THE NEXT STEP IN RELIGION

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THE NEXT STEP IN RELIGION

AN ESSAY TOWARD THE COMING RENAISSANCE

BY

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TO

HELEN STALKER SELLARS

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

FOREWORD

The purpose of this book is positive and constructive, although it may not at first appear such to the reader whose inherited beliefs are freely challenged. But let the reader ponder the fact that the deepest spiritual life has always concerned itself with the appreciation and maintenance of values. He who acknowledges, and wishes to further, human values cannot be said to be irreligious or unspiritual.

The center of gravity of religion has been openly changing for some time now from supernaturalism to what may best be called a humanistic naturalism. The history of this change is traced in many of the chapters of the book. There have been many steps forward in the past, for every age must possess its own religion, a religion concordant with its knowledge and expressive of its problems and aims. The sincerity and adequacy with which this necessary task is done measures the spiritual greatness of the particular age.

I have called the book *The Next Step in Religion* because the time is ripe for one of the great steps forward. The setting of religion must be adjusted to man's knowledge. Let it not be feared that man's spiritual life will be injured thereby. Rather will it be made saner, healthier and more creative.

The first phase of religion reflected man's helplessness and fear. He peopled his surroundings with conscious powers, sometimes adverse, sometimes friendly,

but always jealous. Man became their slave. As man became less of a savage, these gods of his fancy became nobler. But they still acted like magnets to draw his attention away from his own problems. The coming phase of religion will reflect man's power over nature and his moral courage in the face of the facts and possibilities of life. It will be a religion of action and passion, a social religion, a religion of goals and prospects. It will be a free man's religion, a religion for an adult and aspiring democracy.

A book must in the main carry its own credentials. But there may be those who will wish to carry the quest further and deeper. To those interested in my share in this larger work I may mention my *Critical Realism* and *The Next Step in Democracy.*

R. W. Sellars.

Ann Arbor, Michigan,
August 5, 1918.

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THE NEXT STEP IN RELIGION

CHAPTER I

SUGGESTIONS

More than people are consciously aware, a new view of the universe and of man's place in it is forming. It is forming in the laboratories of scientists, the studies of thinkers, the congresses of social workers, the assemblies of reformers, the studios of artists and, even more quietly, in the circles of many homes. This new view is growing beneath the old as a bud grows beneath its covering, and is slowly pushing it aside. While the inherited outlook, still apparently so strong, is losing effectiveness and becoming a thing of conventions and phrases, the ideas and purposes which are replacing it possess the vigor and momentum of contact with the living tendencies and needs of the present.

Mankind grows away from its traditional beliefs as inevitably as does the boy or girl from childhood fancies, and often with much the same lack of realization. But the time is certain to come to both when the change is pressed home and there is need for interpretation and serious self-communing. At such a time, kindly — yet uncompromising and veracious — explanation of the nature and implications of the crisis is the course dictated by wisdom. Nothing can be more cruel, disorganizing, and, in a way, insulting than the attempt to

harmonize what cannot in the long run be harmonized. The agony is then sure to be long drawn out and the strength of soul, given by fearlessness, is lost. I feel that the first law of personality is *spiritual courage.* Actions and methods founded on a doubt of this primary law lead to a blunting of the fine edge of the self, an injury greater than which can scarcely be conceived.

In this day of testing, when so few have been found lacking in courage and the capacity for self-sacrifice, it seems peculiarly fitting that spiritual values and beliefs be boldly thrown into the arena, there to prove themselves. In the years after the Great War, mankind must build its life afresh and it will be wisest to see that the foundation is a sound one. And, as a matter of social psychology, I doubt that a people which is unwilling to look carefully to the framework of its social and spiritual edifice can build a noble mansion. Mechanical efficiency and cleverness will not be enough for this task of spiritual creation. We must find lasting values around which to build a humane life. And this, also, is a kind of warfare. Some have expressed to me a doubt whether America is prepared for this effort at reconstruction of a basic, yet intangible, sort. I have hopes, although not blind ones. I refuse to take the vulgarities and ignorances of popular evangelists as completely diagnostic of America's soul.

In the following pages, which are devoted to a clear statement of the new view of man and nature which, in its essentials, has come to stay, I shall act according to this law of personality, to wit, spiritual courage. I shall explain the spiritualized naturalism to which we are ascending in the same spirit that the scientist presents his facts — impersonally, calmly, and simply.

Such, at least, is my purpose and desire. What I write here is in its way a confession of faith. The values and loyalties which I shall proclaim as true, redemptive and invigorating are those which my own life and concrete reflection have selected. In them I see the possibility of high spiritual attainment.

The new view of the universe is founded upon, influenced by, and has for its necessary setting, the exact knowledge which the various special sciences, mental as well as physical, have been accumulating. This knowledge is rounding into something of the nature of a whole whose interpretation does not admit of doubt. Incomplete in detail though his knowledge be, man is no longer in the dark as to the main features of the world and his own origin and destiny. He knows that he is an inhabitant of a small planet in one of the many solar systems of the stellar universe, that he is the product of an age-long evolution in which variation and survival have been the chief methods of advance, that his mind as well as his body has its natural ancestry. While it will always remain a wonder, so to speak, that there is a universe in which and to which we awaken, it is equally certain that the only sensible thing to do is to seek to find out its character and laws. Is it not like exploring the chambers and corridors of a house in which one shall live for a stated period?

As a matter of fact, man has always been curious about his world. Yet before he hit upon the proper methods of investigation, he could only guess and dream about it, under the sway of hopes and fears which too easily threw themselves like gigantic shadows before him. The fire of his untrained intelligence was feeble and unpenetrating and, so, distorted the world which it

dimly revealed. The result was what must be called the older religious view of the world — a view which saw personal and super-personal agency at the heart of things. This primitive interpretation of the world we shall be led to criticize, but, in so doing, we shall be the servants of truth and of a more adult spirituality.

It is not surprising that the patiently acquired knowledge, obtained by science, philosophy and a matured human wisdom, has been found to conflict with the first interpretation of the world. The recognition of this conflict dates back now some centuries — the warfare between science and religion also has its history — but each generation has seen the addition made of some new element to the clash which is leading man to a new view of the world.

What is striking about the present situation is the increase of the positive elements in the outlook which is forming in men's minds. In the past, the traditionalist had some justification in speaking of the opposed ideas as largely negative. What positive doctrine there was in the physical science which theology had to meet, to its discomfort, had only an indirect bearing upon life. But the nineteenth century was the witness of a distinct revolution in this regard. I do not refer merely to the fact that the idea of evolution was applied to man. That was prophetic and strategic rather than revolutionary. It symbolized the passage of science from the periphery to the center, from the outlying regions of the universe to man's very self. All the time, however, a new perspective had been arising in man's interests and values. The possibilities and needs of this life were replacing the dream of another life in

another world. A busy concern with the things of this world was everywhere evident. Man was seeking to master his environment.

During the first stage of this revolution, the industrial and political changes were the most prominent. A change in the instrumentalities of life, physical, economic and political, occupied men's thoughts to a larger degree than ever before. But as the nineteenth century circled to the twentieth, deeper notes became audible. Humanitarianism, constructive reform, social democracy became the watchwords of the day. I do not think that it has yet been clearly realized how completely these new aims and interests fit in with the results of science and yet pass beyond them to the service of human values. The truth seems to be that, by an imperceptible process, new values and hopes have been replacing the traditional ones, and that these values and aims both find themselves in harmony with the new knowledge and rest upon it.

In spite of the conflict between the rising view of man and nature and the traditional religious conception, there is yet, I believe, a profound continuity in the genuinely spiritual achievements of humanity. It is a pity to be so ridden by the new that the noble in the old is forgotten. Tenderness and love, however obscured at times by formalism and bigotry, owe much to their nurture by Christianity. Hence, the deeper and truer interpretation of all past movements regards them as varying expressions of humanity's growth in social and mental stature. There is, in other words, no real discontinuity in human history. The only difference is, that the dynamic of social conditions and intellectual heritage has varied.

But this acknowledged continuity does not preclude that presence of genuine and effective newness which is revolutionary in its effects. *The perspective, intention, and elements of religion are about to alter.* In the following pages, I shall argue that the attachments of past religion were determined by a mythological, and essentially magical, idea of man's environment. Such attitudes and expectations as prayer, ritual, worship, immortality, providence, are expressions of the prescientific view of the world. But as man partly outgrows, partly learns to reject, the primitive thought of the world, this perspective and these elements will drop from religion. That this alteration has, in surprisingly large measure, already taken place can be seen from the following excerpts from the writings of the best known American authority on Church History: "Traditional Christian ideas, in fact, are undergoing extensive transformation as a result of the new social emphasis. The individualism of evangelicalism, with its primary concern for the salvation of the individual soul, is widely discredited. The old ascetic ideal is everywhere giving way to the social. Instead of holding themselves aloof from the world Christians are throwing themselves into it and striving to reform it. Holiness in the traditional sense of abstinence from sin is less highly valued than it was. The test of virtue is more and more coming to be the social test. The virtuous man is he who makes his influence tell for the improvement of society. Personal probity and uprightness, dissociated from the active service of one's fellows, is frequently regarded to-day as 'mere morality' was by the Evangelicals. As virtue had value to them only in union with and subordination to piety, so without the spirit of service

personal morality seems to many a modern social reformer a mere empty husk." [1] Obviously, the center of religious gravity has altered tremendously from what it was in the Victorian Age. We are on the brink of a new period, the period of a realistic, and yet spiritual, social democracy.

"But," I will be asked, "do you advocate a religion of humanity? That is an old effort weighed in the balance and found wanting." Comte's reform was, in a way, premature. Society had not developed enough to give his effort a concrete basis. But, more than this, his mistake was that he did not see that the elements of religion, as well as its perspective, must be altered. Humanity is not an object to be worshiped. The very attitude and implications of worship must be relinquished. In their place must be put the spiritually founded virtue of loyalty to those efforts and values which elevate human beings and give a quality of nobility and significance to our human life here and now.

The positive note of the present work can now be given in a few words: *Religion is loyalty to the values of life.* The idea of the spiritual must be broadened and humanized to include all those purposes, experiences and activities which express man's nature. The spiritual must be seen to be the fine flower of living, which requires no other sanctions than its own inherent worth and appeal. We must outgrow the false notion that religion is inseparable from supernatural objects, and that the spiritual is something alien to man which must be forced upon him from the outside. *The spiritual is man at his best, man loving, daring, creating,*

[1] McGiffert, *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas*, p. 272.

fighting loyally and courageously for causes dear to him. Religion must be concrete instead of formal, and catholic in its count of values. Wherever there is loyal endeavor, the presence of the spiritual must freely be acknowledged. It would seem to follow that religion will have objects only in the sense of purposes to fulfill. It will no longer have need of a special view of the world.

The religion of the past has had much to say about salvation. Salvation was only too often something which happened to a man from outside. It was something capricious and uncontrollable like sudden fortune. Let us see what the religion of the present with its more realistic conception of life has to say about salvation. I have written in the book as follows: "Only that soul is saved which is worth saving, and the being worth saving is its salvation. Salvation is no magical hocus-pocus external to the reach and timbre of a man; it is the loyal union of a man with those values of life which have come within his ken." Whatever mixture of magic, fear, ritual, and adoration religion may have been in man's early days upon this earth, it is now increasingly, and henceforth must be, that which concerns his contact with the duties and possibilities of life. Such salvation is an achievement which has personal and social conditions. It is not a label nor a lucky number for admission into another world, but something bought and paid for by effort. It is like character and education, for these are but special instances of it.

The personal conditions of spiritual life are sanity, health, and a capacity to be fired by consuming purposes. No one can be greatly saved who has not a

soul capable of being touched in some measure by what is sterling and significant. But one of the discoveries of democracy is the wide distribution of this sensitiveness. The spiritual is not something painful, but it is something which concerns the quality of human life.

The social conditions of salvation are just as necessary. They are the presence of institutions and arrangements which give opportunity to the individual to develop himself. The individual must have a certain amount of leisure and a chance for a vital education. He should have some contact with beautiful things and the stimulus of association with great causes. A healthy and sane society makes possible healthy and sane individuals. It is especially desirable that society put its emphasis on the right things. If it is permissible to speak of society's salvation, we would say that it consists in the wise relation of means to ends, the subordination of the economic side of life to the moral, intellectual and artistic activities. A society which does not order itself in this way is called materialistic; and such a society is certain to contain numberless individuals who live at a far lower spiritual level than they should. It is the very nature of religion to condemn this falling short of loyalty to the finer values of life.

We have said that religion must be catholic in its count of values. Moral souls may still be comparatively starved souls. One of the great mistakes religion has made in the past has been this very lack of sympathy for values of all kinds. For this very reason, religion has often displayed a certain narrowness and harshness. Its loyalty has frequently been a one-sided loyalty which prided itself on its asceticism. But the day of an irrational asceticism has passed. Intensity

is good, but intensity and breadth are better still. A humane religion will preach loyalty to many values, harmonized together by the work of a concrete reason and a living art. When religion did not consider itself of this world, it was passive and acquiescent toward many features of human life. But a truer idea of the nature of the spiritual, united with a decay of the old supernaturalistic sanctions, will change all that. Religion will become active and militant, intensely concerned with everything human, a loyal enthusiasm for all the significant phases of life. It will cease to be a matter of taboos, of ritual, of rather conventional routine and become a spirit of vigorous search for whatever elevates and ennobles human beings in their day of life. Into the service of such a religion reason and art will gladly enter.

