begets terror, whereas

[1] "The Oxford Movement," by R. W. Church (1902). Also "The Mystery of Newman," by Henri Bremond (1907).

only love inspires love. Not until he learned to preach the sovereign grace of the Gospel did the eighteenth century revival in Wales work its wonder. Then the debtor remembered his debt, the drunkard returned to his hearth in his right mind, the prodigal received welcome at home, and those grown gray in sin saw a light at eventide—all because one morning a dark Cross stood on a little hill, and the One who died upon it was found to be a Friend and a Redeemer. So in the ministry of Oberlin, further back, there arrived a day when he wrote, "I preached no more the pains of hell," and the restored Gospel of Love won its way as summer through a waiting wood, changing the wintry valleys of the Vosges into sanctuaries of piety and gladness. Small wonder that such awakenings have been attended by outbursts of song, for "the people of God are a singing people, and their way is a singing way."

Nor should we forget the influence of the great revivals on Christian theology, modifying it, as they do, in the only way it can ever be truly modified—that is, by a deeper, more vivid, more victorious experience of things immortal. Evermore our pressing need is for a vital theology that springs from life and, returning quickly to the life from which it springs, gives form and clarity to experience; for if we are to think about religion in any great and conclusive way, we must think religiously from the inside. St.

Francis with his passion for the imitation of Christ; Tauler with his mystical union with the Master; Luther with his gospel of faith; Wesley with his good news of free grace; Moody with his vision of Love divine all love excelling—each seized the truth most needful for his age, and without deliberate intention modified the current theology: just as we are beginning to see in what ways religious thought may be influenced by the social activity of the Church. If we are to have a great revival in our day, it must be by "the good-will of Him who dwelt in the Burning Bush," whose Voice from the midst will give the accent of truth for our vexed and noisy age to those who approach, with reverent and earnest hearts, the Place of Hearing.

II

Add now the witness of the great mystics,[1] who have been the living bonds of union between the differing sects, and the redeemers of the

[1] Readers who may wish to study the mystics will find an admirable introduction in an essay on Christian mysticism, with examples of mystical exposition of truth, entitled "The Garden of Nuts," by W. R. Nicoll (1905). Then there are Dr. Alexander Whyte's charming "Appreciations" of Behmen, Santa Teresa, Sir Thomas Browne, and Father John of the Greek church—biographical studies with selections from their writings. Other books, among a number too great to name, are the "Works of St. John of the Cross," with preface by Cardinal Wiseman (1864); "Life of St. John," by David Lewis (1897); "Life of Madame Guyon," by T. C. Upham (1905); "Life of

Church in times of arid materialism, spiritual apathy, and dismal half-belief. Amid the shifting scenes of theological thought they sit undisturbed by the permanent fountains of religious grace and power, having a "sincere, sweet and still view of the Eternal Truth,"—to use the words of Molinos, whose gospel of quietness and confidence, distilled into his "Spiritual Guide," though suppressed by the Church, flowed on, now flooding the soul of Guyon and Fénelon, now running into channels already formed by the early Quakers, now descending deeply, like the fabled river of Arabia, out of sight, but never lost. Just so we trace through the ages a shining tradition of spiritual light, a glorious communion of the "friends and aiders of those who live in the spirit," whose teachings underlie all sects and overarch all creeds—prophets of the Universal Spiritual Church of God, to whose service our institutions are but instrumental and from which they derive their meaning and beauty.

Tauler," with twenty-five of his sermons, preface by Charles Kingsley (1905); "Life of St. Teresa," written by herself—a memorable book; also her "Way of Perfection," translated by David Lewis (1911); "A Mediæval Mystic," by Earle Baillie, being the life of John Ruysbroeck, whose writings are best translated by Maeterlink. Also "Christian Mysticism," by W. R. Inge, an excellent essay, though too much emphasis is laid upon the shortcomings of the mystics. Hereof are a few cups from a well of pure water; it is free water of life—taste and see.

They have been fertilizing spirits, openers of sleeping seeds, and those who study them look up from the page with faces aglow, as William Law studied Behmen, as Alexander MacLaren lived with Tauler. So much so, that it may be truly said that no man, from Augustine to Luther, from Wesley to Phillips Brooks, has ever been a great prophetic preacher without being a mystic, or the disciple of a mystic. Time fails me to tell how the mystical theology—driven from the pulpit, and finding refuge in hymns, prayers, and fireside meditations—was the living faith of the burghers of Germany for nearly two centuries; how it kept alive experimental religion of a pure kind, how it inspired the early German and Flemish artists—like Van Eyck, whose famous painting, *The Adoration of the Lamb*, is the reduction to colour of the vision of a mystic; and how it taught Luther himself what heart religion really was. So also Wesley, whose strange "warming of the heart," which set England on fire, was kindled by fellowship with a band of Moravian mystics; as the sweet pietism of Francke and Spener rescued the Swedish church from a barren, stony orthodoxy, and a dead polemical dogmatism. In our own age —encumbered as it is with so many "blank misgivings," so many cloudy sunsets and so few glad confident dawns—the sign of most promise among us is the renewed and wide-spread in-

terest in the mystics, which, despite a too frequent quest after fantastic occultisms, and pseudo-psychisms, betrays a deep hunger of the soul for a more satisfying experience of Unseen Realities.

Here, in the mystic tradition, is the true apostolic succession of the spiritual life, unbroken by the transitions of theology or the conflicts of sects, confident and forward-looking amid the mysteries of life. It is authentic, not because of any hierarchy, but because it comes to us through a succession of apostolic souls. Otherwise it would be hardly more than a legend, though every church could boast an unbroken line of teachers whose heads had been blessed by the men before them. Just as the poet-laureates of England are made poets, when they are poets at all, not by edict of state, but by the divine gift of genius; so the teachers of faith have power not by virtue of rank or office, but by experience of things eternal. Such an experience, when illumined by great genius—whether in St. Francis or Fénelon, Chalmers or Channing—places a man in the true hierarchy of the light-bringers and way-showers of the race. For, by its very nature, authority in matters of faith and morals rests in God, and so far as it is entrusted to men is not official or arbitrary, but spiritual and persuasive. To some of us the Catholic church appeals with overwhelming authority, not through its hierarchy, nor yet through its pontiff, but through the

voices of its saints, who are among our dearest teachers. Its thinkers must fight their way up in the arena of philosophy; but when Santa Teresa tells us of her life of prayer, we listen in a different mood, if so be that we may learn the path to the Mount of Vision.

Saints, poets, seers, mystics all—a strange and radiant fellowship they make, of many races, traditions, and creeds, held in the unity of the Life of the Spirit. They speak in various tongues, but with a unison of tone which each understands, a language neither ancient nor modern, but timeless, eternal, one. Across the ages we hear Philo saying, "God hath breathed into man from heaven a portion of His own divinity." Years pass, and St. Paul speaks of Christ formed within us, a continuing glory both of character and of hope, whom to know aright is life everlasting. Other years pass and Plotinus bears witness: "The wise man recognizes the good within him; this he develops by withdrawal into the holy place of the soul." Bernard of Clairvaux, administrator and saint, takes up the strain, assuring us that "It is in the spirit that union with God occurs"; while Tauler pauses in his humane labours, having found the same secret: "This revelation must take place in the spirit, for God is Spirit." Again we hear Madame Guyon testify, confirming the word of Santa Teresa: "Accustom yourself to seek

God in your own heart, and you will find Him." So the witness runs through the years, through Huss, Luther, Wesley, Fox, and Bushnell, as before it had come down through Augustine, St. Francis, and Savonarola. At last the voice of Emerson is heard speaking in our own land: "Within man is the soul of the holy, the wise silence, the universal beauty"; and Phillips Brooks, standing beside the pillar in Trinity Church, sums it up:

"Religion instantly becomes irreligious if you carry it away from its great enveloping truth of the mystic union of God and man. Mysticism is the heart of religion, without whose ever-beating life the hands of religion, which do the work, and the mind of religion which studies and thinks, fall dead. . . . It is a blessed thing that in all times there have always been men to whom religion has not presented itself as a system of doctrine, but as an elemental life in which the soul of man came into very direct and close communion with the soul of God. It is the mystics of every age who have done most to blend the love of truth and the love of man within the love of God, and so to keep alive or restore a healthy tolerance." [1]

[1] "Essays and Addresses," by Phillips Brooks (1895).

IV

THE PROSE OF FAITH

IN the "Life of Dante," by Boccalos, we are told that "theology is God's poetry." It may be so; but when one studies the history of dogma, its hidden and unnoted factors, and the materials of which it is composed, one feels like modifying the saying of the great poet. Religion is indeed divine poetry—"poetry believed in," as Dean Everett used to say—but theology, for the most part, is very human prose, or at least an imperfect translation of the divine music. Though they bore the same name, held the same faith, and used the same vocabulary, what a gulf divided the second Christian century from the days of Jesus! No sooner did Christianity step upon Greek soil than it was taken up by alert and eager minds, mixed with the fag-ends of decaying philosophy, and changed into something seemingly utterly alien to the mind of the Master. One familiar with the theologic outlook at the middle of the second century, as we have it reflected later in the pages of Irenæus and Tertullian, knows that it was a

bewildering maze, in which the poetry of Jesus had become an uneven and jangling prose.

No good purpose would be served by an attempt to tread that labyrinth here, least of all without a torch and a guide. All along the error has been a failure to realize that our dogmas, at best, are but picture-conceptions of realities so great that all men are one in their littleness—an error due, perhaps, to our intellectual conceit which tends to assume that its analysis, and therefore its explanation, is complete. Whereas, if we could once be made aware that the truth includes what all of us perceive, and much more unguessed by any of us—that our dogmas, as Matthew Arnold said, are only so many words thrown out at a vast reality—each would seek, humbly and eagerly, to know what truth the other has discovered, in the hope of attaining to a larger faith. It has been said that the supreme gift of Cardinal Newman—who was a miracle of intellectual delicacy joined with an austere and unearthly spirituality—was an intellect which discerned the inadequacy of words, ideas, or systems when confronted with the realities which they seek to body forth. His insight is best exhibited, perhaps, in a passage from his "*Apologia*," remarkable alike for its style and for its sweep and grasp. Thus:

"The broad philosophy of Clement and Origen carried me away. Some portions of their teach-

ing, magnificent in themselves, came like music to my inward ear. These were based on the mystical or sacramental principle. Nature was a parable: Scripture was an allegory: pagan literature, philosophy, and mythology, properly understood, were but a preparation for the Gospel. The Greek poets and sages were in a certain sense prophets; for 'thoughts beyond their thoughts to those high bards were given.' In the fullness of time both Judaism and paganism came to nought. And thus room was made for the anticipation of further and deeper disclosures, of truths still under the veil of the letter, and in their season to be revealed. The visible world still remains without its divine interpretation; Holy Church, in her sacraments and her hierarchical appointments, will remain, even to the end of the world, after all but a symbol of those heavenly facts which fill eternity. Her mysteries are but the expression in human language of truths to which the human mind is unequal." [1]

So luminous a passage persuades while it exemplifies the doctrine which it recommends—the doctrine, that is, that doctrines themselves are but symbols; that theology is at once an allegory and an act of faith; that it is figurative because it seizes on a hidden reality, not otherwise

[1] "*Apologia Pro Vita Sua*," by J. H. Newman, Chap. I (1865).

to be detained. It was an illuminating insight, particularly so in the midst of what Dean Church called the enormous irruption into the world of modern thought of the unknown and the unknowable. Also, it helps to account for the embarrassment which has always beset Christian apologists, when they have been challenged to give a reason for their faith in the court of logic. As Newman pointed out, such reasons as may be formally adduced are rather specimens and symbols of the real reasons than those reasons themselves. Defenders of the faith select, of necessity, not the truest, the highest, the most sacred reasons for belief, but such as best admit of being exhibited in argument; and these are rarely, perhaps never, the real reasons in the case of a religious man.[1] Nor does this hand the case over to the agnostic, who hastens to agree that dogmas are but words, the Bible a book of metaphors, and religion an echo of our own voice in "the dark night of the soul." For a sense of humour, if nothing else, should protect a man from the dogma that the human mind, finite in all things, is infinite in its ignorance. To that dogma Newman opposed, and rightly so, the inner fact too deep for speech, which, confirmed by the Mystic Vision and the devout life of ages, is the surest possession of the race.

If we allow so much, consequences of an inter-

[1] "Cardinal Newman," by William Barry, Chap. V (1904).

esting kind seem to follow. At first glance theology is apparently removed from among the sciences and placed in the domain of the arts; but that need not be regretted. This at least is true: we are here given a key to the deeper unity of experience and life beneath diversities of temperament and every variety of intellectual symbolism. If we take the dogmas of Christian theology as symbolic pictures, they are seen to be efforts of the Church at various periods, and of certain types of mind in every period, to express spiritual truth in such imaginative intellectual forms as were best suited to their needs. Thus a truth may find expression in different dogmas, just as any thought may be uttered in different languages by phrases that sound very unlike, and yet mean the same thing. Even the same truth, as Lowell shows in his poem on *Ambrose*, may in different garb have power over other minds, who actually deny that truth as we state it in our words. Some dogmas seem irrational and crude, and we are prone to deny not only their clumsy form, but also the spiritual truths which they are trying to utter, because we think of the surface intellectual meaning only, and do not apprehend the truths underlying or feel their power. What we have always to remember is that the Truth is greater than all symbols, deeper than all dogmas, and that, as George Eliot said, "the divine life moves underneath the

thickest ice of theory." And, after all, it is that deep inner life of the soul, flowing with strong current in its hidden bed, which at last "winds somewhere safe to sea."

No better example of the difference between religion and theology [1] can be found than in the successive dogmas of the Cross which have followed each other through the Christian years. To-day men are sometimes accused of tampering with the doctrine of the atonement, and it is held to be a vital offense, but one may well ask, "Which doctrine?" It has been truly said that if men are saved or lost by their correct or incorrect views of this truth, then whole ages of the Church are clearly past praying for. One view, which held the ground for almost a thousand years, was that the death of Christ was a ransom

[1] It need hardly be said that this is not meant to depreciate, in any way, the definitions and distinctions of historic Christian theology. We must think and define; we must interpret and justify to the intellect the convictions of the heart, and put our religious persuasions into the best intellectual shape we can. The mystics err in this respect, perhaps through a sense of the ineffableness of truth and the inadequacy of language ("Mysticism," by Evelyn Underhill, 1911). As Thomas Erskine of Linlathen remarked: "I feel self-condemned in occupying my mind in the labour of constructing the intellectual shape of religion when I could be more profitably employed in actually walking with God." On the other hand, as Kant said of philosophy, theology does not discover truth, but simply arranges the truth explored by experience; and is thus of secondary importance.

paid to the devil, and that His resurrection was a kind of trick by which Satan was finally defrauded. Think of a man like Ambrose of Milan, one of the noblest and sweetest souls of the fourth century and the spiritual father of Augustine, being able to write a sentence like this: "It was necessary in order that this fraud should be carried out upon the devil that the Lord Jesus should take a body!" We can hardly imagine a theology of the Cross more grotesque and unthinkable, yet no one amongst us knows more effectually than did that ancient saint the religion of the Cross, as felt in the soul and realized in life. One cannot read his works without feeling that the root of the matter was in him, despite the crude intellectual imagery of his day.