But this interpretation of religion has its obverse side. It is in part directed against the age-old, supernaturalistic perspective which has done so much to render religion a hindrance to the growth of spirituality. The growth of my own thinking has led me to see, ever more clearly, the harm done in this day and age by that emphasis on sanctions for conduct which are not justified by the vital and concrete needs of human life. The appeal to tradition and authority abstracted religion from that fresh contact with the movement of events which makes the great causes of history so vivid and appealing. This abstraction divided the spiritual life of man against itself and led to inefficiency and confusion. What the world needs today is a rational enthusiasm for human values. The thought of another world with its melodramatic last judgment encouraged individualism, withdrew atten-

tion from social problems and aspirations, made the conception of the spiritual anæmic and vague. The official spirituality of the Church lacked the happy stimulus of a social setting.

Bad as this division of man's spiritual life against itself was, it was not all. Man had been taught to despise reason, almost his highest quality. The consequence was, that reason passed into the service of the mere technical arrangements of life. Man rationalized nature and left himself irrational, as can be seen in the Great War. Because religion ignored reason and slighted many sides of man's nature, it paid the penalty of abortiveness. It is not a mere accident that Christianity has been so helpless in the present crisis.

In times of darkness, it is natural for the individual to seek ways of escape from the crushing load which has fallen upon him. The student of the history of religion knows that the most popular way of escape has been in terms of spiritualism and supernaturalism. But the thinker knows that this is a search for a sedative rather than a remedy. Moreover, the growth of human knowledge has made such a refuge more strained and artificial than it used to be. Those few men of standing in the physical sciences who have lent the prestige of their name to fields in which they have little competence have done a grave disservice to mankind. Man must conquer his problems; he cannot find salvation in a cowardly flight from them. The teaching of this book is that supernaturalism has prevented man from finding himself, and that the spiritual task of the present generation is a re-interpretation of the spiritual to take in all the significant features of human life. We want a religion of present use, a religion

not concerned with mythological objects and hypothetical states of existence but with the tasks and needs of human beings in society. Will not the next step in religion be the relinquishment of the supernatural and the active appreciation of virtues and values? It is my hope that the present sincere discussion will assist, in some small measure, the coming of such a religion.

CHAPTER II

THE AGE OF MYTH

We must, perforce, admit that our ancestors awoke to consciousness of themselves and their surroundings at a time when they knew practically nothing, as we understand knowledge. Theirs was a world of sights and sounds, a world of woods and streams, of moving things, of growing things, of things to be eaten, of things good and evil. It was a driving, fearful, fascinating world. Unconsciously and inevitably, man interpreted his surroundings in terms of his own eager, childish life. Force and desire peeped from every corner.

The sky was not very high above him for it seemed to touch the mountain tops; and yet he could never hope to climb there. But he could see very well that it was inhabited. And was it not a wonderful place, since the heat and light of the sun and the warm, fructifying rain came from it? And what were the clouds that floated across it like huge birds or strange, gigantic creatures? Even the lush grass of the spring-time seemed full of a hidden life. Everywhere was force and will — the power for good and harm.

Perhaps only an imaginative child, or an adult with something of the poet's gift, can appreciate vividly the type of world in which these early men found themselves. The city-dweller of to-day lives in a subdued

and mechanically controlled region whose every clank and rattle speaks of routine and order. The myth-making faculty of the street-urchin has little to feed upon — all is so obvious and open to inspection. The ordinary lad, again, is so soon filled with the conventionalized views of his elders that the hand of fancy soon ceases to write upon his soul or give a touch of wonder to familiar things. There can be no doubt, therefore, that a conscious effort is required before a man of to-day can give even a fleeting glimpse at the capricious, magical, animated, and intensely personal world of his distant ancestors. And yet the guesses and surmises of these earlier men were the source of more of his beliefs than he would care to admit. In these pages we shall see how much of mythology still lingers with us.

Mythology is a product of the social group, of clans and tribes and peoples, and is of slow growth. Story added itself to story, this feature to that. Hence it was often a work of art, though of unconscious art. It was an expression of the life of groups who had gods and totems. It was inextricably bound up with the whole savage outlook upon nature; and yet only recently has this setting been adequately appreciated. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, knowledge of mythology was practically limited to the poetized mythology of the Greeks and Romans. And so, because it was found in the poets, it was thought of as an artificial product, as a series of stories invented and embroidered by the fancy of bards and narrators.

But the wider knowledge due to exploration changed this narrow approach. The discoveries of travelers in the Americas, Africa, and Oceania gave pause to this too

civilized and superficial theory of myth. Gradually, a more realistic view arose. The idea of evolution gave a genetic way of approach and made investigators aware of the slowness of human advance. The next steps followed quickly. Social psychology replaced the individualistic and overly rationalistic psychology of the early nineteenth century. All the phenomena of primitive society were seen to be the products of relatively non-reflective groups who felt and stumbled their way into rituals and beliefs. As the material accumulated, comparative methods were applied in the field. The result has been astounding. In place of the romantic conception of primitive life, which made the savage essentially a civilized child, a grimmer picture unfolded itself. Fetichism, shamanism, magic, human sacrifice, totemism, ritualism, all were found combined and interactive in a scheme of life alien to our own enlightened outlook. In such an atmosphere it was that mythology arose. It arose as an account of acts and beliefs, and, as these were purified and deepened, it, also, advanced in purity and depth. Yet, always, there remained the trace of the savagery from which it had sprung.

While primitive religion and mythology are not identical, they are closely bound up with one another. Both rest upon animism, totemism and magic as these are brought into relation with man's needs and fears. Religion is chiefly an affair of sentiment and cult, actively guided by belief in superhuman powers capable of helping and hurting man. Mythology, on the other hand, consists of the stories told about these dynamic powers as they are more and more personified and given a history and a name. And such stories are naturally

built up around acts whose significance has been forgotten, or around dramatized interpretations of processes in nature. Myths are explanations of acts and events and names which aroused curiosity and therefore demanded some explanation. It was only after modern anthropology had unearthed the characteristic beliefs of primitive man that many myths became intelligible. A few examples will make this relationship clearer.

Totemism is a sort of cult rendered to animals and plants which are regarded as akin to the tribe. It must be remembered that primitive man was not nearly so convinced of his superiority as is modern man. Wolves and bears and foxes are strong and cunning, and seem to him to have a power and knowledge even superior to his own. Strange as it appears to us today, savages quite often assign their origin to some animal and regard that animal as the possessor of a force which is valuable to his kin. This cult of totemistic animals and plants is at the base of the tales of metamorphosis which we read in Classic literature or in our own fairy tales. "Beauty and the Beast" is an example of this transformation, which our ancestors looked upon as quite natural; while the savage tales of the werewolf go back to the same outlook. The serpent in the Garden of Eden is another instance of the same cycle of ideas. The application of our present knowledge of totemism to mythology has been very enlightening. Students of Greek literature used to wonder why all the gods had birds and animals as companions. As a matter of fact, these animals were once sacred totems. The eagle and the swan were gradually displaced by Zeus, the sky deity. But so gradual was

this displacement that the animals became attributes of the younger deity, while he was thought to change himself at times back into the totem animal. The story of Leda and the swan can, in this way, be easily understood.

Many myths are explanations of rites which were no longer understood. Such myths are called ætiological. They are answers to questions which worshipers were bound, sooner or later, to ask. The myth of Prometheus, the Titan who stole the fire from heaven to succor men, was connected with the use of eagles on the front of temples to ward off lightning. Originally, the story concerns the punishment of the eagle, but is later attached to Prometheus. It is, according to Reinach, the development of the following naïve dialogue: "Why is this eagle crucified? It is its punishment for having stolen the fire from heaven." Other examples of ætiological myths are the Phaethon legend, the story of Hippolyte, and some of the stories told about Heracles.

Another source of myth is to be found in the sacrifice of animal-gods who are supposed to possess a secret strength. Such animal-gods are not anthropomorphized in early times. They are simply regarded as seats of vital power or *mana*. We must bear in mind the fact that savage man would not have been shocked by Darwinism as Bishop Wilberforce was. No distinction worth mentioning was made between men and animals in those ancient days. "English-lore," writes Andrew Lang, "has its woman who bore rabbits." The religions of Greece and of Asia Minor had rites and myths which introduced the sacred bull. In Mithraism, a religion which almost won against Christianity, the sacrifice of the bull and the consumption of its

blood and flesh in a communion feast were prominent features. Again, in the rites of Dionysus Zagreus, a bull was torn to pieces and eaten. From this arose the myth of Dionysus Zagreus as a son of Zeus and Persephone changed into a bull and eaten by the Titans. He is born again under the name of Dionysus, yet carries horns on his forehead, evident signs of his animal origin. Thus different strata of religion and belief meet and blend and necessitate the growth of explanatory myths.

But we must not allow the newer recognition of the part played by misinterpretation in the development of myths to obscure the genuine rôle of naïve reflection upon the phenomena of nature. Yet the savage imagination was limited by the experience at its command. The Homeric hymn to Helios "looks on the sun as a half-god, almost a hero, who had once lived on earth." Still more naïve are legends which make it a beast which has once been trapped. Myths arise to account for eclipses, the waxing and waning of the moon, sunset, etc. The explanation of the rainbow as a sign of a covenant between Yahweh and Noah is an excellent example of a nature-myth introduced as a part of a legend.

There are many other sources of myths. Around all striking events, such as the first punishment of homicide, legends arise. Bellerophon and Ixion are compelled to flee into exile. Again, the facts and ritual of death are a fruitful center for the working of the imagination. The *sheol* of the Hebrews is first the grave; and only later does it become even the shadowy underworld which is pictured in Isaiah.

But our purpose is not to present an exhaustive

analysis of the types of myth which early man wove about the world in which he found himself. What it is important to grasp is the slow growth from an almost animal state of ignorance to a more enlightened, moral, and socially ordered life. This evolution took time, and such progress as was made was always in danger of being overthrown by the hardening of myth and cult into a strait-jacket of superstition and hysterical fear. This danger was always great just because reason could secure no firm foothold upon reality. Man's life was one of constant fear. He felt himself assailed by evil spirits and surrounded by taboos and laws, to violate which meant disaster. When we glance over history, we find only two things which have shown promise of power to raise man out of this slough of fear,— ethical monotheism and reason. How far is this a genuine antithesis? May it not be that the real strength and freeing power of ethical monotheism is due to the reason which created it and speaks through it?

Upon one set of myths of extreme importance for religion we have, however, scarcely touched. Yet the study of this group and its explanation has been a signal triumph for the science of comparative religion. It is a great pity that the general public knows, as yet, so little about the researches made by scholars into the wide-spread ritual of communion and purification, by means of which the participant becomes one with his deity and is even assured of salvation and immortality. The interesting fact is, that, here again, we find ideas which are essentially primitive and magical given a new setting. What was once social, and largely a ritual concerned with the re-birth of vegetation in the Spring, becomes personal, and a symbol of the resurrection of a

believer in another world. In its first form and motivation, this set of ideas turns around the tribe's material needs. Only with the growth of self-consciousness is it applied to the individual.

Why did this type of ritual arise? And why was it celebrated with such fervor? These questions lead us into the very heart of early religion. Religion was the expression of man's very real need, in the light of his view of the world as the seat of spiritual agencies. "The extraordinary security of our modern life in times of peace makes it hard for us to realize, except by a definite effort of the imagination, the constant precariousness, the frightful proximity of death, that was usual in these weak ancient communities. They were in fear of wild beasts; they were helpless against floods, helpless against pestilences. Their food depended on the crops of one tiny plot of ground; and if the Savior was not reborn with the spring, they slowly and miserably died. And all the while they knew almost nothing of the real causes that made crops succeed or fail. They only felt sure it was somehow a matter of pollution, of unexpiated defilement. It is this state of things that explains the curious cruelty of early agricultural works, the human sacrifices, the scapegoats, the tearing in pieces of living animals, and perhaps of living men, the steeping of the fields in blood." To men at this stage, religion is the most natural of attitudes. It is the child of animism, of magic, of ignorance and of need. But to explain the origin of an attitude is not to explain it away. May it not be that these sentiments can be given another setting and other objects?

While all races have passed through this myth-

making stage, certain races have been more gifted, or else more favored by the circumstances of their development. A vivid imagination, a relatively complex society with different traditions, a diversified landscape, an inviting climate, and a leisurely, yet vigorous life were necessary to the highest efflorescence of this poetic power to weave human motives into nature and into the conduct of supernatural powers conceived after the manner of men. These conditions were fulfilled to a remarkable degree among the Greeks, whose mythology constantly surprises us by its richness, variety and delicacy. As the years rolled by, every striking aspect of nature or of traditional ritual was interpreted in terms of the passion, plan or caprice of some being, different from, yet by no means alien to, man. The daring and beauty of the legends woven by this race and the immensity of their range have made them the admiration and wonder of other times more given to reflection than to phantasy. The childhood of the race was productive in a memorable fashion which has made art and literature forever its debtors.

In our admiration for Greek mythology, we must not forget that other races and nations wove stories to account for human life and to interpret those features of nature which aroused their fear, love or wonder. Our own Northern mythology had its beauties and wild reaches of imagination which made it, in certain regards, a fit rival of that of the Mediterranean. The story of Balder, the joyous and kindly god whom all things loved, is evidently the mythical form of the passing of summer sunshine and the coming of winter with its darkness and gloom. We must always remember that our remote ancestors interpreted their world concretely,

and mainly in terms of human life, because they had no abstract ideas at their command. Psychical and physical concepts were interfused in their minds: prose and poetry, fact and figure combined together without that feeling of disharmony which is so distinctive of the modern mind. Nature welcomed personification, and to read the conflict of light and darkness, warmth and cold, in terms of human struggles and hates was the inevitable course for human thought to take. The simple grandeur of many of these tales of the gods comes from the poignancy of life itself. Those events in nature which affected man intensely received an intense meaning. We, who have conquered nature in large measure, or can so predict her convulsions as to escape the first shock of her rude forces; we, who think of her processes as ruled by impersonal laws, cannot appreciate the directness and unveiled immediacy of those ancient dramas which man saw around him. Darkness is for us the absence of light, not a mysterious and threatening presence which fills the sky while the kindly god of day sleeps. Light consists of vibrations in ether emitted from a tremendously hot, material substance instead of being a beneficent force under the control of a radiant being.

But other races than the Aryan were less inclined to embellish and humanize nature. The imagination worked less freely to add to the visible aspect of things. The consequence of this thinness of reaction was, that the mind rested in things as they appeared, although it could not desist from assigning to them capacities and powers which were superhuman. Nature was at least instinct with will, even while this vaguely stirring will did not clothe itself in definite forms. Man believed

himself surrounded by forces which affected him for good and evil; he felt himself immersed in an ocean of life, yet he could not discern any forms back of that which he saw with his bodily eyes. Perhaps these other races had less of the dramatic in their composition, less of that genial delight in far-fetched analogies and the free play of ideas.

As time passed, the first stage of mythology with its simple naturalism and its relative lack of imaginative elements gave way to a more human stage. Myths of the next world came to the front, and man became more and more concerned with his salvation in an after-life. Comparative religion has proven how wide-spread was the belief in some sort of immortality. The Orphic cults in Greece, the Osiris and Isis cult in Egypt, the worship of Attis and Adonis in Syria, the purification and communion ceremonies of Mithraism, all turned about the idea of a secret means of salvation. A common set of ideas developed in the Mediterranean basin and found expression in liturgies and phrases of a striking similarity. The god dies and is resurrected; the virgin goddess gives birth to a son; the members of a religious community eat of their god and gain strength from the sacred meal. The Church Fathers were aware of these similarities and sought to explain away their resemblances with the Christian ritual by means of the theory that the Devil had blasphemously imitated Christian rites and doctrines. Research has shown that this theory of parody is entirely unhistorical. The fact is, that Christianity borrowed its ritual from the cults among which it grew up. For instance, the belief in the death and resurrection of a savior-god was very

prevalent in Tarsus, Paul's own city. The Attis mysteries were celebrated at a season which corresponded to the end of our Lenten period and the beginning of Easter. They were preceded by fasting and began with lamentations, "the votaries gathering in sorrow around the bier of the dead divinity; then followed the resurrection, and the risen god gave hope of salvation to the mystic brotherhood, and the whole service closed with the feast of rejoicing, the Hilaria." There can be little doubt that this whole cycle of ideas represents a development of the primitive ritual of eating the sacred animal or plant in spring in order to foster the re-birth of man's necessities. From this germ sprang reflective ideas of atonement and communion and immortality.

Along with the growth of the mysteries went the introduction of more ethical standards of conduct. Ritual purity suggested the idea of spiritual purity. This ethicizing of myth is very apparent in Greece. By the time of the dramatists, moral judgments had become more severe, and the gods were looked upon as guardians of the moral law; and yet this view was tragically thwarted by much of the old tradition. The savage inheritance and the later moral idealism found themselves in conflict. The consequence was the gradual weakening of the older myths and the welcoming of new cults.

Ethical growth is usually in large measure unconscious. Man reads ideas into the world around him before he becomes conscious that they are his own. His own development is thus reflected in the pantheon with which he has peopled nature. Zeus is at first the thunderer and the cloud-gatherer; finally he represents jus-

tice and those kingly qualities which social growth stresses. Poets and philosophers refine away the grosser myths which shock the taste of a more advanced social level. When we compare the conceptions of Euripides, of Plato, of Cleanthes, of Marcus Aurelius, with the conduct of the Homeric gods, we realize the distance traveled by the mind of man along ethical lines. Man is now a builder of ideals. Yet the cosmic setting for these ideals is virtually unchanged; the framework of man's universe has remained much the same. It is at heart a realm of personal agents with which man is in communication.

In all the nations which advanced in civilization, this transformation within mythology makes itself felt. Ormuzd, the Persian god, passes from a personification of the sunlight in its battle with darkness to a spiritual deity who is the guardian of all the virtues. Indra, the Vedic god, is likewise at first the sky through which the clouds move, and is later conceived as the creator and sustainer of the world. The same process reveals itself in Egyptian mythology for we pass from Ra, the sun deity, to Neph and Pthah who represent creative energies and to Osiris, the god of truth and goodness. Thus there is in mythology a universal movement, from the visible aspects of nature as personified, to supernal beings back of nature, protecting what is thought of as highest and noblest in human conduct. The setting remains constant while new wine is poured into the old bottles. *The truth of the matter is that man grew faster ethically than he did intellectually.* Philosophy and science were far harder to achieve than glimpses of justice and kindness. The very growth of society in numbers forced man to adapt his conduct to a

social life and to have regard to his neighbors. The ideals advocated by Confucius, Buddha, Plato, Hosea and Jesus are as noble as our own. But advance in knowledge and its presuppositions is more revolutionary and extraordinary because more artificial and more alien to the psychological prejudices of the mass of the people. Ethics, like religion, remained for ages peacefully within the mythological setting which primitive man unconsciously constructed.

We have purposely omitted prior reference to the development of religion among the Hebrews because their religion has been so important for our own civilization. The mythological element in it was relatively small for various reasons; yet this is true only if we have regard to fable and æsthetic tale. Their world was one of personal agency just as it was for other races. But the Hebrews made a fresh start long after they had isolated themselves from the general Semitic stock. Their migration from their ancient home could not help but wither the more local myths, and this tendency was reenforced by the adoption of a new god, Yahweh, the God of the Kenites. Yahweh was a god of the lightning who thundered from Mount Sinai, and he was a god of battles, just as was Thor, the thunder-god of the Scandinavians. This war god naturally obtained their allegiance during the years of conflict with the Canaanites, and gained in prestige as time elapsed. The Canaanites had their local Baal cults and myths, and these were associated with agricultural festivals and with that worship of fertility which was so wide-spread among the ancients. The followers of Yahweh, on the other hand, were hillmen and shepherds and their rites were closely connected with sacrificial observances.

As time passed, the two races mingled and the tendency was toward an amalgamation of their respective cults. But a storm of protest set in, led by the prophets and the simpler, less concretely naturalistic religion prevailed. The very simplicity of the cult of Yahweh made it a fitting basis for that ethical development which we associate with the names of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Only an ignorance of the ethical deepening of other religions can excuse the belief that this ethical development was absolutely unique. Probably it is the aspect of national monotheism, or henotheism, as it should more accurately be called, which impresses so many, whereas this feature was an historical accident. To claim that the Hebrew development was unique and therefore supernatural is to assume that the relatively unique must be supernatural. But such an assumption has no foundation in experience, for differences in the development of nations are the rule rather than the exception. Shall we say that English constitutional development is supernatural because no other nation achieved such a form of government by itself? Shall we assert that Greek art was supernatural because it was unique? Is it not evident that the wish has been father to the thought in this case? All early peoples have looked upon themselves as chosen and upon other peoples as gentiles and barbarians. We have accepted this prejudice of the Hebrews because we have adopted a modified form of their religion with its racial traditions.

But while conditions in Palestine were not favorable to the flowering of a rich and delicate mythology, it would be false to deny the presence of a mythological motive in the Hebrew outlook. The whole story of the

intimate relations of Yahweh to his people and to their ancestors is through and through mythological. Milton's epic was made possible by the folklore incorporated in the Bible. There are many traces in the Bible of a common Semitic tradition in spite of the reactions which it underwent. Recent Semitic scholarship has made it evident that Babylonian beliefs had penetrated to this kindred people. There are sun-myths and tales of semi-divine heroes. After the exile, under the influence of Persia and Babylonia, there arose a belief in demons and angels as powers at work in the world for good and evil. These mythical creatures passed into the outlook of the Western mind by way of Christianity, and offered fruitful material for art and poetry, and for the gradual blossoming of new myths around the Christian epic of the universe. Milton and Dante unfold the inner meaning of life in terms which cannot be understood apart from beliefs which have their ultimate roots in primitive conceptions of the world.

Christian mythology, like Greek mythology, has its æsthetic value, but it is a mistake to assume that this value is removed when the old credence has departed. To appreciate the beauty of Botticelli's Venus, it is not necessary to believe that Venus arose from this sea-foam; in like manner, to enjoy Christian art it is not required that we accept the literal truth of its symbols. Indeed, it seems to me very doubtful whether many educated people to-day take the minor characters of the Christian pantheon very seriously. We would be more than surprised to hear angelic messengers chanting in the heavens above us. Only because they are bound up with a system of attitudes and values dear to men, are these mystic beings given that half-belief which pre-

vents them from falling into that limbo to which dragons and griffins and nymphs have descended. That this will be their ultimate fate is certain. In Protestant countries, in which moral values control religion and sensuous elements exercise little attraction, these figures have already retreated far into the background. Yet the average religious mind likes to dally with the thought of them, much as the child, who no longer believes in fairies, still wishes to indulge in make-believe when the everyday world becomes too bare and well-ordered.

The age of myth, then, corresponds to a naïve extension of human characteristics to natural phenomena. The world becomes a drama to which man holds the key in his own life. He feels himself surrounded by mysterious forces and agencies, far surpassing his own puny strength, and inevitably conceives them in analogy with his own activities. They differ not so much in how they work as in what they do. In this way, the gods were born into the world — and once born man has been unable to free himself from them. As he has grown in mental and moral stature, he has unconsciously reflected into them this increased knowledge and these higher ideals. And the process, once begun, has continued to the present. *Not until he has outgrown old fears and relinquished unwarranted hopes will these beliefs lose their power. Then and not till then, will reason be able to supplant mythology by knowledge.*

CHAPTER III

STORIES OF CREATION

In stories of creation we have the imagination of primitive man at work, trying to answer questions which it was no more prepared to answer than a child of seven is in a position to understand higher mathematics. The savage has an answer for every question because he has no idea of the difficulty of the problems involved. A name or a story will completely satisfy him because he is uncritical. Now the stories of creation, or cosmogonies, as they are technically called, are peculiarly interesting because they give us an insight into the concrete terms which the imagination was forced to use in its attempt to picture the past and the origin of things. Moreover, we can trace the changes these naïve stories underwent as man's experience broadened and he was able to think more abstractly. We can become acquainted with the materials with which the poet-priest of the pre-scientific past worked to build himself a marvelous and soul-satisfying tale; and we are able, as history unrolls, to watch myth gradually pass into theology.

The desire to explain how nature came to be and how man arose was well-nigh universal. Everywhere we find accounts of a distant past when the gods walked on earth. Egyptians, Hindoos, Greeks, Japanese, Polynesians, Hebrews and American Indians had tales of the origin of things to tell. This desire to account for

origins is not hard to understand. The same psychological tendency is at work to-day and gives zest to the theory of evolution. Why did the *Descent of Man* awaken such a storm throughout the Western World if not because it shook the story of man's first coming, which had been handed down from generation to generation since the mists of antiquity? Man wants to know about himself, how he came here, and whither he is going. The vogue of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam is in large measure due to the haunting sense of man's ignorance of his place in the world. *Who* set the stage and placed the puppets on it? Primitive man always answered his questions in terms of Beings like himself, although more powerful and longer lived. *All agency was for him personal agency.* And there are, even now, a surprisingly large number of people who can think in no other terms. The universe is for them the playground of spirits who work their will upon it. Matter and energy and the slow growth of years are ideas which strike them cold. Their view of the universe is dramatic and even melodramatic; it is personal, mythical.

Let us glance at some of these attempts to account for the world. We shall not find them very coherent or deep, but we shall always find them instructive for the light they throw upon man, himself, and the limits set to his theories about origins by the concrete agency to which he perforce appealed. We shall then realize how natural were the questions which man asked and which he sought to answer, and how impossible it was for him to offer any other solutions than those imaginative ones which grew up in folk-lore and which have been developed and re-cast in the various religions.

No early race had the idea of an absolute beginning.