So it is with the theory of Anslem, in his "*Cur Deus Homo*,"—a theory which, strangely enough, was in its main features adopted and taught by the Reformation leaders. He regarded Christ as having, by His passion and death, paid in suffering the exact equivalent of human guilt, and thereby satisfying the claims of divine justice: which, as Augustine had pointed out before, was not a doctrine of grace, but a negation of grace. No one now attacks this dogma with laboured argument, and few are left to defend it. Like other clumsy ideas, it has suffered the most terrible of all refutations—the moral sense of mankind has outgrown it: a

benign change having come over the race rendering obsolete much both of the faiths and fears of former times. Yet he is a poor interpreter, and no poet at all, who does not see that those crude dogmas, modified by the forms of Roman law and the feudal system, were striving to give intellectual shape to the same ineffable truth which we feel to-day, and cannot utter. It towers above all theory, from Anslem to Bushnell, and we may well be dumb before it, smitten mute where speech is vain, yet softened, thrilled, and redeemed by a reality which we feel and know, but can in nowise define or explain.

So of all our dogmas. They are but picture-conceptions of spiritual truth, useful and often beautiful, but they ought not to be made tests of fellowship, much less occasions for marring that charity without which the most perfect theology is nothing. In the olden time one man formulated his faith into a series of dogmas, and called it the truth. Another man did the same thing; then the two began to hate each other with an unholy hatred, and there is an epitome of some of the blackest chapters in history. All of which admonishes us, once more, that in every form of faith there is some truth which can be seen, perhaps, from no other angle, and that the Truth is greater than all dogmas. We, who have such a rich inheritance of duty and hope in common, have enough to do to live kindly among our-

selves, without quarrelling about the prose of faith, least of all when its lofty and sustaining poetry is the treasure of each.

One theology goeth and another theology cometh, each speaking the language of its day, but the faith abides and the divine life in the soul of man moves on. Forever the human race reaches out its hands and shapes some system, some creed, and declares it to be final, and behold! something flowing and eternal in the race itself presently splits that creed to pieces. Other and nobler systems are built, each shutting us from heaven "with a dome more vast," but they in their turn suffer a like fate, as man learns to read here a line and there a stanza of "that flowing music which is life." Always the gain of truth is richer; always the outlook is larger, and the vista longer. Thus the living faith by which men live grows from more to more, and more of reverence and charity within us dwell, as mind and soul, according well, make one music as before, but vaster.

"Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

V

TRUTH FOR TO-DAY

TRUTH is a marvellous thing. It can fill our eyes with tears and our hearts with joy; it can make us die for it; but once we attempt to imprison it in a system, it eludes us. Where men fail is not in seeking to formulate truth, as they must do if they are to think at all, but in striving for finality;[1] either mistaking a segment for the whole, or else trying to close the circle. As Flaubert said, the greatest geniuses never conclude: God alone may do that. Whether from the limits of human thinking or from the profundity of divine things, the great difficulties remain, and our solutions of them are not final. Faith in "the gospel of

[1] "The Final Faith," by W. D. Mackensie (1910). Surely the final faith, if it ever appears, will be less intricate than the system of dogma here set forth, which involves elaborate explication, theory, and argument. Not content with faith as a *great perception*,—a consensus of the insight, experience and aspiration of all devout men,—the author gives us a system, noble indeed but still a system, much of which is still in debate. A final faith must be able to live in new and changed times, must be compatible with vast and unimagined developments of thought and life, and the "final faith" here proposed does not seem to meet the test.

going on," too reverent of God and too proud of the spirit of man to settle everything, is our true attitude, with no ambition but to know more truth, and richer.

In his "Foundations of Belief," Arthur Balfour discusses the question as to whether there can be such a thing as a synthetic theology. He concludes that no man can live long enough to acquire, even if he could manipulate, the intellectual apparatus necessary for such an undertaking. Nor do we yet need such a Messiah of theology, though the reconstruction of religious thought is now perhaps sufficiently advanced to permit a consensus of positive and united emphasis upon the great realities of faith about which we seem able, at last, to agree. While there is always a demand for fresh, original insight, it seems clear that the chief gain in the near future will come, rather, through the larger fellowship towards which we are tending. The profound change of heart now taking place everywhere, in all sects, through interchange of thought, courtesy, and personal touch, will mean the bringing together of truths long held apart, and must result, it would seem, in a more inclusive vision.

An example in point is the old contention, so bitterly debated, as to the person of Christ and His place in the thought and faith of the race. Carlyle said truly that if Arius had won, Chris-

tianity would have dwindled into a legend; for when Athanasius stood against the world he was fighting for that which is most distinctive and vital in Christian faith. The religious interest of that day centred, not in the dogma of the trinity, but in the question of the future life of the soul; and if the debate found focus about the person of Christ, it was because all saw that the fate of our race is bound up with Him. Athanasius stood for the whole truth—that Christ was real God and real man joined, a revelation of what God is, of what man is, and of what their life together may be. Mankind, he held, is perfected in Christ and restored, as it was made in the beginning, with greater grace. Since in Christ humanity was joined with deity, man must be akin to God, and his hope of a life beyond the grave is not in vain.

The Church has fought valiantly for its faith in the deity of Christ, and rightly so, but that was only one-half of the truth as Athanasius saw it. The other half was neglected, if not forgotten, along with the Arian dogma that God and man are so utterly apart and distinct that a *plastic medium* is needed to bridge the chasm between them—a conception which, banished from the creeds, took refuge in the institutions of the mediæval church. Channing, Emerson and Martineau brought forward the truth of the divinity of man, so long overlooked, and for so doing we

owe them honour. What should follow from this reunion of truths so sadly estranged is a vision of a race consubstantial with God, issuing in a sincere confession of the deity of Christ and the deity of man. These two truths are not contradictory, but one. They stand or fall together, and if we are to have a complete Christianity we must hold both.

Of course, such a vision of truth must be more than an achievement of the intellect, more than an adventure in theory, else it will result in a discipline in confusion. It must be a fruit of experience in the moral process of living, a reality authenticating itself in the final test amid the trial, tears, and triumph of righteous and devout souls. Faith of any kind is valid only in so far as it resolves itself into character and the ideal forces that shape character, making us such men as without it we could not be. So tested, faith in Christ is more than faith in His deity, more than the faith that He once lived, died and rose again, and that He still lives among men. One may believe all that as a theory and remain a slave to greed and passion. No; it is actually to trust and follow the awful yet gracious and ever-living God who is in Christ and in ourselves, to love and obey whom, at whatever cost, is the way of life. With such an experience we read the story of Jesus in the days of His flesh in a new light and with a new sense of reality. In-

stead of being a record of long ago, we become wayfarers with Him in the beauty and sorrow, the joy and awe of His life, and the Gospels seem but "the broken memories of days He walked with us." Then we serve our fellow souls with a new zest, knowing that there is something divine in every man, no matter how sodden or sin-bespattered he may be, if we can but reach it. Nor can we ever reach it save through the divine within ourselves, mediated through a tender, tactful human ministry.

After this manner faith may be not only unified, but greatly enriched, when it is studied as it stands in the service of life. Some would have us think that religious truth is thus growing out of all recognition, like the letters cut in the bark of a young tree. Others wonder how, if this be true, there can be any fixed standard or criterion of that growth. A building may grow, but if the building materials also grow, the results would seem to be like those of the croquet-party in "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland." On the other side, it may be said that the wonderland has been here a long time, and that the ancients bequeathed to us some very profound and revealing insights. No doubt we know more than our fathers knew about the world, its laws and forces; but few will affirm that we surpass, if indeed we equal, Dante, Fénelon or St. Francis in our acquaintance with divine realities. One

reads the "Confessions" of St. Augustine and finds there not only a splendour of genius, and an exquisite literary grace, but a profound and passionate religious life not easy to discover in our laughing and logical age. Even Newman, who was a citizen of eternity, lived as a pilgrim and a stranger among us.[1]

Ages differ, and the chief difference between our age and that of St. Francis would seem to be that we have more light from without than the ancient mystic, and less from within. Surely no man ever brought together two things more unlike than Masterman did when he wrote his essay on "Chicago and Francis,"—the smoky city, with its medley of races and its babel of voices, and the gentle saint who preached poverty and talked to the doves.[2] It is a far cry from State Street, with its din and jam, to the unclouded days and hot nights of Umbria, when St. Francis lived his life of beauty and pity. That was an age of art, of poetry, of beautiful and strange personalities, over whose long, still days hung an air of mystery: an age, also, of rough brutality, vocal with violence and misery, when, in the Salimbene picture of the scene, wolves howled under the

[1] A stranger, it now seems, even in the church in which he sought his home, as we learn from the new "Life of Newman," by Wilfred Ward (1911), two rich volumes made up, for the most part, of letters and diaries of the Roman period.

[2] "In Peril of Change," by C. F. G. Masterman (1905).

walls of Italian towns and at night entered and devoured men. There was a blithe beauty in those sons of St. Francis who, though pilgrims seeking a country, went singing through the world, cheered by an abiding vision of the Unseen. All now is changed, and how different the picture of the world as a factory, with its gray smoke-cloud of puffing industrialism, from the world as a cloister.

"There will never be any saints in America," said the heroine of a recent novel who visited Assisi, and whose only wonder was that St. Francis and St. Claire never married.

"No, no!" was the reply, "instead of St. Francis preaching poverty, we shall, maybe, have men who will lessen poverty, and make the world a more comfortable place."

Not simply a more comfortable place, let us hope, but a theatre for the working out of great human ideals of liberty, justice and fraternity; a world filling up with those "large, eternal fellows" who do the thing that needs to be done for the joy of doing it. To-day men believe—and, verily, they do well—that poverty, disease, crime, war, ennui, and numberless other evils, spawn of ignorance, need not and must not be. They are building for utility—taming forces, cleansing swamps, moving mountains, mobilizing the men of good-will, driving the piles for a new and better order of society; and when this work

is done, or rather in the doing of it, there will be born a new art, a new humanism, and a larger faith. When we leave the Bunyan allegory and come to the Hawthorne story of the "Celestial Railway," we find a bridge spanning the Slough of Despond, and Vanity Fair is a salubrious village in which passengers stop off for a few days. Not only is the whole tone of our social life higher and purer, but great social wrongs, overlooked in the age of Bunyan, rise up before us in all their horror. As soon as the forces of the New Reformation have grown strong enough, it is believed that Christian faith and modern science will unite to quicken the heart and mind of humanity, and lift it, on a wave of common joy and hope, into a nobler life.

Still, all must feel that something fine and precious has gone out of our life, as though a sweet note had "trembled away into silence." We have come to a kinder knowledge of man, and, alas! to what can only be described as a kinder ignorance of God. There was something in the soul of St. Francis—a fellowship with God, a sense of the Unseen, issuing in a vision of the world as love and comradeship—more precious by far than all the gold in all the marble hills. We need to unite the passionate religious faith of a Tauler, or a Wesley, with the practical activity of our day—a blend of the "holy stillness" of Christina Rossetti and the ardent humanitarian-

ism which made Elizabeth Browning a prophetess of purity, piety, and pity. There is need of a new "*Imitatio Christi*," such, perhaps, as Benjamin Jowett projected, whereof we read in his "Life and Letters"—a "new Thomas à Kempis, going as deeply into the foundations of life, and yet not revolting the common sense of the twentieth century," combining, "in a manual of piety, religious fervour with perfect good sense and knowledge of the world." It is not a new religion that we need, but religion renewed; the old faith with larger realizations and wider applications to these new and changed times—but still the same Gospel that stirred the soul of Luther, and the same Spirit that whispered about the heart of St. Francis when he bowed in prayer.

Life must come before theology, now as at the beginning, as Rudolf Eucken is telling us with so much insight and eloquence. When Edward Irving began his ministry in Glasgow, well-nigh ninety years ago, he resolved to "demonstrate a higher style of Christianity—something more magnanimous, more heroical than this age is accustomed to." This lesson is for us—a higher style of Christianity is more than ever our need. Let us give ourselves to it, nor think it too great an achievement, interpreting that we do know in the language of our age, as the teachers of the past spoke for God to their vanished times.

The Culture of the Soul

What is personality? How is it constituted? What power have we to modify, enlarge, elevate and expand it?

I

THE SECRET OF POWER

I

ONE charm of the life of Jesus, as we read it in the Gospels, is its graphic though meagre detail, its exquisite brief touches of sidelight and colour. Few scenes in that life are more vivid, for example, than the account of His first return to Nazareth, as given by the evangelist Luke. On a Sabbath day, when He wends His way to the synagogue, the fact is recalled that this was His custom. News of His works in other places had been noised abroad, and those who had known Him as a youth were gathered to see and hear Him. When He stands up to read, and the Book is given to Him, we see Him unrolling the page until He "finds the place"; and when He has finished, again we see Him close the roll, stretching out His hand to give it to an attendant, and sitting down. We feel the breathless expectation, when "the eyes of all that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him."

Whether the writer himself was present, or it was told him by some one else who was present, the narrative bears all the marks of the recollec-

tion of an eye-witness. Not otherwise could it have reproduced the very atmosphere of the scene, the Teacher with His grave dignity of intense stillness, and the mingled curiosity and criticism of His hearers. The incident suggests many things, and among them that, in the simple act of opening and closing a book, the manner of the Master had about it something personal, unique, and unforgettable. Here, evidently, was one man who, in recalling that Sabbath morning scene—it may have been twenty or thirty years after—could not blot out of memory the appearance and bearing of Jesus as He opened, and again as He closed, the book of prophecy. Something in His manner, it may have been only the simple majesty and grace of His movement—or it may have been the air of finality with which He closed the scroll of prophecy of which He was the fulfillment—left an unfading image.

It is the privilege of personality to make the smallest things memorable, and the life of Jesus is rich in examples of this kind. In the greatest history in the world the writers pause to say that He who made that history stooped to take a little child in His arms; that He turned when held by violent hands, and looked at Peter; that He made as though He would have gone further one solemn eventide. These are not intrusions on an otherwise exquisite narrative, nor do they impair the majesty of that incomparable record.

Rather do they partake of its essential dignity and beauty, as cloudlets gather and are transfigured by the sunset splendour. No wonder Robert Browning saw in these little touches, at once so graceful and so artless—wherein a great soul made the commonplace unique, because He was unique—so many signatures of the authenticity of the record. Such strokes, so deft and so revealing, and withal so natural, are beyond the skill of art, much less of artifice.

The personality of Jesus impressed itself indelibly upon every act of His life, and He did all things, whether great or small, with a certain calm and grave completeness. When He called back the daughter of Jairus from the dead, and felt her hand grow warm in His palm, He did not forget, while all around amazement reigned, to remind her mother that a child, a-journeying so, is hungry, and that she must be a mother still. His smallest act, which in any other biography would have dropped out of the history, is clothed with a nameless beauty, as elusive and uncapturable as it is arresting and irresistible. If He plucked a lily of the field, it became an emblem of the loving care of God; and if He closed a Book, He closed it as never man had closed it before. And by a strange literary mystery, His words, coming to us afar, have about them the very quality of Him who uttered them, as though the fragrance of His spirit clung to

them; and that is why they unlock in us secret chambers accessible to no other speech. The same words, if uttered by another, have not that power, lacking that indefinable charm.