The attempt made was simply to carry things back to different conditions, to a less developed state of things, and then to trace the larger steps by means of which the later world, as they saw it, came about. Those races which had little power for abstract thinking and had achieved few impersonal ideas kept very near to concrete phenomena and explained their own origin in terms of a mythical ancestor, or animal magician, while they left the earth and the sky very much as it was. The Iroquois Indians, for instance, believed that their original female ancestress fell from heaven. There was no land to receive her, but it suddenly bubbled up under her feet and waxed bigger, so that ere long a whole country was visible. Other branches of the tribe held that otters and beavers hastened to dig up enough earth from beneath the water to provide her with an island on which to dwell. The Athapascans of Northwestern Canada asserted that a raven, whose eyes were fire, whose glances were lightning, and the clapping of whose wings was thunder, descended to the ocean. Instantly, the earth arose and remained floating on the surface of the waters. It was from this Being that the tribe traced its descent. We must remember how near akin are animals and men at this stage of human development. Once throw oneself into the atmosphere of myth and it is not difficult to comprehend how such stories grew up.

But we are more interested in tracing the development of stories of creation from primitive types to subtler and more abstract forms; and a collection of savage folk-lore on the subject would, therefore, be of little value. Let us pass, then, to the accounts given by races which have played a part in history.

The Egyptian account is as follows: In the beginning was the primitive ocean, a wild waste of waters. From this tossing chaos sprang land and sky, and it was from their embrace that other things arose. The general idea present in this account was probably derived from the Nile floods or from glimpses of the ocean. The lifting of the watery mists which are seen rising each morning from the Nile, the parting of them from the earth and the raising of them to the sky was a work variously attributed to Ra (the sun) or Shu (the atmosphere). Gradually the Egyptians developed ideas of various deities all of whom derive from objects and activities in nature. To these were then assigned the work of creation. At first this work was thought of as a shaping or fashioning in a literal sense. Ptah, the Great Artificer, shapes the sun and moon eggs on his potter's wheel; Osiris, the god of vegetation, formed with his hand the earth, its waters, its air, its plants, all its cattle, all its birds, all its winged fowl, all its reptiles, all its quadrupeds. Is this view very far different from the account given in the so-called second story of creation beginning with verse four of Genesis? There it is written: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Somewhat later developed the more priestly, or theological, account; just as it did for the Hebrews. Creation was then conceived more mystically as an act of will issuing in a word of command. We should remember that, for primitive thought, words were not mere verbal signs, useful to man as means of communication, but were conceived, more realistically and naïvely, as essential parts of things, bound up with their existence.

This same fact will explain much of the ritual of magic. When God says, "Let there be light," light is selected and, as it were, coerced into existence by the name. As time passed man became reflective and critical. He had nothing essentially new to offer, yet he felt dissatisfied with the crude imagery of tradition. Step by step with the growth of society, we always find the passage from creation myths built around the idea of spontaneous generation to the idea of a god who molds men as a potter does his clay, and thence to a *fiat* in which the creative will of a supernatural and transcendent deity finds expression. There is a remarkable similarity in creation stories, just as we would expect. The same few motives repeat themselves with local variations.

The oldest of the Greek myths of creation are to be found in Homer and Hesiod. For Homer, Oceanus is the father of the gods, while Tethys, called the suckling or nursing one, is the mother. Back of these august, generative powers, however, lies Night whom even Zeus is afraid to offend. We must remember that darkness is a presence for early man, as real as water or air, and that man feared it as mysterious and threatening. Always we must put aside the knowledge which science has given us and sink down into this vague world of the past, filled with tremendous shapes and forces. Hesiod's view is best given in his own words:

> "From chaos were generated Erebos and black Night,
> And from Night again were generated Ether and Day,
> Whom she brought forth, having conceived from the embrace of Erebos."

Here we have the same sexual motive at work as among the Egyptians; a motive which, as we should expect,

is well-nigh universal. During the sixth century there was an efflorescence of creation myths among the Greeks. These are associated with the name of Orpheus, and are commonly classed together as Orphic cosmogonies. Soon after, philosophic speculation began to come into its own and the Greeks "left off telling tales." Burnet, a famous student of Greek culture, asserts that "history teaches that science has never existed except among those peoples which the Greeks have influenced." But we shall leave the Greeks for the present; it may be that we shall meet them and their influence again.

The Hindoos passed from crude views to more abstract and refined concepts just as the Egyptians and Greeks did. In the Vedic period, there are many contradictory statements about the creation of the world and of the gods. Heaven and earth are spoken of as the parents of the gods, and at the same time the gods are said to have built, or woven, the whole world. When we remember that there was little distinction at first between nature and the gods, we are not surprised at this contradiction. Moreover, as one writer suggests, this contradiction seems only to have enhanced the mystery of the conception. When religion enters, logic is not always desired.

Another conception which we find in Hindoo thought is that of a world-egg. This analogy is so natural that we are not surprised to discover it. Let us glance at one of the accounts given in the Satapatha Brahmana: "In the beginning this universe was water, nothing but water. The waters desired, 'How can we be reproduced?' So saying, they toiled, they performed austerity. While they were performing austerity, a golden egg came into existence. Being produced,

it then became a year. Wherefore this golden egg floated about for the period of a year. From it in a year a male came into existence, who was Prajapati. . . . He divided this golden egg. . . . In a year he desired to speak. He uttered 'bhur,' which became this earth; 'bhuvah,' which became this firmament; and 'svar,' which became that sky. . . . Desiring progeny, he went on worshiping and toiling. He conceived progeny in himself; with his mouth he created the gods. . . ."

This account of the creation is characteristic of Hindoo thought as it passes from the frank admiration of nature, which distinguishes the Vedic period, to what more nearly approaches theosophic speculation. Yet there is no genuine break with the animism of primitive times. The waters are thought of as desiring, that is, they are held to be alive and vaguely conscious. The belief that words are inseparable from things should again be noted. "Bhur" becomes the earth, and "svar" becomes the sky.

In the course of time, Hindoo thought became more abstract and sophisticated without having achieved any method which would lead to tested knowledge. An analogy may make clearer to the reader the vicious intellectual situation. Imagine the subtle minds of the Mediæval scholastics, without the material furnished them by the Greek philosophy, and obliged to exercise themselves upon magic, myth and legend. The very energy and subtlety of their intellects would lead them into all sorts of phantasmagoria. Theosophy — and a large share of what is called theology — is simply a refining and subtilizing of mythology. The more difficult and abstract the thought, the more significance

it is assumed to possess. The penetrative and exploring power of mere untested speculation is taken for granted. Words throw a spell over the mind because nothing of a more positive character is before it to counteract their charm. Even to-day we all know of people who like to employ such terms as force, and unity, and spirit, and will. The very vagueness of the words exercises a fascination which smothers the slight demand for explanation. Just as the Jews of the Dispersion spoke of Wisdom as the first-born creature of God and gave this abstraction an objective existence, so the Hindoo poets and theosophists explained the world in terms which seem to the scientifically trained mind subjective and irrelevant. For all its apparent profundity, such an outlook represents a lower stage than that which science has reached. Subtlety is not enough; it must be a servant to the right methods of investigation. Dialectic and imaginative vividness cannot give truth to ideas not adapted to explain the sort of a world we live in.

Those creation stories developed by the Hebrews with the aid of the Babylonians have had most influence on Western thought and, therefore, deserve considerable attention. The motives and mental processes at work are, however, essentially those which we have already examined. Unfortunately, we have only hints here and there in the Old Testament of the more primitive traditions which were worked over and built upon by the priests and prophets. Moreover, the Yahweh religion seems to have been adopted quite late and to have made easy a break with the older tales. Probably few readers of the Bible, who have not made a systematic study of Semitic literature, are aware that ancient strands of

folk-lore are scattered through it. In Psalm 74, for instance, there is a good instance of primitive views: "Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength; Thou breakest the head of Leviathan in pieces. . . . Thou didst cleave fountain and flood." In Job, likewise, there are references to these deeds of Yahweh in the far past. Very few casual readers ask themselves who Rahab and the Flying Serpent and Leviathan were. Now investigation has shown that we have, in these references to the deeds of Yahweh, fragments of the Babylonian myth of creation. These creatures are monsters whom Yahweh makes captive before he orders the original chaos into a cosmos. In doing this, he is a counterpart of Marduk, the Babylonian creator. These monsters, like the gods who conquer them, are only personified forms of phenomena in the heavens above and the earth beneath.

Let us now consider the stories of creation given in Genesis. It is not widely enough known that there are two distinct accounts which, although they are externally combined, can easily be separated even in the English translation. The oldest version begins with chapter two, verse five. This version is called the prophetic account. It assumes that the world already exists and concerns itself only with man's appearance, the institution of marriage, and the general features of man's life. God forms man out of the dust of the ground, as a potter molds his clay, and breathes into him the breath of life. He places him in a garden to dress and keep it. But the incidents which follow are so familiar to every one that there is no need to repeat them. Scholars have pointed out that this account is very similar to that current in Babylonia. The motives are like those found in the Gilgamish and Adapa

myths. The differences in general tone and in geographical details can readily be explained by the later date — about the eighth century — and the character of the Palestinian landscape. Those who read Hebrew will note the difference in vocabulary between the second chapter in Genesis and the first, while those who are confined to the English translation should especially note that the two words, Lord and God, are combined in the prophetic account. There are many naïve, and obviously primitive, touches in this creation story which give it a quaint charm. Only those, however, who are themselves naïve in their outlook upon the world can dream of taking it as other than folk-lore. I must confess that it is a mystery to me that so many fairly educated men can take it as anything but what it so obviously is, a creation myth.

The creation story, told in the first chapter, is called by scholars the priestly account. It is post-exilic and, so, relatively late. The foundation consists of mythical ideas which go back to the mists of antiquity. From these were derived certain terms which are scarcely translatable into English. The reader has been further confused by a poetic and inexact rendering of many Hebrew phrases. The " spirit of God " is literally the " wind of God," an idea which probably is historically connected with the Babylonian tale of how Marduk uses the wind as his instrument in his fight against Tiamat, the monster of the deep. Tiamat has become Tehom, translated as the " deep."

In spite of the lapse in verse 26, into the language of polytheism, the priestly account represents a late theological level in which creation is conceived as the passage of will and word into existence. The effect is

majestic and intensely dramatic in its simplicity. Yet how else can critical thought portray creation? An omnipotent, personal God is necessarily conceived as one who has the power to call things into being. To ask *how* he does this is meaningless, for it ignores the stark power which is assumed. In accordance with the genius of the Semite, then, God was pictured as a monarch whose very will brought forth without effort. But a little reflection must convince us that this conception neither makes creation thinkable in any genuine sense nor proves its occurrence. We have merely attained the idealization of the creation myth, its most perfect form.

The Christian conception of the creation rests largely upon the Hebrew account. The uncritical way in which this was studied and accepted, previous to the rise of modern science and the higher criticism, remains a marvel to those who are not acquainted with the psychology of religion. Sanctioned by religion, idealized myth naturally held its own until something positive arose to dispute it. The Church Fathers, the scholastics, and the leaders of the Reformation accepted the stories in Genesis as revelations. They believed that there was a God and that he had revealed to man what he had done and what his plan of salvation was. These myths fitted into their view of the world as an essential and harmonious ingredient of it. What motive would there be for skepticism? Luther states that "Moses is writing history and reporting things that actually happened." "God was pleased," says Calvin, "that a history of the creation should exist." Of course, no really educated man of to-day can accept this attitude unless he wishes to sin against his reason. It is unfor-

tunate that there has not been sufficient openness of mind to make possible a wider extension of the knowledge which scholars have been accumulating. The only candid thing to do is to class these Hebrew stories of the creation with the myths which grew up in other parts of the world. All represent attempts to picture a beginning of things as they are, by appeal to a magnified and magical personal agency. Those early thinkers did the best they could do with the ideas they had at hand. They were innocent of our modern understanding of nature as a scene of impersonal, causal processes. To try to find science in mythology is like looking upon Dante's *Divine Comedy* as a tale of real adventure.

It is interesting to study the speculations which Christian thinkers have evolved upon the question of creation. Usually, the idea of a creation of the physical world out of nothing by a fiat has been favored. "I am the Lord, that maketh all things; that stretches forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth." Such is the natural goal of the idea of a creation. Yet a moment's reflection makes us realize that the position is entirely deductive and without a shred of evidence. To assign to a hypothetical agent called God powers sufficient to produce what experience tells us exists explains nothing. The primary assumption, of course, is that there must have been a creation. But the conception of evolution has attacked that assumption at its very foundation.

Of late, there have been attempted compromises with the idea of evolution. May not God guide the course of natural change? But this outlook meets with certain difficulties. In the first place, was the physical

world created? If so, it must have been the best of all possible physical worlds, or else God is either not omnipotent or not omniscient or not ideally good. And when these questions are raised, we pass immediately into a field of mere speculation. The centuries have been witnesses of disputes between advocates of different dogmas. At present, there seems to be a revival of interest in the idea of a limited and youthful deity struggling against odds to make the world livable. But God becomes a part of the universe in every sense, and so we are led to the idea that the physical world was not created but is, rather, co-existent with deity. Of course, there are many possible variations on the theme, and human ingenuity will exhaust itself in combining these possibilities in various ways.