II

What is true of the words of Jesus is equally true of the great and simple truths they tell, whereof we need so often to be minded. It is not by logic, nor by dogmas—"truths packed for transportation," as Phillips Brooks used to say—that our faith is kept alive and aglow; but by the touch of spirit upon spirit, the contact of soul with soul. Persons influence us, voices melt us, looks subdue us, and it is only when Truth is made flesh and dwells among us that its presence is a power. Because this is so, only when the man of the pulpit forgets that he has a name and an isolated soul, and becomes the embodiment alike of human need and divine grace, does he stir us deeply, tenderly, vitally, awakening memories of the time when the heart was pure, while beckoning us to become that which we have so often dreamed. This is more than eloquence; it is life. At such times the Unseen seems to drop its veil, and the Life of the Spirit invites us with the lure of its own beauty, putting to shame the neglect which eats away our hidden riches.

One of the great sermons of Newman at Ox-

ford had this for its thesis: that the influence of personality has from the first been the chief means of bearing spiritual truth to the human soul, and a sermon more fundamentally true and beautiful does not exist.[1] How else can this apparently incommunicable thing called religious faith be taught? Is it true, as William James held, that a mystical experience is of authority and value only to him who possesses it, a dark lantern of the spirit which none can see by but the man who carries it? Far from it; and it is here that we come upon the truth of which Newman—like Phillips Brooks, and every great leader of the souls of men—was at once a teacher and a shining example. The personal equation in faith—the "illative sense," as he called it—by its very nature mystical, can be altered only by personality which is also mystical. Hence the priceless value of a man like Newman himself, whose genius, full of "that within us not ourselves which makes for righteousness" and faith, was a "kindly light" in a beshadowed age. Few have ever equalled him as a teacher of the soul of man, as a follower of the subtle motions of the spirit, and the sudden starts of conscience, in moments

> "When the light of sense goes out,
> But with a flash that has revealed
> The invisible world."

[1] "University Sermons," by J. H. Newman, Sermon V (1871).

With what impressiveness it comes home to even the humblest teacher of faith, that it is not so much what we do or say that wins men to the higher life, but what we are; our characters more than our tenets. George Eliot has described this blessed influence of one loving soul over another—"not calculable by algebra, not deducible by logic, but mysterious, effectual, mighty as the hidden process by which the tiny seed is quickened and bursts forth into tall stem and broad leaf and glowing tasselled flower." Ideas, she tells us—remembering, no doubt, the life of her aunt, who lives again in Dinah Morris—are poor, pale ghosts which pass athwart us in their vapour and cannot make themselves felt. But "sometimes they are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft, responsive hands, they look at us with sad, sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn after flame."

Not in the pulpit alone, but through all the ramifications of human fellowship, it is personality that tells; as, for instance, in the influence of a great teacher on "Tom Brown's School Days"—a book which, despite its "muscular Christian-

ity" which would prove its faith by fisticuffs, after the manner of boy religion, remains a classic in its way. Who can forget the visit of Tom to the Rugby Chapel after the death of Dr. Arnold, his honoured and dear teacher: how he walked humbly down to the lowest bench and sat once more in the very seat which he had occupied in his first Sunday at the famous school. Old memories rushed over him, form after form of boys, nobler and braver than he, returned, and seemed to rebuke him. But above all rose the image of that stately, firm and noble man, sleeping now beneath the altar, by whom his young soul had been awakened and led to a vision of what it is to be a man. Walking up the altar steps, his eyes dim with tears, he knelt hopefully, and laid down there his share of a burden which had proved itself too heavy for him to bear in his own strength.

"Here let us leave him," says his historian—"where better could we leave him, than at the altar, before which he had first caught a glimpse of the glory of his birthright, and felt the drawing of the bond which links all living souls together into one brotherhood—at the grave beneath the altar of him, who had opened his eyes to see that glory, and softened his heart till it could feel that bond. Let us not be too hard on him, if at that moment his soul is fuller of the tomb and him who lies there than of the altar

and Him of whom it speaks. Such stages have to be gone through, I believe, by all young and brave souls, who must win their way through hero-worship to the worship of Him who is the King and Lord of heroes."

There are souls who, worn thin and penurious, make even great things dwindle at their touch, while others, throbbing with gracious power, transform ordinary tasks into something rich and strange. Some men and women are gifted with a peculiar and persuasive fascination, which their fellows can neither resist nor define; they are made to be loved, made to lead and command.

> "All familiar things they touch,
> All common words they speak, become
> Like forms and sounds of a diviner world;"

every word a revelation, every gesture an event. None can tell of what that mystic power consists, least of all those who are so fortunate as to possess it. It is an indefinable quality, a kind of "ethereal fifth essence" which, like magic, gives some men and women an unexplained influence and ascendency over us. This is what we ordinarily mean—a something too fine and subtle, indeed, to be put into words—when we say that a man has personality, or that he has it not. And this is the secret of power, for good or ill, in human life.

II

WHAT IS PERSONALITY?

I

THAT personality is a matter of birth or accident, like fair features or dark blue eyes, is a prevailing impression with many. That it is most marked in the less sanctified types of humanity has, strangely enough, been the claim of more. That it is lost utterly in the upper airs of being, where the infinite woos the finite into its mystery, has apparently been the teaching all along the mystic ranks of philosophy and religion, from the "sacred seven" down. All of these views would seem to be equally removed from the truth, which assuredly does not render what Rudolf Eucken calls the "redemptive making of personality"[1] either impossible, undesirable, or useless. One of these views leaves us in the clutch of fate, as clay in the hand of the potter; another ends in pantheism, which dissolves the pearl of great value; while the second, though widely held, is at war with the facts and nothing short of absurd. All of which may justify an inquiry as to what

[1] "Rudolf Eucken's Philosophy," by Royce Gibson (1909).

personality really is, how it is constituted, and what power we have to modify, enlarge and ennoble it.

Words, when turned from their original import and perverted by loose usage, exert a fatal influence on thought and belief. The word *persona*, from which our English word person is derived, meant, originally, the mask worn by actors on the classic stage, all the parts in Greek and Roman drama being performed in masks. The mask was called in Latin *persona*, from *personо*, meaning "I sound through," hence very naturally it came to signify the part performed, the character personated. From the stage of the theatre the word passed to the scenes of life, and *person* denoted the character which a man presented to the world, the part he enacted in life. For whether in guise or disguise, every man is an actor and plays a part, and all that we really know of a man is the part he plays; the real man is never seen. Perhaps we are justified in using the words person and individual the one for the other, since all we know of individuals is their persons. Only, we must keep it ever in mind that there is something deeper in a man than his person, and that though the person is the outbirth of the individual, and is constituted by the individual, it nevertheless is not the individual; is not identical with the innermost being, but something exterior and distinct. We live in a world where each one is a

veiled mystery to his fellows, and even our best friend is like Eros whose face Psyche sought to behold, with what tragedy we know.

Three things must be kept apart in our thought, if we would think clearly in this matter: the unknown something which lies below all else as the ground of our being; the conscious individual self; and the person.[1] Happily it is with the last of these that we have to do here, else this inquiry would soon lose itself in waveless depths which no man may fathom. The person, as has been said, is the image a man presents to the world, his character as shown in word and act as he moves in the scenes of life. Using the word in this sense, we may ask what relation does the person bear to the individual—that is, how much of the individual goes into the person? All, it may be answered, that given conditions—by which is meant native endowment, temperament, education, habit, social fellowship and fortune—will allow. No one can say absolutely, even with regard to himself, that the individual is expressed in the person. In some men we feel —perhaps also in ourselves—that there are capabilities which are never brought out in their lives, which find no scope in their environment, and which remain unused. Yet the very feeling

[1] See a paper on "Personality," by Dr. F. H. Hedge, found in a volume of his essays entitled, "Martin Luther and Other Essays" (1888), to which the present paper is richly indebted.

which such men inspire in us is a part of their personality, since it belongs to them to create in us an impression of reserved or unused power. So, if we may not say that the person is all there is in a man, we can say that it is all there is of him. At least it is all that we know of him, and all that the world knows.

So that personality is a matter of expression, and in nothing do men differ more than in their ability to put themselves into their words and deeds. It may be true, as Emerson held, that all souls are equally rich—that what Plato thought all may think, what the saints have felt all may feel—but by a fine art of life Plato and St. Francis gave lovely and abiding shape to the beauty that was in them. Emerson argued that such beauty is in all of us, potentially at least, else we would not recognize it when it is revealed in others. If this be so, many men are like the dear old woman in the George Eliot story who died unhappy for fear her husband would not find the keys to the blue closet up-stairs. They live with many closets locked, and take the keys with them when they die. Those closets may be full of treasure; they may be empty and bare; all we know is that they are closed. Some natures seem almost transparent, but while each may have a unique and precious beauty in his own soul, it is too often but dimly seen. Nor is this strange. Our human lot is nowhere better described than

by Robert Browning in "Paracelsus," when he says that there is an inmost centre of truth in us all—the *funklein* of the German mystics, perhaps —but around,

> "Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in;
> A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
> Binds it, and makes all error."

Not only all error, but all ugliness as well; for the art of life consists in opening out a way whence what is deepest within us may escape into our words and acts. Whether the effigy of ourselves which men see—our personality—is a true likeness or a cartoon, depends not only upon our sincerity but also upon our lucidity of life. Whether a man write a poem or live one, he must have "a heart in the business," as Gil Blas cried on the road to Merida, but he must also have a certain grace of art. By as much as he puts himself into his work, transfers his spirit into it—just as, it is said, the Arab sage, in practicing with gems, looses their spirit in his cruce—by so much does he win personality, which is the plot alike of literature, philosophy, and life. But the culture of personality is of all arts the most difficult, for the raw material of human nature is obstinate and resists the impress of the ideal in a thousand ways. Hence the most beautiful thing on earth is a pure and noble soul express-

ing itself in a form befitting its nobility and beauty.

II

What amazed Robert Louis Stevenson, as it must amaze any thinking man, is that men pay more attention to the making of a fortune than to the making of a personality. For our personality—the image of ourselves among men—is all that remains of us on earth when our bodily form has fallen into dust. We cast ourselves into our action, and the cast remains; all else vanishes. To live on the earth is thus not to live while the body lasts, and then no more; it is to live forever. From this kind of personal immortality, vague as it may seem, there is no escape. In this sense, if in no other, the words of Jesus, uttered when He was about to vanish out of sight—"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"—are eternally true. He is with us still—richly and divinely with us in the image of Himself which He stamped on the world; with us, subtly colouring the life of mankind, as the Friar said of the supposedly dead hero in "Much Ado About Nothing": "The idea of his life shall sweetly creep into the current of our imagination." So, in less degree, are all the prophets, teachers and saints who have stretched a spiritual firmament over our workaday world, and set their names in it for suns and stars.

All who were once here are still here: their

words are they, their acts are they; and though both be forgotten, their influence survives; their person is immortal. What other men dreamed and said and did in the past makes a network about us, which we cannot escape. When we try to annul a contract, the thoughts of the dead jurists of England, living though their ashes have long been cold, forbid us. If we would overreach a fellow man, the words of an old Roman lawyer, who died before Justinian, estop us. This act, Moses commands; that, King Alfred. Thus the dead rule and the living obey, as, for weal or woe, the men of the future will obey us when our lives have been added to the momentum of the great body of influence and law. No wonder the pioneers of our race have found comfort in this fact, as in the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, taking thence the courage to labour for the right in face of obloquy or apathy, assured that by so doing they make it easier for the men of to-morrow to see the truth and do the right.

The men of Islam say that after death the soul is made to cross a narrow bridge over a gulf of fire, on its way to its fate. On that bridge it is met by a spectre, which being questioned as to what it is, answers, "I am the spirit of thy life." In the case of every soul that has worn the burden of flesh this is a fact—the spirit of its life survives. Our earth teems with such. They are

all about us—not as swarming entities in the air, but as influences, ideas, forces derived from all the shadowy past. Every soul that has lived on the earth has by its life added something, though it may have been only a mite, to make the world what it is. The strong man added his labour and sorrow, the little child its smile and song; for, as George Eliot said, "that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs." Many of the noblest minds of the race have wished for no other immortality; and, as some one has well said, for him who is careless of this, no other immortality can yield much joy.

If the soul sees, after death, what passes on this earth, and watches over the welfare of those it loves, then must its keenest joy consist in seeing its good influences widen out, as rivulets widen into rivers; and its sharpest pang in seeing its evil influences causing mischief and misery. Lofty and noble, albeit touched with plaintive wistfulness, was the prayer of George Eliot, in which all of us may devoutly unite—though we may not hope to have it answered for us in the same far-reaching manner that it has been answered for her—when she asked that she might join "the choir invisible of those immortal dead who live again in minds made better by their presence," and

"Be to other souls
A cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
Be the sweet presence of a good diffuse
And in diffusion ever more intense."

Yet, even so, it is a dim destiny for which we thus ask, and far below what we have reason to hope. Vague indeed is the dream of living again in the lives of others, as influences urging them to vaster thoughts, or else as our inherited tendencies are the pale immortality in us of those who went before us. If this be all, even if our prayer were answered, it could only mean that at last, after myriads of dusty deaths, in some distant time a few men would be utterly good and utterly wise; but only for a brief time, for they too would soon vanish. No; the far off divine event, hinted to us in the finale of "In Memoriam," stirs us only when we feel that we are to see that victory. What is immortality, if to attain it our souls here and now be lost or so changed that we have no memory of the people and things we loved, of the suffering we bore or inflicted, of even the sins that made us glad only to make us, later, sad? Though Theocritus and his songs be remembered, does he remember the island of which he sang, its soft skies and its violet seas? What to him is an eternity of fame in his long-echoing song, if *he* remember not?

That there is another kind of immortality, a

continuing life of the individual self, some of us are confident; just as we are sure that Jesus is with us in ways more dynamic than as an image of ideal beauty, "a sovereign legend of pity," and an influence for good. That the soul, the innermost being, is immortal needs no proof, since it belongs to the nature of an entity, if such it be, or to a force, as it certainly is, to persist. That it will exist as a conscious individual self, retaining love, memory, and fellowship, we cannot prove. Yet of this, too, some of us are increasingly assured, having, as we think, ample basis for a just and victorious hope. While we do not know the future, whether far or near, a vision of the fathomless depths out of which the soul has come, and the unfulfilled powers with which it is endowed, give intimation of its power of going on. Think of it how we will, the only way out of unworthy views of both God and man is the faith that He who made us what we are will lead us to what we ought to be.

III

THE ABYSMAL DEPTHS

OF the nature of the deeper self, which lies below personality, much has been said of late years. Many lights have been thrown upon it, many plummets dropped into it, but it is not clear that we know much more about what lies in that abysmal depth than Plato knew. Like him, we must still speak of these things in myths, parables, and symbols, in what he called "lies by approximation,"—and lies they must needs be, since we cannot tell the truth about these veiled mysteries. Those who talk so wisely of the Platonic idea of the soul ought, in all fairness, to specify which one of his ideas they have in mind. For he had many and various thoughts about the nature of the soul and its wayfaring in the future, and apparently none of them were such as are so often ascribed to him, which are often only exigeses of his misunderstood metaphors into dogmatically asserted metaphysical entities. As was said of another, Plato was too wise to be wholly a poet, yet too truly a poet to be implacably wise.

Only a word can be said about what is called the modern "science of the subconscious," and

it must be a word of grave caution, lest we find ourselves in a bog.[1] It is true that a part of our nature, perhaps its largest part, lies below the level of conscious feeling, thought, and will, and that our surface self is indeed small in comparison with what is hidden beneath it in "the centre, the fund, the bottom, of the soul," as William Law would say. It may be that the real machinery of our being, like that of an ocean liner, is far below, but the captain and the pilot must be on deck and at their posts, or the ship will come to grief. Nor must we forget that much else is hidden in those mysterious recesses besides the automatic activities of our nature, such as our hereditary tendencies and the like. There, side by side with the least known powers of man, are also his most animal instincts, his ugly Mr. Hyde, the remains of his savage ancestry; all that the soul either casts off or transmutes in its

[1] It has been said that William James and F. W. H. Myers are to blame, if blame there be, for the present emphasis on the subconscious as applied to religious experience. However that may be, each knew what he was about, and neither should be held to account for the deluge of pseudo-science and fantastic nonsense which now threatens us. So potent is this charm of the subliminal that even teachers of accredited acumen have been enticed thereby into strange ways. When the subliminal is hailed as "the Mesopotamia of Liberal Christianity"; when the telepathic hypothesis is evoked to support the mysticism of St. Paul ("Paul the Mystic," by J. M. Campbell, 1907) or to settle the question of inspiration, as though prophets were inspired from below and not from above ("The Rational Basis of Orthodoxy," by A. W. Moore, 1901); when spiritism

ascent. At least we should be careful to avoid the blunder of making it appear that the subconscious, whether as a mental or moral factor, is superior to the conscious; a view which, if followed out, means fatalism and the end of morality. Too often, one fears, the advocates of the subconscious forget the "ape and tiger" in their effort to rescue an imprisoned angel.

Whether this vague region lies above, as Ebrard thought, or below, as is now held, it is less a region than a name, when it is not simply a convenient receptacle for inconvenient facts. No doubt Noah was aware of the fact that there is more in the depth of the soul than he himself knew—unguessed powers which crises evoke, reserved strengths near at hand, glimpses of hitherto unimagined beauties and horrors—but

serves to confirm "*the post mortem*" life of Jesus ("Religion and Experience," by J. Brierly, 1906); when the subconscious is apparently made the basis of theology ("The New Theology," by R. J. Campbell, 1907), if not the explanation of the divinity of Christ, in lieu of the Kenotic theories of Germany ("Personality in Christ and in Ourselves," by Wm. Sanday, 1911); with quaint revivals of antique superstitions wearing the name of New Thought ("The Power of Silence," by H. W. Dresser, pp. 59, 84ff, 1899), it is time to pause. All this despite the warning of science and without its sanction. ("A Symposium, Journal of Abnormal Psychology," April–May and June–July, 1907; "The Subconscious," by Joseph Jastrow, 1906; "Personalism," by B. P. Bowne, 1908.) Why this is so, and by what exigency wise men were driven or led into a blind alley, Prof. G. A. Coe has pointed out, and his satire is not amiss. ("American Journal of Theology, July, 1909.)

he did not betake himself to that realm, implying, if not confessing, the defeat of thought in its higher reaches. Nor did he, so far as we know, exhort men to abandon the watch-tower of the soul and look for God amid the shadows in the basement of the mind. Character would seem to be formed by conscious self-determinations; and the way to God, if He is to be found at all, is by raising all our powers, rational and moral, to their height; not by wandering through the dim passages of the subconscious, seeking the still darker relations with the under world by which the subconscious has been formed, or is being influenced through inarticulate memories and impressions, only to fall into the abyss of the unknowable. No; we are bidden to seek those things which are above, climbing out of the dark caves towards a star of happy light.

Our conscious life may be only a flowing mirror on the surface of the soul, reflecting the stars above and the wonders below, but it is our chief point of interest. Though it be only a tiny plot, it is none the less our field, and about it as a centre a man must unify himself, bringing out of the hiddenness of his nature what treasures [1] soever may be there, remaking, transmut-

[1] But Dr. Sanday, in his lectures on "Personality in Christ and in Ourselves" (1911), will have it that the subconscious is not only a storeroom, but a workshop; "none the less a workshop because the work is done in the dark" (p. 38). To

ing, and enriching it, and thus "putting on the divine humanity." One man has done well when he has brought to the surface ore which another man—like Emerson or Newman—whose moral mining seems to have been done for him before he was born, with less effort works into shapes of beauty. Our task is to widen, deepen, and heighten the area of conscious life and activity, opening up the paths which permit the inflow of larger life, and the fellowship of higher reality. We are, as Plato said, not so much a *being* as a *becoming*; and it is only by an unrest-

which all agree—but he does not raise the question as to whether there is anything in the subconscious that did not originally enter through the gate of consciousness, though he seems to imply that there may be a dark back door to the mind. But, admit that the subconscious is a workshop: who is the workman, or is the work done automatically? If our moral life is wrought out largely in this way, is it moral at all? If our communion with God, as he tells us, is also in large part of this kind, is it communion? It was the thesis of George Eliot, in "Romola," that sin consists primarily not so much in the motive as in the making of the motive; that is, in the intent involved in attention; the will as applied to the choice of ideas that shall frequent the mental life, and, by playing round it and through it, make it after their own fashion. This thesis she works out with rare insight and impressiveness; but she leaves us in no doubt as to Tito Malema's deliberate choice of the ideas that poisoned his soul and wrought his downfall. The work may have been done in the dark, but he initiated it and furnished the pattern. It is not otherwise in the life of faith, and prayer, and hope, which, however dim and half-conscious its beginnings, becomes more and more a conscious quest and achievement.

ing process of advance along "the inward way," involving the death in us of low-born and base desires, that we may attain to a personality of a superior type, and begin at last fully to be. Life should thus be a perpetual disclosure of a beautiful soul, if we make it so, ever remembering, as we are told in the noble passage in *Othello*, which, on the lips of Iago, is so out of character, that it may be taken to be the poet himself speaking:

"'Tis in ourselves that we are thus, or thus. Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners; so that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs or distract it with many, either to have it sterile with idleness or manured with industry, why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions; but we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings," and so on, in several sentences more of Elizabethan bluntness.

Nor is it true that the soul, in its higher ranges of culture and achievement, tends to fade away into the mist of impersonality. No student of biography can accept that dogma. It may have seemed to be true under the shadow

of eastern pantheism, where men were apparently lost and drowned while voyaging in divine seas, but it was only seeming. If we may judge by the men who have attained to the highest life, it is not so. The two men in recent time of whom this was most often suggested were Emerson and Wordsworth, yet no two minds stand out with more vividness and beauty. Nor is it so in the lives of the great mystics who assure us, over and over again, that personality is not lost, but becomes more real as they approach the divine. As St. Augustine exclaimed, "My life shall be a real life, being wholly full of Thee," [1] and the nearer St. Paul came to Christ the more vividly aware he became of his own soul. Our ideals, in the deepest sense, are foregleams of future possible reality, and our upward strivings are prophetic of One in whom they find fulfillment and end. [2]

Of the laws of the innermost life this is not the place to speak in detail, except to say that great truths, when sincerely and habitually held in the mind, find their way into the deepest life, and shape it. Finally and at bottom every man is what his thinking is. If foolish notions preside over the whole sordid and tragical procession of

[1] "Confessions of St. Augustine," Book X, Chap. XXVIII.

[2] "The Nature of Personality," by William Temple (1911). As only the saints look up references, one is tempted to transcribe the passage (pp. 62–64), but space forbids.

human vice, that fact should only serve to emphasize the power over man of great and valid ideas. Since it is true that life answers to the kind of ideas held in the mind, it behooves us to fix authentic and abiding truths in our hearts, and hold them there until they lay hold of us and make us after their design. Here is the strategic position in the moral life. There is no evil we may not overcome, no crisis we may not face, if the mind be thus armoured and the heart ruled by just, sane, and lofty truths. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he, so is God near or far, and so are the abysmal depths clear or dark.

IV

THE WINGED VICTORY

I

WHAT is more to the purpose of these studies is the inquiry as to whether we can modify personality, and what power we have to enlarge, elevate and expand it. Here we meet the dogma of the unchangeableness of innate tendencies in men, and the consequent invariability of the primitive disposition. There are those who refuse to believe in the new man, or in any positive improvement in a human being. Only the appearances, they tell us, are refined; there is no change below the surface. The man we knew ten years ago and know now is the man we shall know ten years hence, if we are both alive. He may make a fortune or lose one. He may succeed or fail. His wealth or poverty may take him into new society or into new surroundings; it may give him a new manner; but it will not make him a new man. He may go away to where his scampishness does not obtrusively show, but a scamp he remains.

Just so a man may grow stronger or feebler in health, he must grow older, he may grow wiser, but his nature does not change. Life may

indeed modify the proportions of his character. Trouble may sharpen his sympathies or luck increase his native buoyancy. But these changes are, so to speak, functional, nor organic and fundamental. The impulsive man will not become cautious, or the cautious man rash, though education may refine both and religion make them more reverent. All the tears in the world cannot quench the naturally hopeful, nor all the happiness inspirit the naturally depressed. If it were not so, say the wise; if changes of character were really common, life would be no drama at all, but a horrible medley of half-seen acts and broken dialogue. It is the "strict limitation which the changelessness of character puts upon the mutability of things which makes life both dear and entertaining," and which mitigates the terrible sense of chance and instability which occasionally makes the heart of even the strongest man stand still within him.

So argue the worldly wise; and while they may seem at first to hold the field, yet their insight does not go beneath the skin of things, and whole regiments of deeper facts rise up to put their fatalism and pessimism to flight. If what they say were true, life would indeed be a play—a poor puppet show in which wooden figures are pulled to and fro on wires until the master of the stage grows aweary of the farce. To meet a man after ten years of life in such a world as this and

find him no deeper of soul, no larger of heart, no more a friend of God, is neither "dear nor entertaining"; it is dismal tragedy. What tragedy, then, if he were doomed to such a fate—doomed to be always the same, exhibiting, like some of the figures in the Dickens stories, the same tricks and traits of nature, with never any variation, nor any hope of freedom or change! Then would our humanity be an assembly of wax figures, and our human voyage "a painted ship upon a painted ocean." No, what makes life dear and worth the living is the touch of soul upon soul, evoking new powers and making us other and better than we were; and the play upon us of divine influences, wooing us to higher life and richer, with a vision of the man we ought to be ever on before—the sense, born in each of us, of a perfection ever about to be attained, a joy and victory ever about to be realized.

It is true, as Goethe said, that underneath every human life lies a divinely laid ground-plan, upon which the character must rest. Whether a man build with gold, silver and precious jewels, or with wood, hay and stubble, he can build on no other foundation. That is to say, no man can develop powers he does not possess or overleap the limits of his being. Individuality is primitive and fatal. Temperament, no doubt, goes far back and deep down, but it is alterable to some extent, while personality is susceptible to modifi-

cation almost without end. So that Tolstoi, looking back down the years, might have seen many effigies of himself, many personalities—the gay, sin-bespattered young nobleman, the gloom-crowned atheist, the tender, suffering humanist, and the saint waiting at the beautiful gate. It may be admitted that man, toiling unaided and alone, makes slow progress towards the ideal, but man does not toil alone. Of old it was written, "He hath made us, and not we ourselves," and nothing is more certain than that He is still making and remaking us. Not that the soul is inactive, or the heart passive under His touch, but in Him we live and move and have our being, and no man, though he flee to the ends of the earth, is secure from His sweet surprises.

Truly the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. Ignatius Loyola was a gay Spanish gallant until a cannon-ball broke his leg and he opened the "Lives of the Saints" to beguile the weary hours. When, behold! by some mysterious chemistry, the play of a new influence upon the old qualities produced not only a revolution of life, but a new quality of character—a new personality. The colliers of Kingswood, like their fathers before them, were big, rough, begrimed men, hard workers and hard drinkers, until Wesley stood among them. Upon them fell the white fire from the soul of the great evangelist,

and the result was a type of life so unlike what they had been as scarcely to be recognizable either by themselves or by their neighbours. Even the lowest of the low—*Dead Souls*, as Gogol would say, *Ex-Men*, as Gorky described them—are thus transformed and raised, as from the grave, into lives of purity, usefulness and joy; not only saved, but filled with an ardent, tender, joyous passion to rescue others of their kind.[1] So read the records of the Christian ages, disclosing a power working in us and through us, renewing a right spirit within man and establishing a new order of life.

Here is a fact—as old as Pascal, St. Francis and St. Paul, known to Augustine and Cardinal Newman—which puts fatalism and pessimism, with all their wise and witty lore, to shame. The discovery of a new element in the air, or of a new star out on some dim margin of the heavens, thrilling as each may be, is only the wonder of a day compared with this marvel. Deny it as men

[1] Examples in point are the volumes by Harold Begbie, "Twice-Born Men" and "Souls in Action,"—which the author modestly describes as foot-notes to Professor James' "Varieties of Religious Experience"—sketches, from real life, of human wrecks in the East and West Ends of London lifted out of the mire into usefulness and honour by the Gospel of Christ, when that Gospel was manifested through tender, tactful, loving human ministry. William James does not explain this wonder; nor does Harold Begbie. They are filled with awe by the simple facts, which make a rare assortment of human documents and two remarkable volumes of Christian evidences.

will, this rebirth of the soul is the master fact of our human world. Not only does religion rest upon it, but all our higher human life is made possible by this self-transcendence, whereby the soul, many times reborn, mounts upward through its dead selves towards the ideal. For we need not stop with one or two births, since life must be a continual death to what is old and a new birth into that spiritual environment which is always and everywhere present. Hence those glimpses, intimations, and strange visitings of beauty, and the wisdom of the great teachers who bid us drop all and follow them.

II

No palace of enchantment was ever half so wonderful as the world in which we live, where the most incredible things are every-day facts. From one angle our earth is a vast orb of dirt moving through the air, driven by force; but from another point of view the chief fact about it is the elusive spiritual atmosphere in which it is embosomed. God is in it, and many are the ways, and delicate the heavenly strategy, whereby He surprises the soul of man and captures it. Common things are touched, at times, with an eerie strangeness, and familiar realities become illuminated messages of warning and of hope. The day, whose coming in beauty fills us with nameless longings, departs with a glory that

makes the heart ache with a wild, sad joy, we know not why. What though a man build him a castle of unbelief, with thick walls and frowning towers, he is not safe; for,

"Just when we're safest, there's a sunset touch,
A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
A chorus ending from Euripides—
And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears,
As old and new at once as nature's self."