The truth is, that these theological speculations carry us nowhere. Myth and dialectical acuteness, however skillfully blended, cannot add to our genuine knowledge of the world. Instead, they create new problems of their own which cannot be settled, because there is no way of testing and verifying the various solutions. In short, the premises are at fault and must be outgrown and left behind. Our experience no longer suggests to us the idea of a supernatural agency at work, nor are we so prone to think of an act of creation some few thousands of years in the past. We have largely outgrown the mythological setting out of which theology arose, and it is tradition and the lack of a more positive view which enable it to retain for us any semblance of plausibility. There is nothing inherently irrational in the idea of creation; it simply bears witness to a looser, more personal world in which annihilation and

origination were familiar events, because man saw only the surface of things and was not able to follow the continuities which bind things together underneath. The principle of conservation, which is one of the grand achievements of science, is like a two-edged sword: it destroys not only the belief in an absolute annihilation but, likewise, the belief in an absolute beginning. Slowly, but surely, this new view of nature will have its effect and undermine the more naïve hypothesis of a creation. The emotional reverberation of the accustomed forms of speech, reënforced by the mental habits encouraged by religion, will die out only gradually. Man is instinctively romantic and tends to dramatize the world. His favorite categories are personal, and he has a profound distaste for the impersonalism of science. Only the slow pressure of actual knowledge will lift him to a truer view of the world in which he finds himself.

CHAPTER IV

MAGIC AND RITUAL

Early man had not the conception of natural law that we now possess. In order even partially to understand his attitude toward things, the man of to-day must abstract from the idea of law and regularity which he has shot through nature, and ignore the knowledge about the antecedents of events which close observation and careful experiment have furnished him with. In the case of magic, just as in the case of mythology, he who wishes to see eye to eye with those who lived long ago must rid himself for the time being both of the knowledge which science has accumulated and of the mental habits of enquiry and causal explanation which have been fostered by it. These habits and this knowledge have become such a part of us that we are not fully conscious of them and of their importance. They are like the clothes we wear or the forms of politeness which we go through with automatically. It is only after the twentieth-century man delves into folklore or reads accounts of the beliefs and practices of the past, that he realizes that he stands on the shoulders of innumerable generations as the inheritor of a long process of mental evolution. Nothing, perhaps, can make him realize this fact more vividly than a study of magic.

What is magic? The best answer is to give examples

of magic. "In the Malay Peninsula the magician makes an image like a corpse, a footstep long. If you want to cause sickness, you pierce the eye and blindness results; or you pierce the waist and the stomach gets sick. If you want to cause death, you transfix the head with a palm twig; then you enshroud the image as you would a corpse and pray over it as if you were praying over the dead; then you bury it in the middle of the path which leads to the place of the person whom you wish to charm, so that he may step over it." Ancient agriculture is full of magic rites designed to ward off evils. "To this day a Transylvanian sower thinks he can keep birds from the corn by carrying a lock in the seedbag." To this day, again, in Roumania, Serbia and parts of Germany, the peasants try to bring on a rain by sprinkling water on a young girl. It is supposed that nature will follow suit and send a beneficent shower upon the thirsty earth. Magic is, then, an ingenious way of making or leading nature to do what you want it to do. As Professor Murray writes: "Agriculture used to be entirely a question of religion; now it is almost entirely a question of science. In antiquity, if a field was barren, the owner of it would probably assume that the barrenness was due to 'pollution, or offense somewhere. He would run through all his own possible offenses, or at any rate those of his neighbors and ancestors, and when he eventually decided the cause of the trouble, the steps that he would take would all be of a kind calculated not to affect the chemical constitution of the soil, but to satisfy his own emotions of guilt and terror, or the imaginary being he had offended. A modern man in the same predicament would probably not think of religion at all, at any rate

in the earlier stages; he would say it was a case for deeper plowing or for basic slag."

Magic is a way of controlling things. Imitate the act desired, in a certain way, and it will come to pass. Talismans and amulets, again, possess a secret power for good and evil. Ancient societies built up a lore of this kind, adding to material objects the agency of demons under the control of magicians. This lore is practically a feature of the past. Even white magic is no longer good form, no longer accredited by the dominant social mind. It slinks into out-of-the-way places beyond the public eye. Yet research is showing that these seemingly discredited beliefs and points of view seldom completely disappear. They smolder beneath the surface and flame up now and then in a startling way to remind us that society in its evolution does not carry all its members along at the same rate. The historian is surprised to find that rites which are given an exalted place in various religions are magical at heart, and go back to beliefs which have long been discredited in other settings.

Some who have specialized in folklore and anthropology are very pessimistic as to the degree in which the scientific outlook upon nature is replacing the more primitive attitude associated with magic. One of the greatest authorities upon primitive beliefs and customs writes as follows: "We seem to move on a thin crust which may at any moment be rent by the subterranean forces slumbering below. . . . Now and then the polite world is startled by a paragraph in a newspaper which tells how in Scotland an image has been found stuck full of pins for the purpose of killing an obnoxious laird or minister, how a woman has been slowly roasted

to death as a witch in Ireland, or how a girl has been murdered and chopped up in Russia to make those candles of human tallow by whose light thieves hope to pursue their midnight trade unseen." The danger to civilization foreseen by the specialist in uncouth customs is undoubtedly exaggerated, but his warning should remind us that education has a very valuable function to perform in training an ever increasing number in scientific habits of thought.

One of the assumptions which underlie magic is the idea that two things are connected in nature because they are like one another. Space is not looked upon as a barrier to this connection. So far as can be seen, anything can affect anything else; and the slightest suggestion of such a relation leads to the belief in its reality. There is almost entire absence of any conception of systematic testing: any accidental association may lead the savage to be assured of an important sign. Thus, if a man went out hunting and saw a rabbit cross his path, and then had bad luck, he would be sure that a rabbit is a sign of bad luck. Moreover, since individuals were on the lookout for hoodoos, they would not tempt providence a second time. This example illustrates the psychology rather than the sociology of the process. It must be remembered that social groups developed what we call superstitions by way of social contagion and suggestion. The laughing acquiescence of the present in hoodoos, mascots and lucky objects cannot be traced back to the credulity of any one individual. Such things come to pass by a process of accretion just as does the belief that a particular house is haunted.

Most writers on the subject classify magic into two

kinds, imitative and contagious. These varieties are then carried back to two principles which seem to govern the association of ideas. Imitative magic follows the law of association by similarity, while contagious magic is based on the law of contiguity. To those who have studied psychology this classification will present no difficulties. To others a word of explanation is, perhaps, necessary. Our minds connect things or acts which are similar (the principle of similarity) and those which are experienced or thought of together (principle of contiguity). Connections are thus made between things and, since the principles are so liberal, almost anything can be connected with anything else. It is this liberality which is alien to science. Let us glance at some examples of both kinds of magic.

The most familiar instance of imitative magic is the device by means of which an individual hopes to injure or kill an enemy. A figure of the enemy is made and this is then stuck full of pins or else burned before a slow fire. "In ancient Babylonia it was a common practice to make an image of clay, pitch, honey, fat, or other soft material in the likeness of an enemy, and to injure or kill him by burning, burying, or otherwise ill-treating it." This practice occurs in the highlands of Scotland to-day as well as in Mexico, Italy, China and other countries. Rossetti's poem, *Sister Helen*, has made this example of imitative magic fairly familiar to those who would probably never otherwise have heard of it.

> "Why did you melt your waxen man,
> Sister Helen?
> To-day is the third since you began."

"The time was long, yet the time ran,
Little brother."
"Oh, the waxen knave was plump to-day,
Sister Helen;
Now like dead folk he has dropped away!"
"Nay now, of the dead what can you say,
Little brother?"

There are many other curious instances of imitative magic. A Bavarian peasant in sowing wheat will sometimes wear a golden ring, in order that the corn may have a fine yellow color. Similarly, in many parts of Germany and Austria, the peasant imagines that he makes the flax grow tall by dancing or leaping high, or by jumping backwards from a table. Telepathic action, or action at a distance, was constantly believed in. The hunter's wife abstained from spinning for fear the game should turn and wind like the spindle and the hunter be unable to hit it.

While imitative magic works through fancied resemblance, contagious magic is based on the principle that what has once been together must remain forever after in a sympathetic relation, so that what is done to one affects the other. In Sussex some forty years ago a maid servant remonstrated strongly against the throwing away of children's cast teeth, affirming that should they be found and gnawed by any animal, the child's new tooth would be, for all the world, like the teeth of the animal that had bitten the old one. It was quite the custom in former years to anoint the sword which wounded a man instead of the wound itself. In Dryden's play, *The Tempest*, Ariel directs Prospero to anoint the sword which wounded Hippolite and to wrap it up close from the air. Footprints, pieces of cloth-

ing, pictures, locks of hair, all are connected with the individual and what is done to them reacts on the individual no matter where he is.

At first, mankind resorted to magic as naturally as we resort to the information given us by science. There was nothing nefarious about it. Not to use all the precautions in your power and employ all the means you could think of was simply foolish. As time went on, however, socially approved magic became distinguished from black magic or that which it was wrong to resort to. But magic, like every other activity, tended to become specialized. Certain persons seemed to possess more power than others, and, since no one could tell what was impossible, what appear to us the most absurd claims were put forth. Things were believed because they were impossible. It was under the encouragement of this "will to believe" that magic flourished until the slow growth of civilization and the awakening reason of man cast doubts upon it.

To study the more technical developments of magic is extremely interesting. Magicians as a class evolved a lore which was looked upon by the uninitiated as occult and mysterious. The mass of the people did not know of any bounds which could be set to their power. They and their deeds were shrouded in darkness and surrounded by all the gruesome associations which the awe-struck imagination could conjure up. Such was the case especially when magic became outlawed as an underhand means of obtaining things. But magic had by then fallen on evil days. It was not yet disbelieved but simply condemned because it did not fit in with the dominant religious and social order. The exact

relation of religion and magic is a somewhat complex problem which we must postpone for a while.

The orient was always the fertile home of magic: here it reached its more technical developments. In *Lucian* we read of the reputed power of the Chaldean wise men who were able to recite spells which would move even the gods. All through the East this esoteric science existed. In Egypt the magicians claimed to be able to compel the highest gods to do their bidding. By this time magic had, however, passed beyond its more primitive character. So far as it involved signs and acts, these were of a highly symbolic type. Geometrical figures of intricate construction, phrases consisting of apparently meaningless words or of words supposed to have a peculiar significance, and the names of gods or demons were used with appropriate ceremonies. Many of these magical formulæ have come down to us. They are spells which are supposed to constrain even the highest gods.

The story of Faust reflects very well the notion of magic existing in Europe during the Middle Ages. The reader will call to mind the scene in which Faust calls up the Earth-Spirit. Devotees of Victor Hugo will remember the description given in his *Notre-Dame* of Dom Claude's cell and this ecclesiast's unsuccessful attempts to use the hammer of Ezekiel. The important thing was to discover the magic word which this famous rabbi pronounced as he struck upon the nail with his hammer.

We have frequently called attention to the close connection supposed to exist between name and thing. The name is a genuine part of the nature of the thing.

It was this assumption which lay at the root of the more involved magic of spells and incantations. "This is why every ancient Egyptian had two names," writes F. C. Conybeare, "one by which his fellows in this world knew him, and the other, his true or great name, by which he was known to the supernal powers and in the other world." He who possessed knowledge of the name of another had him to that extent in his power. Fear of such an eventuality led many nations to conceal the true name of their god. That is why the real name of the god of the Hebrews is a matter of conjecture to us, and why the Romans had an important deity whose name is completely lost. In an old Egyptian legend, the goddess Isis asks herself this question, "Cannot I, by virtue of the great name of Ra, make myself a goddess and reign like him in heaven and earth?" This conception reminds us of the passage in Matthew, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out devils, and by thy name do mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Again, in Mark, we have this corresponding passage, "John said unto him, Teacher, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed us not." Thus names were things to conjure with in a literal sense. How few of those who read these verses understand their real meaning, that they involved a belief in the magic of names! In the Acts of the Apostles, Peter performs a miracle simply by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Is it necessary to remark that such cures as were possibly performed were due to sugges-

tion of the sort for which ecstatic religious faith prepares the way?

In pre-scientific times, diseases were regarded as the effect of spirits or demons. Death, itself, is considered the work of a malignant agent. It is unnatural and magical. Savages often address diseases respectfully as Grandfather Smallpox. Jesus heals a woman and speaks of her as "a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has bound these eighteen years past." This address is in accord with the beliefs of that day everywhere. That the early Christians held similar views is no matter for surprise. They were children of their age.

Religion and magic were long bound up with one another. It is useless to ask which came first, for they are not mutually exclusive in the beginning. Only as an ethical monotheism, with a high respect for the personality and power of the deity worshiped, develops, is the magical element rejected. There are few religions, even to-day, which do not contain magical elements, and the farther back in time we go, the more conspicuous is the presence of incantations and ritual acts imputed to have a mysterious efficacy. Man had sore need of help, and so he adopted all the means which accident, fancy and ignorance suggested. If certain acts gave him the *mana* of his god or brought pressure to bear upon a supernatural agent, so much the better. Much of early liturgy is a mingling of spell and prayer, and it is strictly true that much of Christian liturgy bears traces of this origin. The following example shows this intertwining of higher and lower elements: In the blessing of the baptismal water on the eve of Epiphany, a custom prevalent in the earlier Church

of Rome, the priest, while praying to God to sanctify the water, dipped a crucifix thrice into it, recalling in his prayer the miracle described in Exodus, the sweetening of the bitter water with wood; then followed antiphonal singing describing Christ's baptism in Jordan, which sanctified the water. "We appear to have here," writes L. D. Farnell, "a combination of the great typical forms of the immemorial religious energy, prayer pure and simple, the potent use of the spiritually charged object, the fetish (in this case the crucifix), and an intoned or chanted narrative which has the spell-value of suggestion."