Thus are we lured, half unawares, into communion with Him to whom St. Anslem prayed as the Absolute Beauty. Often a forest vista seems to open, of a sudden, into heaven, as when Louisa Alcott, running over the hills, saw through an arch of trees the sun rise over river and meadow, and a great, God-given peace came into her heart, "never to change through forty years of life's vicissitudes." There are, indeed, the darker aspects of nature, what the Bible called "the wrath of God"; but the eternal beauty is far more constant and more persuasive. Not less true is it of our human world, in whose fellowships, as in a divine net, we are caught and held by the Fisher of men. Let a man look into his heart and he will see in how many ways the needs and aptitudes of our nature link us to the divine, and invite us to a life becoming to immortal souls. Love of persons and places, ties of blood and friendship, tender strokes of sorrow, the ministry of music, memory, hope, and a sense

of duty, with much else of a sort similar, make up in large part not only our life, but also our religion—not all of it, but much of it; for, "what we cannot but worship, that we should."[1] No wonder that from the earliest times man has been thinking beautiful and solemn thoughts about the world, about human life, and about his fellow souls, and out of this response to the mystery and beauty of life grew his faiths and his fine arts.

Yet there is something finer than the fine arts, something to which all art and faith alike may minister: "*the art to live*," which Mark Pattison said is the highest of all arts—but his "Memoirs" show, what all of us find out, how hard it is to master an art which is also an incarnation. Hence the wise life of Socrates, who did nothing, he tells us in his "Apology," but go about persuading men, old and young alike, not to take thought of fame or fortune, but first and chiefly to care about "the greatest improvement of the soul." When summoned up, all the high wisdom of the world agrees that we are here upon the earth to grow a rich, tender, valiant, refined soul, and that it is in pressing on from what we are to something higher that goodness exists. Apart from this ascending effort towards spiritual grace and beauty, our life has no real meaning, and when this quest is abandoned it loses its rhythm

[1] "The Religion of All Good Men," by H. W. Garrod, Chap. II (1906).

and its soul of fire. For it is the growing of a soul which makes our life, to its last day, full of zest and earnestness, of the joy of self-conquest and the strange peace of self-forgetting. To him with whom courage is continual and culture a habit, old age will be only "the last of life for which the first was made," glorified with what Carlyle saw in Chalmers, a kind of luminous serenity, as of an "oncoming evening and the star-crowned night."

Living in a world of beauty, wonder and power, the one art worth trying for is the art of cultivating a rich inner life, and of giving it expression in the colour, tone, and form of our souls,—in the atmosphere and image of ourselves among men. All that is about us turns, by some mysterious alchemy, into something inside, becoming a part of our inmost self. This deposit of experience, with whatever else may be hidden in the depth of our nature, is, so to speak, the raw material and energy which we are to transmute until it becomes an inwrought grace in our words and acts. So then it is, in this world of nature and society, of labour and sport, of sorrow to some of us, of temptation to all, and yet more of high incentive and appeal, we are all set to the task of "working out our own salvation," as the wise old Bible puts it. To this end, all good things are ours to be used in the making of a life of grace, beauty, and power, "nor soul helps

flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul," as Browning said with a sure insight and candour. One also of our own poets has shown, in a book of beauty, in what ways the body, so long held to be a clog to the soul, may be made an instrument for the expression of personality.

"Grace and beauty are necessities of personality and revelations of power, not to be affected nor compelled, but to be cultivated lawfully and revered as puissant oracles of the divine. A well-poised body, while expressing a well-poised character, reacts, in turn, on that character to help and enrich the whole personality. The soul is at ease in the body only when it is using it as a means of expression or action. So when art would embody in beauty the idea of triumph without weariness, of glad elation untouched by envious defeat, of high intelligence overcoming the barbarous and base—when it would add to the fairest human loveliness some hint of superhuman power and dominion over a region more vast than earth—it created the *Victory of the Wings*, to be a lasting signal before our wondering eyes, and an incentive to that dignity of bearing which we behold only in the rarest personalities."[1]

[1] "The Making of Personality," by Bliss Carmen (1908). A book of beauty it is, aglow with colour, vibrancy, and the joy of living, as if some old Greek had stepped out of the world of ancient dream.

When shall we become that which we are! cried Maeterlink, who knows that our life should be, through all its unfoldings, a Victory of the Wings. To be sure, it was only a fancy when Plato said that the soul, in a former state, was winged, and that thus it comes to pass, in this life, when it is stirred by the power of music or poetry, or the sight of beauty, its memory is quickened, and forthwith there is a struggling and pricking pain, as of wings trying to come forth. Yet was it a parable of what we may become, as shown us in those skyey souls who reveal "to what fine issues our mortal life ascends." These sought the highest things, subdued passions, mastered moods, harnassed wayward wills, wrought in brave sincerity, following the angel of their better nature, until they attained to a dignity and poise of soul, a sense of glad elation without vanity, like that embodied in the Vision of the Wings. So may we, frail though we are, attain to such grace and refinement of soul as becomes men who live in a world where there is truth to seek, loving service to render, and where, at sunset, the clouds are touched as if by magic into something, it would seem, other and diviner than themselves.

V

THE LINES OF LIFE

AS has been said, chief among the influences that incite to noble living, evoking and giving shape to what is best within us, is personality itself. No other power on earth is so constant, so penetrating, so gracious, so irresistible; no other so charged with potencies whose range we cannot limit. Only contact is needed, and it becomes a haunting, healing, fructifying power, entering when the doors are closed.

Much knowledge we can learn from books, but, as John Morley reminds us, "the detail, the colour, the tone which make it live in us all, these you catch from those in whom it already lives." Under the spell of the Truth made flesh, buds open seemingly of themselves, and men are changed as if by miracle; as in the life of Jesus the impulsive and unstable Peter became a man of massive nobility and solidity of character, and the fiery Son of Thunder became a meditative mystic who read for us the heart of the Master. So it is, though in less degree, all through our human life. There are men to know whom is

a kind of religion, who are to us what Edmund Spencer in his "Faerie Queen" said of the true teacher—one who is "with unwearied fingers drawing out *the lines of life*, from living knowledge hid." In the strange and tangled business of the world no other influence so steadily does its work as the silent, unobtrusive power of a good life, which reaches to

> "The depths of human souls—
> Souls that appear to have no depth at all
> To careless eyes."

All great souls are founders of spiritual families, centres wherefrom radiates a new light, as though "the flowing light of God" were focused in them, as in a lens, only that it may shine through them upon the human pathway. Within the area of the influence of a Paul, a Francis, a Wesley, an Emerson, a new atmosphere is felt, and new personalities appear. The path of St. Paul, the "wandering Ulysses of our Christian Odyssey," was marked by a train of churches along the way of his journeyings. Where Francis went, he left bands of men, "fragrant with a wondrous aspect," where only idle, frivolous or filthy life had been before. A whole race of poets and idealists may be traced to Emerson, while the influence of Lincoln is a stream of sweetness, earnestness and fine sagacity in our national life. Which thing is also a parable writ

in large letters of what is true of the humblest life when it has done with self-seeking, and has learned to give forth in a worthy form the beauty that is in it.

Much of the power of great men is due, no doubt, to the ideas they advocate and the causes they espouse, and more, perhaps, to an overmastering, unifying purpose which, both philosophically[1] and practically, is needed to draw out and give direction to the powers. There is, indeed, a noble kind of narrowness, without which the life of a man, however rich and rare his gifts, is apt to be, as Jeremy Taylor said, "soft, loose, and wandering"; but one must be broad before he can be nobly, usefully narrow. Wendell Phillips was a man of broad culture and fine powers who condensed his information and enthusiasm and poured them into one channel, with the rapidity of a mountain torrent. So, after a manner, did Ruskin, who was moved by the Spirit of Beauty as Wesley was by the Spirit of Jesus; the impetus of whose passionate evangelism we feel to-day in our desire that all men should have access to beauty, as to a sacrament, as well as in our efforts to live beautifully and reverently. These men, and others of their kind, by bringing all their powers to a focus upon a

[1] "The Nature of Personality," by William Temple (1911), where the power of purpose, as a constitutive element in personality, is emphasized most impressively and suggestively.

high purpose, impressed their purpose, and with it themselves, upon the life of the world. Their purpose gave definiteness to their lives while saving them from the self-consciousness which mars so many forms of culture.[1] Here is a hint which we may follow to our saving. Noble causes are ever beseeching our aid, and while we may not do great things, the path is the same though it wind through humble scenes unnoted of the world.

And, finally, there is an "inward way of life" which, if followed, leads through the dark night of Time to such a union with the divine as lifts man to the height of vision, while helping him the better to serve his fellows in the humblest

[1] Not alone such self-culture as Goethe proclaimed, but in much of the modern quest for personal power. Followers of what is called New Thought set little store, apparently, by charity, pity and renunciation—the great fruits of religion. Too often it seems to be all for their own personal health or luck or peace of mind or success, and the optimism they emphasize is seldom compatible with humility of heart. It is a self-centred optimism, which, when it does not blink the hard facts of life, asks men to think too much about themselves, as an actor keeps his mind fixed on his face. The deep difference between it and religion is, that one wants to get, while the other wants to give; for in these high matters we get by losing, and can only keep what we give away. One almost feels that the New Thought, while it may have its value, is a subtle selfishness trying to wear the robes of a mystical faith. Our day of hurry and unrest, when men take up with almost anything and make a religion out of it, gives it a vogue.

tasks and duties of the common lot. As we see it from afar in the lives of the great mystics, it seems to mean not only a new personality of amazing beauty and power, but a new order of life, requiring, it has been said, "a special psychological system" whereof we know little; a new centre of being and a new method of feeling and action. To them it is given to know that death is nothing to the soul, and that our life is hid from the vanishings of Time in the Sanctuary of the Eternal. They are not left, as we are, to build a frail hope out of the fragments of three score years and ten. They are lifted to where the star of their inborn destiny lies below their feet, mastered and outsped. Yet do they sit by our side, without insignia of wisdom or power, humble as a little child: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Of them and the life they follow, a student has written:[1]

"It ends with the coming forth of divine humanity, never again to leave us: living in us and with us, a pilgrim, a worker, a guest at our table, a sharer at all hazards in life. The mystics witness to this story: waking very early they have run on before us, urged by the greatness of their love. We, incapable as yet of this sublime encounter, looking in their magic mirror, listening to their stammered tidings, may see far off the consummation of the race. They have con-

[1] "Mysticism," by Evelyn Underhill (1911).

formed here and now to the utmost tests of divine sonship, the final demands of life. They have not shrunk from the suffering of the cross. They have faced the darkness of the tomb. Beauty and agony alike have called them: alike have awakened a heroic response. For them the winter is over: the time of the singing of birds is come."

All these elements met in St. Paul—the mystic spell of a person, the noble narrowness of a purpose, and the inward quest of spiritual reality as it disclosed itself to him in prayer and brooding meditation which kindled his spirit and set his words afire. If one asks for the meaning of his life, the secret of its splendour and power, it is found in the words: "*For me to live is Christ!*" His sovereign ambition, that about which his great powers gathered and grew, was so to put on Christ, so to partake of the fellowship of His sufferings and the sacrament of His death, as to reproduce His personality on earth. It was therefore that he fought a good fight, kept the faith, and was ready to be offered up, knowing the power of an endless life.

Weak though we are, followers of the Master afar off, with many sorrows and misgivings, this is also our mission and our destiny. And at last, having "tried a little and failed much," though the scroll of our life be torn and soiled, as alas it certainly is, we need not fear to leave it in the hands of Him who, on that Sabbath

morning, closed the book of prophecy, assured, by His life here below, that He will know what we tried to write, and will impute to us somewhat of that which we are to be. Perchance He is with us even now, "with unwearied fingers drawing out the lines of life," and we, slow of heart and dull of eye, know not that it is He whose Presence touches us to wisefulness:

"Lord Christ, if Thou art with us and these eyes
Are holden, while we go sadly and say
'We hoped it had been He, and now to-day
Is the third day, and hope within us dies.'
Bear with us, oh, our Master, Thou art wise
And knoweth our foolishness; we do not pray
'Declare Thyself, since weary grows the way
And faith's new burden hard upon us lies.'
Nay, choose Thy time; but ah! Whoe'er Thou art
Leave us not; where have we heard any voice
Like Thine? Our hearts burn in us as we go;
Stay with us; break our bread; so, for our part
Ere darkness falls haply we may rejoice,
Haply when day has been far spent may know."

The Living Word of Truth

In what sense is Christ eternal? Is He a living, abiding Presence among men? If so, how may He become real to us?

I

FORESHADOWINGS

ALL of us recall when the news came, some years ago, of awful disaster in the East. For those who knew its story, Sicily, even in its sorrow, was the country of glorious legends of love, of war, and of a happy age of gold; and the tidings had an added poignance of pathos, as of sadness in remembered gladness. Memories of the classics rose up before us—gods and goddesses, heroes, lovers in idyllic fields, came to mind and lived again with an immortality which the people of yesteryear could hardly hope for. Sicily recalled Theocritus, who sang the songs of simple folk by "the light and laughing sea," and whose poems are among the enduring possessions of that storied island which not flood nor fire could destroy.

But in the life of Jesus we have something more than the survival of the intangible beauty of art over the impermanence of material things. Surely there is no fact upon the earth more amazing, from every point of view, than the fact of Christ—His life, His person, and His in-

fluence upon the race. History makes Him real to us as a personality, as visible as Tacitus or Tiberius; but the record of His few short years, on that narrow strip of land, is only one chapter of "an unfinished life which shapes the world." Such a study, therefore, has to do not simply with One who lived in the dim past, although His life divided the story of man into before and after; but with a Living Reality in the present, which is slowly changing the winter of the world into summer. Not only did Jesus bring man and God into a new relation in a distant time, when He moved among the fisherfolk, and His words flashed their glory upon men from the facets of Oriental parable and paradox. More wonderful is the fact, and fact it surely is, that He does so still, and that He is thus, as a grave historian has said, "the personal concern of every one of us." [1]

Renan somewhere remarks that the great achievement of Christ was that He made Himself as much beloved after His death as He had been during His lifetime. The marvel was that One who slept in "a lone Syrian grave" could grasp the future in His nerveless hand, and touch, as with a wand, the lives of men on distant shores. It is indeed a marvel, more strange than the miracles of the gospel story which the facile

[1] "Conflict of Religions Within the Roman Empire," by T. R. Glover.

stylist tossed aside as being so many tales told by those who mistook myths for facts. In imagination one can see Plato walking to and fro in the porch of philosophy, and the young Greeks listening to his sublime discourse. The scene is remote, veiled somewhat in mist, and touched with the glamour of the antique. But it is not so of Him who walked and taught in Galilee, albeit Tacitus dismissed Him with a sentence and Lucian with a sneer.[1] Somehow, though twenty ages have passed, men do not think of Him as dead, nor yet as belonging to a time long gone by. Unlike the great Greek, He was not detained in the outer porch of the human soul, but entered, as a dear familiar friend, into its most hidden and sacred chambers. To-day He is a Living Presence walking up and down in the hearts of men, a thousand times more alive than when He journeyed here below.

Nor was the life of Jesus, whereof we read in "the book of white samite, mystical and wonderful," without its remote genealogy. The note of reminiscence recurs in it, again and again, like an undertone of refrain. About Him there hung always the suggestion, the memory, of a nameless and ineffable beauty, or pity, which had long been haunting the world. Foregleams of the Christ-spirit, foretokens of the Christ-idea, were

[1] Tacitus, "*Annales*," Chap. I, pp. 15, 44; Lucian, "*De Morte Peregrini*," Chap. XI.

seen in many lands, equally in the dreams of incarnations and in the lives of men of His spirit—sons of light and mercy who were as oases in the desert. The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy states[1] that Zoroaster had foretold the coming of Christ, to whom the "Hymn of Zarathushtra," recently translated, may be taken as a greeting to "an expected champion." Plato divined, dimly, the humanity of God out of which our humanity was born, and longed to see that eternal tenderness take human shape. It may be that the mysterious infant foreshadowed by Virgil, in the "*Pollio Eclogue*," was only a poetic dream of a returning golden age; but it is a striking passage none the less,[2] as if, indeed, "thoughts beyond their thoughts to those high bards were given." This dream took many forms in the poetry, faith and aspiration of men, as though to show that the vague, formless Absolute did not satisfy the human heart, which craved some embodiment, some visible shape of the Eternal, about which its love and reverence might gather.

Time out of mind there had been legends of god-men, of divine incarnations, of wonder-workers and redeemers; and so intense was the longing for such a teacher that it has been conjectured that, had not Jesus come, it would have gathered

[1] Chap. VII: "As Zerdusht had predicted."

[2] "*Eclogue*," Chap. V, translated by C. S. Calverley (1868).

about some one else.[1] Examples are many, as in the inscriptions of Priene, Halicarnassus, Apemeia and Eumeneia, lately come to light, proclaiming the introduction of the Julian calendar and ascribing divine honours to Augustus. So also Tiridates, the Mithraist king of Parthia, of whom Pliny the Elder tells us,[2] who, having heard that the prosperity of the Roman Empire was due to the appearance of a divine incarnation, an august personality, who reigned under the name and title of Cæsar, paid Nero a visit, in order to worship the god-man and to surrender to him the kingdom of Parthia. How little did he know Nero, although he addressed him, so Dion Cassius reports,[3] with the words: "I came to thee, as

[1] Of course it is idle to guess at what would have happened had not something else occurred; as idle as it is to say that Christ did not create Christianity, but was created by it: that by a mere chance, as it were, an humble teacher of spiritual and magnetic attraction became the point of coalescence and crystallization of a consensus of expectation, and the centre of a dream edifice. Here is *Hamlet* with the Prince of Denmark omitted —yet this thin theory has lately been put forth in the grave name of scholarship; whereas, a sense of humour, to say nothing of a sense of history and its forces, should have hushed it. But so potent is a bias that it will not only belittle Jesus to fit its scheme, but will proceed to magnify the various would-be Christs, including the Philostratus romance of "Apollonius of Tyana," into rivals. Even on that basis, the law of "the survival of the fittest" would seem to have settled the question, if there were a limit to absurdity when once it is set going.

[2] "Natural History," Chap. XXX, p. 16.

[3] "History of Rome," Chap. XLIII, p. 5.

to my God, in order to worship thee as the Mithras." Nor was Nero less unworthy than some others who were clothed with divine attributes by this flitting dream, seeking, pathetically, "a local habitation and a name." Weary of legend, cultured beyond the credulity that believes without evidence, the best classic minds, as Dr. Arnold said of Aurelius, were "sad and agitated," stretching out their arms for something beyond. Hence a yearning pensiveness, often sinking into a piercing pathos, which Browning interpreted in *Cleon*, as of a long winter with no hope of summer.

Among Hebrew seers there was the same looking forward, but with less wistfulness and more promise. Nor is this strange, for the Messianic hope had long been the key-note both of their religion and of their national life. Heard in faint hints from earliest times, it echoed through "the forest of the Psalms," gathering to its bosom many wandering tones until, at last, it rose to sublime music in the closing chapters of Isaiah. Those chapters, by whomsoever written, are among the greatest prophetic pages known among men, wherein the soul of a race, refined by suffering, became incandescent with ineffable beauty. There we behold a stately Figure walking the dreamy ways of prophecy—majestic and sorrowful, scourged and imprisoned, His beauty marred by the rude way of the world, yet full of grace

and pity. From afar the lonely watcher seemed to see, as through a glass darkly, the slowly coming Christ, and in striving to hail Him the seer himself became a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief, as it were the first miracle of His spirit. In the stress and agony of his day, in the solitude of his sorrow, his own creative love became prophetic, and he sought to be the Messiah of whom he prophesied. Lifted into the shadow of a mighty vision, he was "the Almost Christ, the Christ of the Night—the Shadow Christ."[1]

Here, manifestly, was a spiritual experience, a prophetic vision, as far removed from the wistful dreams of classic poets—who saw no Suffering Servant, tortured and disfigured, but a royal ruler in a robe of purple—as it was from the crass political Messiah of apostate Jewish statesmen like Josephus, who, forgetting the great spiritual tradition of his people, gave his allegiance to Vespasian as the Messiah. And it was in that noble spiritual tradition that Jesus stood, as if the faiths and hopes and high prophetic longings of His race had woven the seamless robe in which His divine beauty was clad. How unlike all others was the Teacher who swayed men by "that strange power called weakness," while proclaim-

[1] "The Shadow Christ," by Gerald Stanley Lee (1905). A book of singular beauty, vividness, and insight, interpreting the foregleams of Christ in the Old Testament, as only a poet can do.

ing Love as the one sweet energy whereby the world is to be redeemed. This it was—a divine love which had hovered over man as a holy dream, a flitting vision, an echoing voice—that Jesus incarnated in a form dross-drained and perfect, fulfilling the radiant intimations of the highest minds and satisfying the God-lonesomeness of the race. The dim became vivid, the awful became lovely, and a new light and power and hope came upon man in the midst of the years.

So sublime a reality would naturally be adumbrated in the highest and best souls ages before its advent in history; and it may well have been forefelt not only by the prophets and singers of the Bible, but also, for aught we know, in the Buddha and Krishna legends, as well as in the dreams of Plato. All the great ideals are largely mysterious, and the words, even of the wisest, are as often as not "wiser than those that use them." The fact that Jesus, when He did come, absorbed into Himself the devotion formerly given to mythical beings, would seem to show that He was a fulfillment of a universal prophecy. Strange, indeed, is the suggestion that these foregleams of the Christ-idea, from whatever source, make the historical Jesus unnecessary and unreal; whereas they add enormously to the impressiveness of His life as an answer to human seeking. What had hitherto been a dream, or at most a hypostasis of aspiration, found embodiment

in a historic personality who was equal to an expression of "the human life of God" upon earth. As a result, there came into the world a spiritual power which overthrew the Roman Pantheon, and established upon the ruins of old philosophies and decaying cults a new order of life. No mere dream, made to clothe a peasant teacher, could thus have grasped the crumbling classic world and revived, reshaped and rescued it from the mire of its own rot.

As to that other and higher genealogy of Jesus —His heredity from God, and His sense of a fellowship with His Father before His advent in the flesh—it is not within the scope or wish of this paper to inquire. So far as His own sayings were reported, He Himself spoke of these things in words cryptic and dim, and where He was so reserved it ill becomes others to be talkative. The dogma of the Kenosis has been appealed to, but even when it is most vividly set forth [1] it emits

[1] "The Person and Place of Christ," by P. T. Forsyth (1909). A book of great power, aglow with divine fire and deeply suggestive, though its epigrams often dazzle us. As of the dogma of the Kenosis, or self-emptying, of Christ, so with the effort of Dr. Sanday to locate His divinity in His subconscious nature, whence it slowly emerged into His conscious life ("Personality in Christ and in Ourselves," 1911). They are alike dark and difficult, if not doubtful. Nor is there much light in the suggestion of Dr. Temple that "the form of His consciousness is human, the content divine" ("The Nature of Personality," 1911). The limitation of the knowledge of Jesus Himself is indubitable—even about Himself.

a feeble light, and leaves much that is dark. There is, indeed, a mystery about even the most ordinary person, while above the spiritually great brood clouds and darkness which none may penetrate. If we cannot fathom our own nature, there is little hope that we can measure One who was, as all admit, the most majestic of all the masters and deliverers of life that ever came forth "out of the bosom of humanity." It is enough to say with Carlyle—who, though he truncated his faith, had always something of the genius and passion of the prophets, joined with the insight of a historian—that the sphere melody of Jesus, "flowing in wild, native tones, took captive the souls of men, and, being of a truth sphere melody, still flows and sounds, though now with thousand-fold accompaniments and rich symphonies, through all our hearts, and modulates and divinely leads them."

II

THE WORD MADE FLESH

I

ALL along there have been those who denied that such a person as Jesus ever existed, though they are now almost an extinct race. Some held that He was an accumulation of abstract attributes, fortuitously assembled by the enchantment of a worshipful imagination; a figure woven of the wistful longings of men and clothed in the robe of myth. Others saw Him as an achievement of romance—a mouthpiece for the spiritual refinements and ethical maxims of certain great unknown geniuses whose teachings had long prevailed as an esoteric cult. Either theory, frail at best, falls flat by its own weight, as being not only without basis in fact, but too great a tax on our credulity. History aside, on literary grounds they ask us to believe an incredible thing—that the lowly hands of fisherfolk, more familiar with nets than with words, created a Figure more majestic, more winsome, more appealing, than the greatest literary geniuses have ever been able to achieve, and made Him speak "as never man spake." Or that a few unknown cultists in-

vented a Being so real, so living, so captivating, that for ages He was mistaken for a reality, equally by the most devout saints and the most critical intellects—surely that were a supreme miracle.

Yet, strangely enough, some such theory has been revamped of late and set forth as the key to the religious life, with this difference, however, between its old form and the new.[1] It now affirms that there is a living, Eternal Christ—a personalized aspect of the human life of God—unfolding in all mankind, and that this Eternal Christ is the life of Christianity. So far forth, the theory is true; but it is a strange inversion of realities to go on and argue that, because there is an eternal Christ-ideal, Jesus never existed as a historical person, or that if He did it does not

[1] "The Christ Myth," by Arthur Drews (1910). Back of this book is a dogma to establish which the author is willing, apparently, to go to any length. He writes as an almost fanatical monist, and in bitter opposition to what he calls "the poor and soulless faith in a personal God, in freedom and immortality." His reason for wishing to get rid of the historical Christ is that He is "the chief obstacle to a monistic religion." Judged by this bias, the book is a hodge-podge, taking familiar facts which every one knows and mixing them with much that nobody knows except the author, and stirring the whole into a syllabub, in which anything may mean anything else. The author has read "a frightful lot," as Goethe would say, but his book is valuable chiefly as an example of how far a dogma will lead a man. His vision of the Eternal Christ is marred by a too ardent zeal for monism.

matter to faith—that, as a fact, He is a myth, an ideal, or an imaginative symbol, like Mithras, Osiris, Krishna, Agni, and the rest. Such jugglery would be unworthy of notice but for its vogue with bewildered but essentially believing minds who are taken captive by it, lured by its emphasis on the Eternal Christ. That from the time-form of Jesus there emerged a Christ-ideal that is eternal, is true; but Jesus was and is more than an ideal. Even the ideal which He set up for our guiding would long ago have grown dim, or else faded altogether, without a living reality to recreate and revivify it. Whether Jesus was a fact or a myth does matter for our faith—matters vitally, and in a manner not to be overcome by devotion to a vague, dream-woven, mystic Christ who never walked among men.

In point of fact, it is no longer an open question, among historians, as to whether such a person as Jesus ever lived. That is an historic certainty, attested in so many ways that to deny it verges on the ridiculous. Put aside the gospel records as a tissue of legends, rule out the witness of Tacitus, Pliny, Suetonius, and there remains the fact of Christianity, by its very genius the religion of a Person, bearing perpetual witness to Him from whom it derived. As Keim, in his "*Jesu von Nazara*," after saying that the religion of Christ goes always mysteriously back to His person, adds, "This funda-

mental fact alone enables us to understand the religion which sprang from it." Criticism may busy itself with the question as to whether the picture of Jesus in the gospel records is a portraiture or an idealization—whether the writers exhibit Him as He really was, or as He appeared to a subsequent age, transfigured by reverence or distorted by superstition—but to deny that He ever lived is at once futile and belated folly. "It is no use," said the sane and acute J. S. Mill—and no fact has leaped to light to render his words less true than they were when he wrote them years ago—"it is no use to say that Christ as exhibited in the Gospels is not historical and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of His followers. The tradition of followers suffices to insert any number of marvels, and may have inserted all the miracles which He is reputed to have wrought. But who among His disciples or among their prosalytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort; still less the early Christian writers in whom nothing is more evident than that the good which was in them was all derived, as they always professed that it was derived, from the higher source. . . . About

the life and saying of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight, which . . . must place the Prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in His inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast." [1]

Such a study as this cannot do more than glance at the intricate problems with which criticism of the evangelic narrative has to deal, but it may at least emphasize the vital reality which is so often and so easily obscured. There are, as every student of comparative faiths knows, striking resemblances between the gospel record and the lives of other religious teachers of the East, particularly in what the critics call "the mythical elements." Dreams, heavenly voices, signs and wonders, legends of virgin births, of the mysterious visits of sages, and the like, were common and wide-spread in the East long before the time of Jesus, and were freely told of both real and imaginary characters. So striking, indeed, were some of these resemblances that at one time the Church was tempted to give the name of Buddha honour in its calendar of saints—just as Seneca was often cited like a Church Father as a Christian authority, until he was reclaimed for paganism by Erasmus and the humanists. No one worthy of notice charges the gospel writers

[1] "Three Essays on Religion," by J. S. Mill (1884).

with plagiarism, but the likenesses are too remarkable to be overlooked. If then we admit, as some seem willing to do,[1] that in trying to interpret and convey the overwhelming impression made upon them by the personality of Jesus, the writers made use of ideas current in their day, the better to reach the popular mind, it was only natural that they did so, and it leaves the essential fact undimmed. What we have to do is to get behind the form to the vital reality, which is a sure and redeeming possession of our race.

It is not otherwise with the eschatology of the Gospels, now so much emphasized,[2] which is dis-

[1] "Christ: The Beginnings of Dogma," by Johannes Weiss (1910). But, though the author is willing to go to such lengths, he does not forget the essential fact, which is that "the less we are able to understand the Christology . . . the more decisively we are referred back to Jesus in His own personality. To understand Him, to suffer ourselves to be drawn by Him into His life with the Father, must mean more to us than the finding of a formula of faith, with which we might be at once dogmatically correct and true to history."