It has been suggested by certain investigators that magic is nearer science than religion. It is the attempt of man to compel things to do what he desires. In religion, on the other hand, man proclaims his helplessness and his utter dependence upon spiritual powers. There can be little doubt that this difference exists and comes more and more to the front. But it is not until religion evolves into spiritual prayer and communion and away from ritual processes that the separation takes place. Few events are more interesting than the gradual rejection of magic by religion. But does not this rejection involve a similar rejection of science? Here, again, we meet the inevitable compromise. White magic is distinguished from black magic. We shall have more to say of this relationship later.

Only after countless centuries of mistake did the intellect of man discover the actual relations in nature in such a way as to be able to use them with certainty. Subjective associations were then replaced by tested causal connections. Faith in mere imitative acts was

lost, and it was finally realized that patient research was a pre-condition of the control of man's environment. Time, alone, could show what was possible and what was impossible.

We have pointed out that, as religion became more idealistic in its conception of deity, magic tended to drop into the background. Moral motives were considered the sole motives capable of moving him to beneficent action. Prayer came to be thought of as a petition for the good, and it was even admitted that this omniscient being knew better than the petitioner what was best. We who have been brought up in the Christian belief have been too much inclined to belittle the character and intellect of races with a different heritage. It may be well, then, to point out that problems which are being thrashed over to-day in Christian communities were discussed and answered in much the same way by other peoples in less enlightened times. Ancient Greece reached the spiritual level expressed in the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done." The prayer of Socrates was: "Grant me to become noble of heart." The prayer of Epictetus was: "Do with me what thou wilt: my will is thy will: I appeal not against thy judgments." Is this not the inevitable deduction from an ethical monotheism? Any noble believer in a good god would look at prayer in this way. It is not surprising, then, that the more philosophic adherents of early Christianity questioned the validity of prayers for favors. Take away the support of science, with its healthy scotching of superstition, from the mind of the modern Christian and I doubt whether he would rise to higher ethical levels than any of his forbears.

But the growth of moral idealism in religion does not involve the rational overthrow of magic. So long as all the events in the world are not assigned directly to God as the sole active agent at work, the basis of magic remains. Moral idealism condemns only black magic, that is, an immoral use of magical powers. But moral condemnation is not a rational denial of the existence of magic. Carried to its logical extreme, ethical monotheism could discredit magic only by substituting personal for impersonal agency, and then proclaiming a monopoly of personal agency. It is evident, then, that science, rather than religion, has been the real foe of magic, because it grappled with it empirically, and in a detailed fashion, in the midst of the here and now of human events. Ethical monotheism is abstract, deductive and dogmatic. What was necessary was a critical movement at once concrete, inductive and empirical. Religion develops only the moral reason and tends to leave the wider reaches of reason an uncultivated field. Hence the traitor of superstition was never far from it, thunder as the preacher would from the pulpit. Victory over darkness requires the spread of light into every nook and cranny of the human soul.

The age-long conflict has passed its crisis. Yet all too few willingly give their whole-hearted allegiance to the ideals and methods of science. The struggle upward from primitive ignorance and superstition to the conception of slow-working impersonal agency has been toilsome and tiring, and the germs of sullen revolt are in more breasts than we often suppose. Man's hold on the good is frail; let us seek to strengthen it and to widen its grasp. Laudation of the practical applica-

tions of science is not enough. All are ready to be healed and to be made the masters of nature. Too few are willing to accept the implications of natural science and press on toward a philosophy conflicting with the ideas of the universe cherished by their fathers.

CHAPTER V

THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIANITY

Let us now pass from the study of the general features of the ancient outlook upon nature to a study of the Christian view of the world. Is the Christian view of the world inseparably bound up with this ancient outlook, or can it be purged of it? Is the moral fervor and idealism of Christianity its essential and permanent contribution, a contribution to a rational appreciation of human life? Probing still deeper, let us not be afraid to ask ourselves whether the surgery which this thesis implies does not involve the daring of a break with theism as only a developed form of primitive animism? In ethical monotheism, may not the *monotheism* be the protecting envelope from which the butterfly has already flown?

The part played by Christianity in the development of Western civilization and its position as chief representative of the religious interpretation of the universe makes our selection of it for study natural. To identify traditional religion with a low stage of its development, in which it is inextricably bound up with crude myth and ritualistic magic, is not a fair procedure. We must take theology at its best and place it over against science and philosophy before we can rightly judge it. Only then can we be certain whether it stands for anything vital, significant and true. For the Western

world, at least, Christian theology is generally acknowledged to represent the high-water mark of theology. If it is intrinsically inadequate and untrue to modern experience, the only course open to a morally and intellectually courageous man is to resign it as a view outgrown. No matter how much pain may arise from a break with old associations and from the relinquishment of false hopes, intellectual morality permits only one course. It may be that social morality will gain new life when the old forms are broken, for the letter killeth. I mean that Christian ethics will operate more freely and creatively in the world when it is given an entirely humanistic setting. In dreaming of a supermundane god, man has only too often forgotten his fellow man. In yearning for the coming of the divine kingdom, he has allowed his hands and feet to be idle, or has even stepped unheeding over the prostrate forms of men and children broken in the mart. To remove theology from Christianity is to make the kingdom of this world.

The content of Christianity cannot be separated from its origin. To do so is to open the door to private interpretations of all sorts and to facilitate duplicity and self-deception. Christianity is an historical fact, and has meant various pretty definite things. If we have outgrown certain of these things and re-interpreted others in a fundamental way, we are not making for clearness of thought by trying to read our own outlook into the past. Continuity of a spiritual kind there has been, but there is also newness of a basic import. The knowledge and atmosphere which confront it today are vastly different from the theosophy in which it was born and nourished.

I think we all feel that Christianity stood for an ethical stimulus of a very fruitful sort whose effect can hardly be overestimated. Yet, if we wish to gain a proper perspective, we must not neglect to put in the other balance the tendency to dogmatism and the persecuting zeal which accompanied it. There have been other than Christian martyrs. Something was faulty with a movement which contained so much obscurantism and bigotry. There was not enough of sweet reason in its composition, and too much of the old terrors which accompanied primitive ignorance and cruelty. It needed a saner and more wholesome perspective and more trust in human reason. For instance, the differences between the various sects, which have sprung up from period to period with such clamor and death-defying energy, have been differences of stress and of formulation whose importance was grossly exaggerated. To the modern student nothing is more tragic and pitiful than this zeal of ignorance. So much to be done in the world to make it sweeter and more beautiful and more livable, so much need for sanity and charity; and yet so much of human energy wasted and, more than wasted, turned to evil results. The only way to overcome this sectarian mal-adjustment is to know the past as it was and to cherish no distorting and blinding illusions in regard to it. Man is so prone to see the golden age in the past that it is necessary to have a searchlight directed upon it. An historical approach is such a searchlight.

There is another psychological advantage in an historical approach. The reason is often unconsciously bound by the authority of a supposed past. For the philosopher with his confidence in experimental reason,

perhaps, this inhibition does not exist; but even people who have every inclination to bring their total experience to bear, in a free way, upon doctrines and beliefs are restrained by what they have been taught, and lose audacity. The spirit of acquiescence is always at work in the world, and nothing reënforces this spirit more powerfully than a traditionally-accepted book of sacred writings. Confronted by these with their unhesitating affirmations and claims, the minds of the majority are intimidated, and such reflections as they allow themselves work within the prescribed boundaries or wander little beyond them. Nothing is better suited to unbind the mind and to lead it to think boldly than a study of origins. The individual gains perspective as he sees ideas and sentiments rise and fall and give way to others. He can no longer be intimidated by the shadow of a compact and seemingly impregnable tradition. We must remember, however, that such an historical and comparative approach can, at its best, only break up the mythical simplicity of a sentimentalized past and reveal the complexity of the many-channeled forces at work; it cannot prove any particular doctrine. The creation must come from the spirit of the present, as it carries the stimulus of the past and adds to it its own energies.

All developed religions have their sacred books. Until the translation of the Sacred Books of the East was undertaken in the latter part of the nineteenth century, few people realized how many such books there were. And we Americans have been the unwilling witnesses of the appearance of two other collections of writings making the same claims, *The Book of Mormon* and *Science and Health*. Now such sacred books are re-

garded as revelations which could not be obtained except by a mysterious contact with divine things. And the religious faith which has been called forth and directed by a teaching founded on the scripture turns back its own warmth upon its source. Nothing is more natural than this interaction between a living faith and the writings which are felt to be its guarantee. Religion is notoriously conservative and retrospective. Especially is this true of religions which impute to themselves a complete and final source of revelation in the past. Faith and book are associated in the mind so intimately that they lose their separateness. To doubt one is like doubting the other. Thus faith forms an emotional envelope which protects the literature, while the concrete detail of the literature reacts upon the mind to strengthen the faith. It is not strange, therefore, that the cult of the book is a phenomenon which is universal in the advanced religions. The Mohammedan believes in the verbal inspiration of the Koran just as fully as does the Jew in the divine origin of the Old Testament, and the Christian in the inspiration of the accepted canon called the Bible. Nor are these the only examples. But this psychological circle is a vicious one. It involves the substitution of a subjective support to claims and theories which require the test of human experience as a whole. But just because science is this coördination of the whole range of experience, there inevitably arises that conflict between science and theology of which we have heard so much during the last few decades. It is a conflict between a part of experience, interpreted too hastily, and the rationalized whole.

Science arose at the time of the Renaissance as a

consequence of man's awakened curiosity. Its first conquests were in the fields of astronomy and physics. These were of such a striking character that they gave this comparatively new movement a prestige which stood it in good stead in time of trouble. Gradually, an assured technic was developed, and inductive tests made of every hypothesis which suggested itself. For a considerable time, science was confined pretty definitely to the physical world; but it was inevitable that the mental habits encouraged would sooner or later extend themselves to other fields. While there were many tentative applications of the methods and ideals of inductive science to the field of history in the eighteenth century, it was not until the nineteenth century that the science of history was fully developed. Our conception of the past has become progressively deeper and truer. Romanticism has been replaced by a realism which calls anthropology, archæology, and modern psychology to its aid. We wish to see the men of the past as they actually were; and we are quite aware that we know more about the world than they did.

In the domain of biblical literature and comparative religions, the method of science was slow of application. There was a tremendous inertia to overcome, and a strong spirit of positive antagonism to resist. The whole system of hopes and fears, sanctions and taboos, which the ancient view of the world had fostered within the human breast cried out against the sacrilege of rational investigation. Humanity hugs illusion more fondly than it does truth because it is more familiar with it. For a while, all that orthodoxy had to contend with was a rationalism of a skeptical cast which had scarcely a better historical outlook at its

command than had its opponent. It could assert that these stories and beliefs handed down from the past could not be true because they conflicted with our experience; but it could not explain why people had originated these ideas and why they had believed in them so implicitly. In other words, it could not let the past explain itself in such a natural way that it would disprove its own beliefs. It is this that modern research has done so thoroughly that there is scarce need for the appeal to the constructive sciences which skeptical rationalism makes. The battle is no longer a drawn one so far as the intellect is concerned. It is merely a question of how long it will take before the victory will be recognized and proclaimed by all educated people.

As the evolutionary point of view forced its way into recognition, scholars became aware of the real nature of myth and legend; they realized that beliefs of this sort are products of a creative group-consciousness saturated with a view of the world which we have slowly outgrown; they sensed the mental complexity of the past and became suspicious of the naïve assumption that religions were formed in a generation by the sheer authority of a single man or of a small group of men. The first clear statement of this changed point of view was the work of David Friedrich Strauss in his famous *Life of Jesus.* Strauss developed the idea that much of religious literature consists of myths and dogmas, not created out of whole cloth by would-be deceivers, but woven by the stimulated fancy of groups working in the atmosphere of traditions and attitudes which the most intense research, alone, can make living

to the scholar. There can be little doubt that this standpoint is essentially correct. Before it could be applied satisfactorily, however, painstaking investigation of the literature and recorded customs of the people of the Mediterranean basin had to be carried through. Only by now has this task been so far achieved that the main features of the Graeco-Syrian-Palestinian-Egyptian world are open to a sympathetic inspection. No one who has not done some work in this field at first or second hand can realize the difficulties which confronted investigators. Fragments found here and there in the writings of the Church Fathers, the teachings of the Jews of Alexandria, the apocalyptic literature discovered in remote places, inscriptions unearthed here and there, all were carefully studied and compared and forced to yield their quota of information.