[2] By such a student as Schweitzer, to name but a single example, whose "Quest of the Historical Jesus" (1910), though accounted blasphemous by some, is a book of great value and charm. He follows the apocalyptic current too far, perhaps, as does Mr. Garrod in his essay on *Christ the Forerunner* (1906) —where it is ingeniously argued that Jesus did not claim to be the Teacher long foretold, but only a Forerunner—but Schweitzer does not forget the essential thing, as witness his exquisite closing paragraph. We are willing to listen to a critic who is a lover of the Christ whom he is seeking amid the changing shadows of apocalyptic vision. On the other side see "The Eschatological Question of the Gospels," by Cyril W. Emmet (1911), a scholarly and convincing book.

tinctively Jewish, and whose influence on Christian thought is out of all proportion to the worth of its forms. Scientific conceptions of the world have replaced the panorama of Jewish apocalypse in our imaginative forecasts, but the spiritual truth thus adumbrated to us is the same. While we may admit that the details of an ethical system, framed for a world momentarily about to perish, can have to-day but a partial validity, yet its insight was sure and its principles are enduring. It is plain, as has been well said,[1] that the real interest of Jesus lay always in the moral and spiritual experiences which gather round the filial relation of man to God, and we are justified in putting aside the eschatological element, if we cannot interpret it, in order to attend the more closely to what has been and is of permanent significance.

II

What, then, is the Reality which is thus our chief concern and the object of our quest? It is the Fact of Christ—the pervasive, overmastering, transfiguring power of His unique personality. This the gospel writers felt, and this, with a skill of insight that is beyond the reach of conscious art, they convey to us in such-wise that it works in us the same wonder of faith and joy that it wrought in them. There is much of Plato

[1] "The Christian Doctrine of Man," by H. W. Robinson (1911).

in the Socratic dialogues—more of the disciple, it often seems, than of the master—but the great soul of Socrates was the inspiration of those gospels of the intellect. Just so, whatever part may have been played in the development and interpretation of Christian faith by St. Paul, with his emphasis upon the atoning sacrifice of the death on the Cross; by St. John with his Religion of Revealing, which is the supreme treasure of his piety; or by St. James with his salutary insistence that faith alone, without works, is empty and dead—Jesus is the power behind the New Testament.

"Not, to the modern mind, so much visibly in it as behind it. Just as science finds in all phenomena the manifestation of an unseen, ever-present Force, so the investigator to-day, turning over the Christian records, feels himself at every point in contact with the mystery that made them possible. Here, to the scientific mind, is the real question. For to whatever extent the inaccurate or the legendary may have crept into the New Testament, there is one thing in which its absolute reliability can never be questioned. It represents, with the accuracy of a hair balance, the impression made upon its writers by Christ's personality. The Fourth Gospel is the echo from the soul of its writer of the heavenly voice that had spoken to it. The Pauline Epistles show us what one of the deepest minds the world ever

produced felt about Jesus. The different reports of these manifold collaborateurs vary with all manner of individual idiosyncrasy and standpoint. But not one of them fails to make us understand that the One whom he wrote about had made on the writer the impression of something heavenly, mighty, beautiful beyond all that was human, of One who had opened new powers in, and disclosed new horizons to, his own soul." [1]

Not only was this true of a few men who recorded the story of His life, but it became true, increasingly, of the great, sad, decaying age that followed. If one would realize the magnitude of the Fact of Christ, and the wonder and bloom it brought to the wintry life of the world, let him go back and read the musings of the men who lived before Him. Rich indeed was the life of ancient Greece, whose treasures of philosophy, literature and art are now, and must ever be, an enduring part of the wealth of the world, which neither moth nor rust can corrupt nor thieves break through and steal. Yet, much as we love the beauty and ordered charm of life in classic times—with its love of reason, its worship of the holiness of beauty, and its hope not hopeless but unhopeful—when we stand, a few years later, on this side of Jesus, we are in a different atmosphere. Signs of spring are on all sides—a strange new

[1] "Ourselves and the Universe," by J. Brierley (1903). Essay on "The Christ of To-day."

hope welling up in the hearts of men, opening buds of joy and sunburst song. No wonder Rome was amazed by the advent, in her decaying cities, of a people whom torture could not affright nor death terrify. Those men singing songs in the catacombs must have recalled her old time hardihood, only that it was not so much manly as godlike. They had a cheerfulness and hope, a power and patience, a fearless and glad enthusiasm, a heavenly valour new among men, attesting the power of a new faith to still the voice of passion and the sob of grief. Something had happened since Socrates taught his religion of "fair hopes," and Plato had reasoned in Athens, and the classic poets had mused so pensively of the evanescence of mortal life and the vanishing of beauty. Some new Fact had entered the world, lighting up its dark night, making men free from the tyranny of the grave and joyously assured of a life beyond.

Of one thing we are sure: Christianity would not now be in the world had it not been for the assurance of a living Christ ruling men from the Unseen. When Jesus went to the Cross, His cause was smitten with ruin and His followers disheartened and scattered, having seen Him die in cruel tortures, conquered by the hate of His foes. When malice had done its worst and hope was utterly gone, all at once they found Him who had hung on that cross by their side again, alive.

Within a few days all was changed, and men who had been timid, fearful and hopeless reassembled in great joy, courageous, hurling rebuke into the faces of those who had put their Master to death, and proclaiming that He was alive. That was all they knew; and that convinced them that death is nothing to the soul; and He became the centre of their faith, the master light of all their seeing, and the burden of their message to the ends of the earth. Through long years and trials unspeakable, and persecutions the most cruel, they went up and down the Roman Empire telling the story of Him, counting it a joy to suffer in His behalf and an honour to die in His sweet name.

Some have thought to explain this marvel by saying that an ideal, pointed by a splendid recollection, may concentrate itself into something which, in the vague language of poetry, may be called a Person. To what absurd lengths will not men go rather than accept a great, unmistakable, unshakable fact! Illusions may sway men for a time, but that the stream of sweetness, light and redeeming power poured into history by Christ flowed from a filmy, flitting illusion is more incredible than the gospel Fact. But, if we admit —as we need not do—that such was the case with the men who knew and loved Jesus in the body—that the image of Him was woven of their worshipful love and memory—this cannot be said of St. Paul. Save "in the spirit" St. Paul

never saw Jesus, never heard His voice, yet the sense of companionship with the Living Christ was the ruling passion of his wonderful life. No matter what acids may be used to dissolve that vision on the Damascus road, the life of St. Paul is a witness, irrefragable, to the reality and power of the unseen Christ, who left the stony paths of Judea to become a perpetual force in the world.

But it is now the fashion to say that it was not Christ, but St. Paul, who created Christianity, and that Paul was an evangelist of a mystical, Eternal Christ. Far otherwise is the fact. St. Paul was indeed an apostle of the living, Eternal Christ, but his great life had its inspiration in the historical Jesus who suffered under Pontius Pilate, died, and rose again from the dead. To him the Eternal Christ and the historical Jesus were one and inseparable; and what was mystically true in the unseen Christ had first been historically true in Jesus, as it must always be or both will evaporate and melt into thin mist. Never once did the mysticism of St. Paul, lofty and revealing as it was, float away into the cloudland of an unhistorical idealism, which is the resort of so many thinkers in our day. While he did not preach Christ after the flesh, the personality to whom he owed his spiritual quickening, his illumination, and his invincible confidence was Jesus of Nazareth. No fact could be plainer, and not to see it is to miss the key to his life and faith.

III

THE LIVING PRESENCE

IF Christ were only a Figure in the past, having a place in history and a date in time, He would be interesting indeed, but not in the same vital way that He now is. What is more wonderful, and none the less a well-attested fact, is that through all these ages He has been an eternal contemporary with mankind, at once an inner colleague of human souls and an unseen world-power purifying and exalting our life upon the earth. Not Moses so lives, nor the prophets; not Plato, nor Buddha, nor any other torch-bearer or teacher of men. Here, in truth, is the fact of the Eternal Christ—that there is a Living Reality behind the Christ-ideal, and hence, however often defiled or defamed, that ideal is recreated by His abiding inspiration[1]—who otherwise would be only a memory, an aspiration, or a vague and beautiful dream. A Living Christ, hallowing all the years with His humane and heavenly Presence—that is a wonder more

[1] "The Historic Christ in the Faith of To-day," by W. A. Grist (1911).

amazing than all those recorded of Him in the gospel story.

One reads history to litttle account who does not detect the footprints of the journeying Christ all down the years, His steps marked by many beauties and sorrows. It was no mere sally of rhetoric, but a calm statement of fact, when Richter said that He has lifted the gates of empires off their hinges and turned the stream of Time into other channels. Though this earth has been made, at times, a hell in His name, no one else has so restrained the brute in man, quickened the heart-beats of his better nature, elevated his ideals and glorified his thought. He has touched all the ages since His advent, penetrating them with a purer, loftier spirit, slowly softening an immemorial hardness of heart, inspiring men to faith in God and in their fellows, and refining the fellowships, aspirations, and activities of the race. Music, art, poetry, law, religion, the amenities of life, its modesties, its courtesies, its home love and friendships, its tone, temper and the spirit of its dream—all that makes us men has felt the touch of the Living Christ. No one can follow all His footsteps, no pen can tell in what ways He has wrought upon the inner life of the race, evoking the God-spirit in man, and, though often seemingly defeated, and always tragically delayed, leading our humanity towards its goal. Of all world-forces making for the

higher life of man, He is at once the most powerful and the most gentle.

What glimpses of Him are seen in the mirror of art, and poetry, and song, and in those lives of rare beauty in whom He almost seemed to wear our flesh once more. On the Roman road-side by the Domine Quo Vadis, on that spring morning at Assisi, in the hall of the Round Table at Winchester, in the clearing in a woodland where the Merciful Knight drew rein before the crucifix, we follow Him. He was in the life of St. Francis, in the cell of Thomas à Kempis, in the art of Giotto, in the "Divine Comedy" of Dante, in the thunder of Savonarola, and in the songs of Luther. He was in "*Les Miserables*," and in the Dickens stories of the love of little children; He gave shape to the troubled marbles of Angelo, and beauty to the stained glass of Burne-Jones; He was with Lincoln in the White House. Wherever there has been a note of pity in art, a white flower of purity in life, a song of hope in the night, a voice pleading for the poor, the lowly, and the world-broken, a champion of those that fail, there, somehow, in some form, is Christ, or the soul of Christ. Ever the Mystic Spinner plies His shuttle; ever the Weaver of hope sends His rainbows adrift across the hearts of men. More than an Influence, more than a Principle, He returns again and yet again, a vision and a voice, to such as have eyes to see and ears to

hear.[1] No other is thus reflected, if only as a passer-by, in the vision and dream and faith of the race.

How vivid, how deep and many-toned is the witness of historic Christian experience, as we have it in the lives of the saints and mystics, to the fact of the Living Christ. What a shining company rise up and give testimony—from St. Paul to Wesley, from St. Augustine to Edwards, from St. Bernard to Phillips Brooks, from John Huss to Horace Bushnell—how their hearts burned within them as He walked with them along the way.[2] In every age and land, those who have followed Him—by unfolding His divinity in their humanity—have shown in the atmosphere of their thought and action a quality of life like His own. Others may think Him only an Influence, but they know Him to be a Living

[1] "The Oriental Christ," by P. C. Mozoondar (1883). "Suddenly, it seemed to me that close to me there was a holier, a more blessed, a more loving personality, upon whom I might repose my troubled head. Jesus lay discovered in my heart as a strange, human, kindred Love, as a response, a sympathetic consolation, an unpurchased treasure to which I was freely invited. Jesus, from that day, to me became a reality." See the entire preface, which is a rich page in the literature of the human soul.

[2] With what beauty and lucidity this evidence of Christian experience may be set forth may be seen, for example, in the lectures of Dr. R. W. Dale, "The Living Christ and the Four Gospels" (1890), and, indeed, in a whole library of literature, including the great devotional classics of the Church.

Presence—a beauty forming within, a continuing glory both of character and of hope—raising them from tombs of selfishness, weariness and despair, until the eternal life began to be an impalpable murmur in their hearts. Said Santa Teresa:

"I was in prayer one day, when I saw Christ close by me, or, to speak more correctly, felt Him; for I saw nothing with the eyes of the body, nothing with the eyes of the soul. He seemed to me to be close beside me; and I saw, too, that it was He who was speaking to me. I was extremely afraid at first, and did nothing but weep; however, when He spoke to me but one word to reassure me, I recovered myself, and was, as usual, calm and comforted, without any fear whatever. Jesus Christ seemed to be by my side continually, and, as the vision was not imaginary, I saw no form; but I had a most distinct feeling that He was always on my right hand, a witness of all I did; and never at any time, if I was but slightly recollected, could I be ignorant of His near presence."[1]

Such love is not inspired by an ideal, however lofty, nor by a figure in history, nor yet by a person living but remote, but only by One who is real, living, and near. Think of St. Francis and his transfiguring vision, of which it is written that "from that hour his heart was wounded and melted at the remembrance of his Lord." Those

[1] "Life of Santa Teresa," by herself, Chap. XXVII, pp. 2-5.

who say that we cannot know Christ as the Middle Ages, with their vigour of faith and defect of history, thought to know Him, confess thereby that in trying to make up a defect of history we have fallen into a sadder defect. For many men in our day Christ has, indeed, ceased to be a Person and a Friend, and has become only an impulse or an ideal, upon which we can never, as we fain would, lavish the devotion of an intimate love. Hence the penury of much of our religious life, and our groping to know, ideally, what can only be known vividly by an experience which abolishes distance and finds in friendship what is lost in philosophy. Yet such an experience is no less native to our time than it was to the past, as witness Phillips Brooks whose epic life is memorialized for us, with true insight, by Saint-Gaudens, who shows him in marble, with Christ standing just behind as if whispering a message into his ear. Nor was that beauty unique in the great preacher of Trinity Temple, but is a reality known to a host whom the world knows not. For Christ is timeless, and those who follow on may know Him as truly, as vividly, in our age as ever He was known and loved in times agone.

When we turn from the saints to those who from the mire and the clay of sin have been rescued and redeemed by Him, with what joyous reality does the Living Christ stand forth. To

Oscar Wilde there was something incredible in the idea of a young Galilean imagining that He could bear upon His shoulders the burden of the world—the sins of Nero, of Cæsar Borgia, of him who was emperor of Rome and priest of the sun; the sufferings of those whose name is legion; slaves, thieves, outcasts, people in prison, and the dumb dwellers of the abyss whose silence is heard only of God. But when he himself fell into the depths of sin, and found himself an exile from man and the sunlight, in a prison cell under the shadow of colossal shame, he learned that the incredible thing was true: that the Living Christ can heal the deep hurt of the heart and cleanse the soul of sin: so that, at this present time, in this far-off age and land, all who come in contact with Him in some way find that the horror of their sin is taken away and the beauty of their sorrow is revealed. Multitudes bear witness, with songs of praise and hearts made white, to this ineffable wonder. What though He enter our hearts clad in tunic and turban, walking with sandalled feet. Now, as of old, He stills the storms of passion, casts out the demons of envy, fear, and hate, cleanses the leprous thoughts that hide in the caves of the mind, and raises from their tombs our dead dreams and our long-buried hopes.