It is a psychological principle which must always be reckoned with that the less an untrained individual knows about the past, the more certain of the correctness of his assumed knowledge he is prone to be. For example, the American who has read one or more of the over-simplified text-books dealing with the history of his country, which are used in the schools, has a clear-cut picture of the various events, knows exactly how they occurred and who was in the right. The university teacher, on the other hand, has before him a wealth of conflicting data from which he must painfully and tentatively construct a picture of the tendencies at work at different periods. He must test the genuineness of his sources, weigh the prejudices of the writer, and decide whether he was in a position to know exactly

what was happening. Consequently, he will speak in a qualified language where the average citizen will deliver himself of emphatic assertions.

Yet the investigator of American history is possessed of an abundance of material and deals with a time for which printing existed. The language in which these documents are written is his own or else a well-known one. The student of comparative religions has none of these advantages. For the ancient world, the inscriptions are archaic and condensed. In the case of the biblical literature, he may be dealing with accounts edited from older manuscripts in other languages. These narratives conflict among themselves and contain surprisingly little information on important points. Hence, the investigator is almost overwhelmed by the difficulty of his task and the fewness of his certain results. The ordinary confessing Christian, on the contrary, is blissfully unaware of these problems. He opens his English translation and reads the familiar words in the light of inherited dogmas which blind his eyes to all contradictions and discrepancies. The truth is, that he is mentally unprepared to compare passages and to see problems which stare the trained man in the face. He reads subjectively for edification. The ecclesiastical atmosphere is such that his spiritual advisors have either desired to keep modern critical work from his notice, or have been afraid to arouse the bigotry of their keepers, or have themselves lacked a modern education. The consequence is that the average Christian has the most naïve notions in regard to the authorship and authenticity of the gospels and of the real meaning of many of the verses. Palestine is conceived in terms of the colorprints which illustrate his bible, while the mental atmos-

phere of the Year One is that of the present day in America with, perhaps, an exotic touch here and there.

Let us glance over some of the facts which investigation is making ever clearer and which are not as generally known as they deserve to be. What is said here should be read with remembrance of the results of the previous chapters. Such a bird's eye view of the forces at work in later Hellenistic and Roman times will be the best preparation for a sane conception of the origin and trend of Christianity.

In Tarsus, a Greek city of Cilicia, Paul, or Saul, was born and educated. Now Tarsus was, after Alexandria, the chief seat of late Greek philosophy in the near-orient. Many of the more noted Stoic thinkers and teachers of the day came from Cilicia and had semitic blood in their veins. Athenodorus, the teacher of Cicero and Augustus, came from Tarsus, itself; and it is said that his grateful and admiring fellow citizens made him a hero upon his death and annually celebrated him in a memorial feast, a procedure very characteristic of the age. There is the strongest evidence in Paul's epistles that he was well acquainted with the doctrines of Stoicism. The larger intellectual world of Philo of Alexandria and Seneca of the Imperial City lies behind these epistles. The Hellenistic Jew of the Dispersion differed widely from the Jew of Palestine, no matter how desirous he might be to identify himself with the worship at the Temple.

But Greek philosophy was not the only element with which the inhabitant of Tarsus would come in contact. When Paul speaks of mysteries, he is referring to the various secret cults which permeated the Roman world. How few Christians are aware that the ancient world

was, at this time, in a religious ferment almost without parallel. *The Greek civilization had lost its nerve.* It had shot its bolt and been overwhelmed by autocratic powers and sheer barbarism. The conditions of a progressive and broadly based civilization had not yet been achieved. "Any one who turns from the great writers of classical Athens, say Sophocles or Aristotle," writes Gilbert Murray, "to those of the Christian era must be conscious of a great difference in tone. There is a change in the whole relation of the writer to the world about him. The new quality is not specifically Christian: it is just as marked in the Gnostics and Mithra-worshipers as in the Gospels and the Apocalypse, in Julian and Plotinus as in Gregory and Jerome. It is hard to describe. It is a rise of asceticism, of mysticism, in a sense, of pessimism; *a loss of self-confidence, of hope in this life and of faith in normal human effort;* a despair of patient inquiry, a cry for infallible revelation; an indifference to the welfare of the state; a conversion of the soul to God. It is an atmosphere in which the aim of the good man is not so much to live justly, to help the society to which he belongs and enjoy the esteem of his fellow creatures; but rather, by means of a burning faith, by contempt for the world and its standards, by ecstasy, suffering and martyrdom, to be granted pardon for his unspeakable unworthiness, his immeasurable sins. There is an intensifying of certain spiritual emotions; an increase of sensitiveness, a failure of nerve." It was in such a state of the social mind that Christianity had its birth. It was, as we have before pointed out, one of many competing for dominance.

These competing religions had much in common,

though it was the advantage of Christianity to have inherited the ethical monotheism of the prophets. Upon Paul, the Hellenist and Jew of the dispersion, was focussed this august tradition along with traditions of a more mystical character. Syria had been the home of certain mysteries from an early day, for we read in the Old Testament of women mourning the death of Tammuz, the god of vegetation who dies and is born again. Now Adonis or Attis was the corresponding god of Phrygia, and all people of Syria were well acquainted with the cult which showed the mother-goddess mourning for her son. But these more primitive rites were being displaced by a more developed and ethical form called Mithraism. I well remember my surprise when, visiting one of the older churches at Rome, I was shown the earlier church beneath and told that, beneath that again, a church dedicated to Mithra had been discovered. Now Tarsus was one of the chief seats of Mithraism, and it is practically certain that Paul was acquainted with its main rituals and beliefs. Let us try to realize the importance of this fact.

Mithraism had an initiatory service in which the proselytes were admitted into the faith. The liturgy of this service is still extant and we know that it represented a mystical dying and rebirth in which the guilt of the old life is removed and a new immortal life is created through the spirit. The initiates spoke of themselves as reborn for eternity. "So striking," writes Pfleiderer the German critic, "is the connection of these ideas with Paul's teaching of Christian baptism as a community of death and resurrection with Christ (Romans 6) that the thought of historical relation between the two cannot be evaded. . . . Mithraism also

had a sacrament corresponding to the Christian eucharist at which the sanctified bread and a cup of water or even wine served as mystic symbols of the distribution of the divine life to Mithra-believers."

When we bear in mind how little importance Paul attached to the actual life and ethical teaching of Jesus, we are not surprised at the frequent suggestion that Paul was the real founder of both liturgical and theological Christianity. He did not create this liturgy but found it to hand. The early church followed this natural impulse and added to the simpler inherited rites. Into the psychology of Paul's conception of the Christ it is difficult to enter. He was probably an enthusiast with the tendency to exalted moods peculiar to epileptics and yet with high mental ability. He felt himself inspired. He gives us to understand that he was subject to visions, and it is well known that religious excitement is capable of welding together the myriad suggestions which play upon the self. We can comprehend the work of Paul, one of the main founders of Christianity, only when we see him as the mystical interpreter weaving the Jewish traditions of the soberer type, the apocalyptic outlook of such books as Daniel and Ezra, the mystery cults of the Hellenistic world and the theories of the Stoic philosophy into one whole, dominantly supernaturalistic. Scholars will continue to differ in regard to the comparative proportions of the ingredients he fused together, but few will gainsay that Paul's teaching is a product of many sources. In this connection a very significant fact should be noted: although the Pauline epistles are the earliest records of Christianity, " aside from the crucifixion, not a single fact in the life of Jesus can be gleaned from these

epistles, nor do they record a single saying of Jesus."

We shall next pass to a brief study of the Jesus of the synoptic gospels, the figure which has become endeared to humanity and with which the Western world has associated its noblest sentiments. But even the present study of some of the more mystical elements in Christianity must have persuaded the reader that we have in this movement the focussing of the complex life of ancient times. The circle of ideas passionately held by the members of the church was not created by any one man or group of men. It was the flowering out of primitive ideas and ethical aspirations. Moral idealism goes hand in hand with cosmological myth. We who have regained the nerve which that age had lost may have the gift and high adventure of separating moral truth from theological illusion.

CHAPTER VI

THE PROPHET OF NAZARETH

Of recent years a strong reaction against the Pauline interpretation of Christianity — or shall we say the Pauline type of Christianity? — has set in. We have so completely outgrown the primitive notions of sacrifice, and the Jewish belief in the necessity of an atonement is so contrary to our idea of God, that Paul's rabbinical theology does not strike a sympathetic chord. After all is said, we are descendants in the spirit of those gentiles for whom Paul's message was nonsense. Intellectually, we are the sons of Plato and Aristotle, of Archimedes and Justinian. During the Middle Ages, the ideas of the period of the Graeco-Roman decline were mingled with the social ideas of feudalism. Today, science and philosophy have lifted us back to the serener heights of classic times, and bid fair to surpass that glorious period in solid construction if not in delicacy of inspiration. The result is, that the social mind is dropping those elements from Christianity which do not harmonize with our moral and intellectual temper.

Now, the synoptic gospels are of a nature to lend themselves to this shifting of interest from the theological and the sacrificial to the more human and ethical. They present an idealized picture of Jesus Christ after the flesh, whereas Paul preaches only the second Adam, Jesus Christ after the spirit. Paul was inter-

ested in the world to come and the heavenly world above the clouds where sit the æons, the principalities, and the powers. We are interested chiefly in the world here and now, in social justice and democratic fellowship. As humanitarianism became aggressive, Christianity reflected the change. Is there any reason to suppose that its theological envelope will be able to place a boundary to the extent of this change? The real forces at work are those of to-day, those of our own spirit and mind. Only for a time will they seek to find themselves in the past. Only while they are gathering force and confidence will they masquerade as a mere revival of a truer primitive Christianity.

It is extremely suggestive that the more democratic movements within Christianity have always stressed the kindlier, more human, and more homely phases of the bible. The followers of St. Francis of Assisi were, at first, teachers of humility and brotherly love; and Francis, himself, modeled his life after that of Jesus as he conceived him. The disciples of Wycliffe made their home among the peasantry and artisans of Mediæval England. John Ball is a good interpreter to us of the social outlook they nourished. It appears that they thought of Jesus as like one of themselves, read his life in terms of their own pressing problems. Pietism and methodism have always inclined toward the gospel Jesus in preference to the Pauline Christ; but their social outlook was far too negative and passive. Democracy must be aggressive, non-mystical, triumphant. It must exalt reason while not forgetting tenderness. With the growth of modern democracy of a socialistic kind, Jesus the Carpenter with his kindly word for the poor and downtrodden and his scorn for

the haughty and rich has become the symbol and sign of a new social ethics. It is evident that religion is not independent of the social temper of an age. Religion points to the seat of power as a compass points to the pole. When man's sore need made him cry out for mercy and succor in the primitive days, his ignorant helplessness inevitably peopled nature with gods of fertility. Illusion and need created the gods of myth and ritual. Remove this setting of ignorance and illusion, and put in its place a sense of power, and need will point to the proper use of that power. Justice and mercy and reason, used socially for a social purpose, will surely become the religion of an intelligent democracy. In the older forms of religion, man was a petitioner holding out helpless hands of prayer; in the religion to come, man will be a creator bravely taking his destiny into his own hands. What a reversal! Yet it is no greater than the contrast between the primitive world we have been studying, with its mana and taboos and magic, and the modern world with its knowledge of chemistry and electricity and its deep probing into the very soul of man.

But we must return to the explanation of the popular tendency to exalt the man Jesus over the Pauline Christ. Is the explanation far to seek? Theology of a recondite character has always been the expression of reflection and leisure. The religion of the masses has always been, on the contrary, in terms of pictures and emotions connected with their everyday needs. The rabbinical concepts of Paul were foreign to their experience, while the philosophical mysticism of John was appreciated only by a few who felt the beauty of the language and the strange charm of its figures of speech.

To the common people Jesus was a loving friend who comforted them in their sorrows, and the witness to a heaven in which all tears would be wiped away. Of course, we must not be too romantic in our interpretation of the outlook of the masses. These sentiments often attached themselves to the given theology with dogmatic fierceness; and in the background superstitious fears were only too apt to smolder. But, on the whole, it is not false to say that the gospel story of the life of Jesus with its simple pathos and vivid diction appealed to the masses, while his personality met their ideal of nobility and moral grandeur. Jesus, the man who was also the Son of God, who came upon earth for them and for some reason died for them, affected them as nothing else could. And is it not a wonderful conception? Yes; in the right setting, there has been none grander in all literature. It is a masterpiece of lyricized mythology. But, when we have outlived its setting, it can affect us only as great literary masterpieces do, when we consent to throw ourselves into the æsthetic attitude.

The pragmatic and æsthetic qualities of a story do not guarantee its historical truth. In fact, research has shown that practically all the most charming anecdotes which have come down to us will not stand critical examination. The historian of Christianity is well aware of this situation. The general movement of enlightened religious thought from the more mythical element to the career of Jesus, while it bears witness to a more wide-spread interest in his personality, also testifies to a growing doubt of the validity of the theological constructions which have been woven around his figure. We wish to know, if possible, exactly what *he* thought

and taught. Were we able to determine this, we feel that much of the distorting atmosphere would be withdrawn. But is not this, itself, one of those deluding hopes which the attitude of compromise fosters? Do we not know in our heart of hearts that the beliefs of Jesus reflected the beliefs of his time, just as the beliefs of Kant or Luther are functions of the ages in which they lived? But we have here an hypothesis which can be tested by historical data. Were the views of Jesus like those of his age? Nothing has come out more clearly than just this fact.