Nor must we forget that vast multitude who in meekness and loyalty follow His footprints

over the hills and valleys of the years, as their fathers followed Him before them. They are as the sands of the sea for number, though the world knows them not and takes little note of their humble lives. But to them Christ is a sheltering Rock in a weary land, a wayside Spring, a Companion and a Friend, a Teacher of faith and a Saviour of the soul, and their last whispers are burdened with His name. To them His voice is music, His words are the philosophy of life, and His story is the one everlasting romance in a prosaic world. They cannot think of Him without thinking of God instead; and when they think of God and wonder what is in His heart, it always comes back to their trying to conceive of Jesus infinitely enlarged in every way. When that vision is before them they can hear the splash of great soft tears, falling from the kind heavens, and they know, for a brief moment, that at the heart of things there is an infinite Pity. To Him they owe their souls, their peace in the midst of peril, what faith they have for to-day and what hope for the morrow. To them it is given to know of a truth that

> "God may have other words for other worlds,
> But for this world the Word of God is Christ."

IV

THE NEW ADVENT

I

HERE, then, is the vast, indescribable, unspeakable Fact of Christ—the fact of "One who stood nearer by some space to us immeasurable to that which is infinitely far" —to explain which we have no adequate theory. When theologians try to measure and fathom this Living Reality, at once historical and experimental, we are made to realize that even the noblest intellects have no plummet wherewith to find its bottom. Nor do we need any theory of Christ, but rather to dispense with all theories and get back to the living Fact, which can only be imperfectly described, and which no theory can compass. In the Fact itself, towering above all our dogmas, the meaning and value of life are unveiled to us, and that is all we need to know. It has been said that "a Christ who is a mere anomaly, a riddle to the mind, can never be the true Lord of our hearts."[1] Yet, even so, without reducing Him to an anomaly or a puzzle, it is open to reverent minds to confess the futility of all explanations of Him.

[1] "The Servant of God," by W. B. Selbie (1911).

Among all those who have written about Jesus, only Renan leaves one with a vivid sense of Him as a living human Being. His "Life of Jesus" —written on the mud floor of a Syrian hut in the Holy Land—does show us the Teacher in habit as He lived,[1] with the warmth and colour of reality, reproducing the vibrating air of the East in which He moved. There we are shown a real historical personage, a teacher of great prophetic endowment, a spiritual genius with an insight and loftiness of nature above his fellows. He is more human, more lovable than the older prophets—a lover of birds and flowers and little children, with glints of humour in his stories, a seer, a poet to whose mind, as to a magnet, the great and simple truths were attracted—so much so, that he holds the foremost place among the epoch-making religious masters of the race. Renan held with Turgenev that Jesus had a face "that looked like the face of all other men, just a common human face"; and he did make vivid the human Christ without which the divine Christ must ever be vague, dreamy, and remote. All of which, apart from his glib theories, is true as far as it goes, but as a final estimate of Jesus it is pitifully poor. If this be all, then His words, however full of beauty, are only so many guesses

[1] For a recent study of the human Christ, exquisite in its beauty and grace, see "The Poet of Galilee," by W. E. Leonard (1909).

at the same old riddle, and His life the story of one more brave seeker after a truth which, after all, eludes us. Nor does it account for the Christ who is still with us, not as a sweet, pathetic memory, but as a Living Presence melting the hearts of men.

Others are not content to stop by saying that Jesus was simply a God-inspired man, and nothing more; a man of the same order and quality as the great prophets who preceded and followed Him, and that neither He nor they could possess the status of divinity. They go further and say that the supposed distinction between God and man does not exist; that humanity, being the offspring of God, is essentially divine; and, therefore, that Jesus was a divine being and spiritually "the first born among many brethren." This, too, is true and inspiring as far as it goes; but surely Channing, Parker and Martineau, noble as they were, did not fathom the Fact of Christ. They did not explain all the facts with regard to Him as those facts are revealed, for instance, in the experience of St. Augustine and Wesley. Many things taught by Calvin, Wesley and Newman are unthinkable to some of us, while nearly all that Channing, Emerson and Martineau taught seems reasonable and true. But if it were a choice between the two—as surely it need not be —some of us would go with Wesley and Newman. Their experience of a rich, warm, personal

fellowship with a Living Master is ours, even if their theology is not. Whole areas of reality were left out of account by Emerson and Martineau, and we have always the feeling that if so much is true, more is true.

Some years ago there arose a cry of "Back to Christ," and it evoked a stir of enthusiasm reminding one of the old crusades, only it was an effort to rescue the real Jesus from the tomb of dogma. Men felt that if they could only get back to Jesus as He really was, as He lived and taught in Judea, they would find some One whom they could love and follow—"the lowly Man of Galilee," more real and more winsome than the august and distant Christ of dogma. They wanted the sweet-voiced Teacher of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, in whom truth had wedded beauty, and they firmly believed that He was there to be found. All that was needed was to throw off the mass of dogmatic accretions that had been imposed upon Him, and then, they were sure, He would stand forth. For a time this quest seemed to sweep everything before it. There were many lives of Jesus, after the manner of Renan and Seeley, and various studies of Him by Harnack, Sabatier, Bossuet and others. All this as a protest, no doubt, against a too formal dogma which had long made Christ too stately and stern, if not almost forbidding, like the strange, mystical figure carved by Saint-Gaudens

on the Adams monument—a Sphinx figure which one knows not whether to call Grief, Patience, or Power.

Then it was that the historical criticism began to do its work, and little by little, step by step, as it made its way back through the years, it found all that these seekers after Jesus had dreamed, but much else besides. The Christ who emerged from these patient and industrious searchings seemed to be a blend of the picture painted by Renan and by the dogmas of the creeds. He was not simply a mild and gentle Teacher, too great for His age, who essayed to make men know the meaning of the word Love, going at last to His death as a martyr. He was all that, indeed, but much more—a Being of light and flame and power, a wielder of thunderbolts as well as a wooer of souls, not only a Teacher but a Lord of men. He spoke of Himself not so much as a man among men, but as a Man from heaven, a divine instrument long expected, long foretold, through whom man was to be brought into right relations with God; that He had come, indeed, to teach a higher truth, but also to die a death of mysterious efficacy, and that this, more than His words, was of principal benefit to the race. While this was not the Christ whom the critics themselves wished to find, none the less we may be grateful for the outcome, because it made men realize that Christ is greater than we know.

Hence a certain vagueness in the thought of our age in regard to Jesus, which means that we are more than ever aware of how vast and indefinable a Reality He is. No longer do we follow a Christ who is only one of ourselves, guessing at the riddle of life as we have to do, knowing nothing certainly either of His own destiny or ours; but a Master in other worlds than this, a revealer of the heart of things. Yet this Being who towers so far above us is still so close to us, and His whole life so entwined with ours, that we somehow feel that what is true of Him is in some degree true, potentially, of ourselves. How these two things can be united may be hard to know, but they are equally vivid and equally blessed in the faith of to-day. What shapes faith may take in times to come no man can tell, but it is safe to predict that its chief adventures will be yet further discoveries of the Eternal Christ who came among men, and is daily coming in beauty and power, to bring humanity to its goal. While all this may seem vague and of little import, if it leaves us with a new sense of wonder at the mystery of Christ it will have made us wise, perhaps, to the saving of faith and the enrichment of life.

II

How can the Eternal Christ become more real, not only as an Influence but as a Living Presence

to men like ourselves in a far-off age? Too many of us are like those two young Romans in the days of Marcus Aurelius, who did not know that Jesus still lived, though they felt the spell of His legend; like *Vinicius* and *Marius the Epicurean.* We read the record of His life with a mingled sense of wonder and regret, as a story beautiful, indeed, but too fair and frail ever to have been true. There it is—the tragedy of One dying for untold myriads who reject, and will reject, the grace of His sacrifice, and for other myriads who, mistaking blindly the meaning of it all, work evil in His name. Looking out over the rough world, that Biography of Pity seems, at times, as vain as all the vain things proclaimed of Solomon, or else as unreal as a dream. We do not deny His words, which are like great music, but His voice "comes strange over years of change," faint, dreamy, and far away from our noisy age.

Yet are we haunted by Him, who shapes even the literature of doubt, as though by some fatality of thought men who do not find Him must still seek Him, as Isis sought for the body of Osiris.[1] Often enough He does seem far away,

[1] May we not say that "the Messianic hope" in the writings of Emerson, noted by every student, is an example? Of our Yankee Plato it must be said—with the utmost reverence for a great soul, with gratitude for his revealing, if sometimes vagrant, insights, and with an honourable pride in his character and genius—that he did not see Jesus as He was and is; and,

but there are moments when He is subtly with us as an ally of that within us, our higher Self, akin to the divine—that seed which sleepeth until we have watered and nourished the ground upon which it lies; that voice of God which we will one day no longer deny—though we are slow of heart and dull of eyes, and know not who it is that wakes to life the man we ought to be. Almost without our knowing it, by a gentle strategy, a delicate adroitness, Something brings us to a knowledge of our better self, like a good teacher trying to evoke what is in a shy, wayward child. Far away though He may seem, His simple words, as those of no other, do uplift and fortify the soul against the Shadow that waits for every man. Nor can any deny that the only things worth while are the things thought and felt and done in accord with His spirit and example, in sympathy with His life, sweet, appealing, and serene. What man does not know what the poet meant when, looking into the face of a little child, touched by the memory of his own stainless days, he wrote:

not seeing Him, he remained, in a way, always a seeker. As Holmes said, Emerson went about peeping into every cradle looking for a Messiah. So Nietzsche, who taught atheism with the passion of a devotee and the mystical, alluring style of a poet, proclaimed a *Superman* who is to redeem us from the slavery of morality and the weakness of pity. Thus, while denying Jesus, he was actually setting up an ugly and distorted effigy of Him.

"So I hid my face in the grass,
Whispered, 'Listen to my despair;
I repent me of all I did—
Speak a little!'"

No other theme stirs us so deeply, so tenderly, and withal so wistfully, with a kind of melancholy in joy, as the story of His pilgrimage and the wonder of His life. When we see a Christ-man on the stage—whether as "The Servant in the House,"[1] wearing the robes of the East, with a wise, half-humorous sagacity putting the Church to rights, or as a "Passer-by"[2] clad in the garb of to-day, visiting a dingy boarding-house, restoring sincerity of life, smiling away the shams which make men and women petty and mean, and revealing to all, as if a gulf had opened at their feet, the utter folly and shame of selfishness—we go away from the playhouse subdued, musing of what life may be when attuned to His spirit of Love, which sees the good beneath the evil, and, by believing in it, evokes it. Not less so when we engage in works of social betterment, the logic of which involves faith in the worth of the human soul, in the possibility of reclaiming it from evil, and the suggestion of a Fellow-worker at our task; and the nobler our endeavour the less able are we to dispense with Him to maintain its enthusiasm and support its faith. At every turn

[1] "The Servant in the House," by C. R. Kennedy (1908).

[2] "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," by J. K. Jerome (1909).

of the road towards a higher, juster, more merciful life a Figure is seen moving on before beckoning us towards the Ideal.

How may He become real to us as a Living Presence? Judging by the lives of those who have found Him to be such, it is by following in His footsteps, by obeying the promptings of our own souls urging us to a life of purity and self-giving service, as He lived it and taught it. No man has a right to deny this fact unless he has put it to the test, and those who have tried it do not question it. Until we have thus made trial of the teaching of Jesus, our doubts, of whatever kind, are invalid and open to doubt. Only as we identify ourselves with our fellow souls in their dire need, sit where they sit, hope for those who have no hope, and love for those who cannot love, do we know Christ and the eternal quality of His life. He comes to us as One unknown, as of old, by the lakeside, He came to those who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same words, "Follow thou Me!" and sets us the task which He has to fulfill in our time. He commands, and to those who obey Him, whether they be simple or wise, He reveals Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings they pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they learn in their own experience who He is,[1]—that He is a Living Friend and Saviour.

[1] "The Quest of the Historical Jesus," by Dr. Schweitzer (1910.)

III

Let him doubt who will, it is still true that Christ does live in the hearts of men, some of them all unawares, in deeds of Love and Pity and Beauty the world over. Those who go back to the far past and prove, by sifting documents and marshalling evidence, that Jesus rose from the dead, render service to faith. But, were it ever so well attested that He did so rise and make Himself known in gardens or shut chambers or by the shore of a lake at dawn, it would still be a fact in a distant time unlike our own. More vital is the fact that He is now a Living Reality, a hallowing Presence, touching us this day to finer issues, and with His mild persistence urging and lifting us to the highest life. Men may deny this as a fact, they may fight against it, but they cannot always resist the gentle and persuasive appeal of a Reality that is at once a rebuke and an invitation to their souls.

Amid the thin fancies of sceptical minds, Christ stands forth in our troubled and hurrying age as a supreme Reality, an invisible world-power making for beauty, pity and friendship upon earth. Led by Him, men are slowly learning that God is everywhere, seeing all, hearing all, loving all, and forgetting none—a God in whom all may trust, whose character is boundless benevolence, and whose mercy is as abundant as the light and as impartial as the air that belts the earth.

Subtle bonds of sympathy and friendship stretch out from us, and to us, all around the world—bonds woven by Him; a larger brotherhood, a broader tolerance, and a keener divination of the good in men. He is a part of the life of us all, whether we admit it or not—a sweet Charity softening the hard ways of the world, a delicate Purity shaming our uncleanness, a beautiful Justice pleading for the poor and the forlorn—and He will be a legacy to our descendants, with whatsoever else of the good and the true we may bequeath to them, in the very fibre of their being. Long after we have vanished, He will be giving beneficent tendency to all the piteous, passionate and pathetic life that shall flourish in times to come. The impetus given by Him to the latent nobilities of the race shall never end, and the men of the future will inevitably realize some of the beauty of the dreams He has taught us to dream. Here is the message of the Church—to make the Eternal Christ real and eloquent to men—and by this sign it will conquer.

Nature, we know, is inevitable in her laws, in her movements, in her high manner. The tides ebb and flow and no man can stay, or hasten, them. Season follows season, with no break in the immemorial sequence, like some stately ritual with "woven hymns of night and day." Over field and factory, over palace and

hut, spring pours its flood of light and joy, melting the snow and waking up the seeds sleeping in the earth. All things respond to the magic of its noiseless touch, to the might of its gentleness. There is something like that in the ministry of the Living Christ. He sways men, even in their innermost thought, by a sweet and beautiful fatalism. His influence is as irresistible as the flow of the tides and the march of the seasons, because it is gentle.

The victory of Christ is inevitable. He will yet have His way with this hard old world to the confounding of all unkindness, all uncleanness. Ultimately every tyranny shall fall, every Bastile crumble. One Spirit commands the scene, explaining while it prophesies the triumph of Love—the Spirit of the Eternal Christ. In the great, noisy, murky foundry of the world a Bell is somehow being cast that shall ring His praise alone —

> "Ring in the valiant man, the free,
> The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;
> Ring out the darkness of the land,
> Ring in the Christ that is to be."

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