Let us see what has resulted from this close study of the sources. We must remember that books were not published in ancient days as they are at present. Manuscripts passed from hand to hand, and individuals added to them, or altered them, or combined them as they saw fit. Plagiarism did not have the meaning it has now when authors live on the proceeds of the sale of their books. Besides, it was quite the custom to attach names to manuscripts at pleasure or in accordance with tradition. Our modern critical attitude had not arisen — for obvious reasons. Besides, it was difficult to secure copies of manuscripts. For instance, Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia toward the middle of the second century, believed that there was an Aramaic gospel according to Matthew, but he was unable to get a glimpse of it and had to trust to the oral tradition of his time. To bring this situation home: suppose we had to rely on the oral tradition still lingering in regard to the life of Washington, how certain would we be of its authenticity? Why, there are already myths in regard to the life of Mary Baker Eddy! In olden days,

myths sprang up like mushrooms. Only too many varieties were at hand to choose from.

Scholars are pretty certain that the present Matthew is not a translation of an Aramaic original. Moreover, the present Matthew breaks up into separate parts conflicting with one another quite extensively, and is full of insertions of a comparatively late date. Only after the gospel has been radically revised are we likely to be near an old tradition of the life and deeds of Jesus.

While we are on the topic of the authenticity of the gospels, it may be worth while to discuss the other synoptics as briefly as possible. The majority of critics regard Mark as the oldest but this is mere guesswork when all is said and done. In its present form it is briefer than the others and this fact has impressed many students. Besides, it does not contain an account of the infancy of Jesus. But it, itself, is evidently a compilation of other documents since it repeats the same event in slightly different forms. In all probability, it was written in Greek for a Hellenistic audience and emphasizes those traditions which would be the most likely to impress its readers. It is not known who wrote it or exactly when it was written.

The gospel according to Luke did not originally make any claim to have been written by Luke. Scholars are agreed from internal evidence that it could not have been written until long after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. The author of Luke was acquainted with the *Antiquities* of Josephus and this shows that he must have made his compilation and free reworking of traditions in the second century.

If, then, our gospels were not written by eye-witnesses, and represent the beliefs and traditions of at least the next half-century after the death of Jesus, to what can we give credence? What is myth and legend and what is historic fact? Can we find a clew to guide us?

It is a canon among historical critics to regard those passages as the oldest which conflict most with the outlook of the later centuries. We can understand why they happen to be there but there would be no good reason for their later creation and insertion. Let us try to determine whither this canon will lead us.

All scholars agree that the birth stories are a later addition. They are a product of Hellenistic beliefs, perhaps even of Hindoo influences. The Virgin-Mother myth was very common in ancient times and the whole machinery of the story was undoubtedly absorbed from tales widely current in those days. For instance, the father of Plato, the Greek philosopher, was warned in a dream by Apollo so that Plato was virgin-born. What can we think of the intellectual state of Churches which excommunicate ministers who have the decency to inform their congregation what disinterested scholarship has determined? So far as there is intellectual dishonesty or incompetence here, it will bring its own punishment in the attitude adopted by sincere men toward the Churches. The best we can say, then, is that there is no very good reason to doubt that Jesus was the son of a carpenter, by the name of Joseph, and his wife, Mary. He was not the only child, for Mark represents his fellow townsmen as saying: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters

here with us?" Quite a goodly family, you see. The Ebionite Christians, who were the Christians of Palestine and probably had the safest traditions on this point, believed that Jesus "was the son of Joseph and Mary according to the ordinary course of human generation." His kinsmen were the leaders of the Christian community for several generations. But there is little use in laboring a point which is so obvious.

Of his early life we know practically nothing. He was probably not trained as a rabbi but worked at the trade of his father. We may assume that he knew how to read and write, since an opportunity to learn was usually offered in the synagogue. It is likely that his reading was largely confined to the religious literature of his people, especially the psalms and the prophets. His spirit was more in harmony with the deep ethical fervor of these champions of righteousness and lovers of justice than with the formal prescriptions of the Law. If we may judge from the general tone of the traditions, he was a close student of men and a lover of nature, a silent, reflective man who noted the events passing around him. His youth passed in this way without any overt step being taken; and, perhaps, without any clear message having developed in his mind. He was simply one of the dissatisfied few who are always to be found. Now and then, it may be, he spoke passionate words against the evils that were apparent on every hand, quoted the prophets in their outbursts against similar evils and subsided into a brooding silence. There are many such in our land to-day, sincere and passionate and kindly men who eat their heart out witnessing the course of events.

The Jews of the day cherished the idea that a Mes-

sianic kingdom would be established. Jesus shared in this expectation; but it is certain that he thought of it less as a restoration of the Jewish state to power than a change in the position of the mass of the people. In other words, he infused the belief with a finer ethical meaning more in accordance with his concept of God and his sense of what was really valuable and important. There is no means of knowing his entire attitude toward this popular belief in a supernatural kingdom to be established by God upon earth, but he undoubtedly retained its main outlines. He was a child of his age although a notably sincere and high-minded one.

About 28 A. D. John appeared and preached in the wilderness. Jesus went to hear him because of the natural interest he aroused. It is quite probable that he was baptized by John. We do not know whether he associated himself with John or not. At any rate John's message crystallized his own ideas and he felt called upon to continue his mission. He did not proclaim himself as the Messiah but simply preached that the kingdom of God was at hand and that men were to prepare for it. This preparation was of an ethical sort and largely ascetic in character.

Palestine was in a ferment at this time and his appearance and preaching aroused great interest. Like all prophets he was called upon to heal the sick and, accepting the customary views of sickness, he proceeded to exorcise the evil spirits which possessed those who were brought to him. I do not see how he could have escaped this task. What part accident played in giving him confidence cannot be known, but it was probably large. There is no reason to doubt that there is a ground of fact for these stories of healing, although

they have been grossly exaggerated by later tradition when he was viewed as divine. We must always remember how late and biased our sources are.

As time went on, he gained more confidence in himself. Since he was human, he could not help being moved by the confidence of the people. He felt that reforms should be made; everywhere was poverty and sickness and unhappiness. Could the thought help coming to him that perhaps he was the one to inaugurate the kingdom? The idea kept coming back, forced upon him by his own reflection and by the questions and assumptions of his disciples. It may be that he never made up his mind but was forced by the course of events to go to Jerusalem where his career ended all too soon. Mankind will never know the details of his inner life; his doubts, hopes, decisions, indecisions are hidden from us in an obscurity that will never be completely lifted.

His preaching became more revolutionary. More and more he set himself in opposition to the mechanical observance of the law and the fanatical worship of forms and days. The opposition of the conservative members of priesthood increased in bitterness. Soon it was war to the knife between this new prophet, with his disregard for the law, and its chosen representatives. Thus Jesus had drifted into a position which he had probably not anticipated when he set out on his ministry. But this is always the way. Mohammed began as a reformer, and the antagonism of the keepers of Caaba led to his aggressive campaign; Luther and Huss and Wycliffe changed their attitude and their ideas at various moments in their career. No man's life is the working out of a fixed and ready-made plan. At any rate, he determined to go to Jerusalem — in all

likelihood, as Pfleiderer suggests, in order to win a victory over the hierarchy and to realize the prophetic ideal in the center of the religious life of the Jewish nation. The people received him enthusiastically but his opponents were too strong and clever for him. He feared only secret assassination while they induced the Roman power to intervene.

The story draws to a close. In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus felt the possibility of a tragic end to his hopes of an early coming of the Kingdom. The real situation shines clear through all the legend which a later age has woven around it. When he saw himself surrounded by a multitude of armed men, he knew that resistance was vain. He was delivered into the hands of his enemies. Through all the humiliation and pain of those days, he seems to have hoped that his God would rescue him. It was only on the cross that he finally gave up hope. The heavens were dumb as they always have been and always will be.

The body of Jesus was probably thrown into the common pit reserved for malefactors, as Abbé Loisy suggests, while the story of the burial by Joseph of Arimathea grew up to save him from the terrible dishonor of such a last resting-place. The rest of the traditional narrative is unquestionably mythical. Paul speaks of him as buried and evidently thinks of the risen Jesus as an incorruptible or spiritual man. Paul did not believe in a bodily resurrection. The visions which led to a belief in the resurrection of Jesus were ecstatic in character. We must remember that the ancients were far less critical than we are in regard to dreams and illusions and did not consider a return to life in some shadowy form as very unusual. I have not the

slightest difficulty in my own mind in accounting for the belief in the resurrection of Jesus in an entirely natural way. Once this belief arose and became important as a part of a new religion, the rise of legendary details was simply inevitable.

The position I have taken is relatively conservative. Many scholars have even become skeptical whether such a person as Jesus ever lived. We cannot be certain but it seems more plausible to give a relative credence to the older strands of tradition in the New Testament. That such an ethical reformer lived who believed in the coming of the Messianic kingdom, that he was embroiled with the priestly class and was done to death by them with the aid of the Roman governor who feared a seditious outbreak, that his disciples after his death came to believe in his resurrection and his coming Messiahship upon earth, all this appears to me more than probable. Human life is a fertile field for tragedy. The more we rid the narratives of their fairy-story accompaniments and see Jesus, not as a god who foreknows his human life and plays it out gravely as an actor who knows his rôle, but as a human being hurried to issues he had not at first dreamed of, the more his career becomes comprehensible. Its pathos is increased by this truer perspective, while the moral grandeur of his life gains by the human atmosphere which descends upon it. He lived his life sincerely as other men have done and did not dream of the use history would make of his name.

CHAPTER VII

THE EVOLUTION OF CHRISTIANITY

Christianity did not arise in the form we associate with it. The followers of Jesus, after they had become convinced that their crucified leader had arisen from the dead and had become a spiritual agent, grouped themselves together in Jerusalem and formed a religious congregation whose distinguishing tenet was a belief in the near approach of the earthly kingdom of God, whose ruler would be Jesus. In his powerful name, the members of the congregation could perform miracles of healing where the faith was sufficient. This form of Christianity did not differ very widely from Judaism in anything but this belief in Jesus as the expected Messiah. It is obvious that this difference has no essential meaning to us to-day who know the origin and import of the Messianic hope of the Jews. Let us be frank with ourselves and clear our minds of these dreams of the past. These early Christians deceived themselves; their hopes were not fulfilled; the earthly kingdom of God did not come. Jesus was not the Messiah for the simple reason that there is no such person. He was not the Messiah any more than Mohammed Ahmed was the Mahdi — and for the very same reason. Mahdis and Messiahs and Buddhas are creations of religious and race imagination just as King Lear is the product of the poetic imagination of William Shakespeare. The

educated man of the present must classify these figures as tremendous fictions whose power is waning. When he faces them squarely and asks himself what significance they have for his life, his answer must be, "Only historical and artistic." We may say, then, that Christianity in its first form has been outgrown.

But the Messianic form of Christianity gave it a vividness and concrete impressiveness that made it a force among the men of that age. Jesus was the heavenly Messiah who would return in power and rule according to righteousness. With him was bound up the hope of immortality and in his hand was dominion over the evils which beset one's path. A great world-event was impending; at any moment the last trumpet might sound and the dead and the living be delivered to judgment. Moreover, Jesus as the Christ and Lord was even now at work among men, his Spirit was active to guide and encourage those who had faith in him. In the congregation at Jerusalem, this belief in Jesus as the Messiah was closely associated with the past history of the race and did not involve a break with the Law. The Old Testament was searched to find prophecies which would throw light upon this apparently new departure and soon passage after passage was found which would easily lend itself to the desired interpretation. Under the guidance of these passages and of the new outlook, the life of the prophet of Nazareth was re-molded until it lost the greater part of its more human features.

Such an important amendment of the Jewish religion could not keep itself hidden. The Jews of the dispersion, broadened by their contact with the political, philo-

sophical and religious movements of the Roman empire, yet cherishing a sincere faith in the traditions of their fathers, heard of the new sect which had arisen in Palestine. Their interest was aroused. Sometimes they felt sympathetic, sometimes they were antagonistic. Slowly at first and then more rapidly through the work of Paul, they came in more direct contact with this new movement. By this time, it had already become Hellenistic in its spirit and attitude. Around the nucleus of the life of Jesus and his resurrection, the seething, myriad-shaped ideas of the age attached themselves. The Palestinian congregation was left behind in its peaceful conservatism while the movement which it had inaugurated grew by leaps and bounds and swept outward into the tossing ocean of faiths and philosophies which extended from India to Gaul. To suppose that it could remain unchanged in such fellowship is to undervalue the assimilative tendencies in the social mind. The Greeks and Romans and Egyptians and Syrians could not think as Jews. They inevitably interpreted it in terms of their own ideas and problems in order to comprehend it.

We have already considered the interpretation which Paul gave to Christianity. It was, as we saw, dominated by the apocalyptic notion of a heavenly, or spiritual, man while it gave ample recognition to the desire for salvation from sin and participation in the divine life. Thus Christianity was brought into touch with the mystery-cults and responded to the yearning for some guarantee of immortality so wide-spread at this time. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal

bodies through his Spirit which dwelleth in you." We should compare this passage from Romans with the corresponding discussion in Corinthians (1, 15), "And if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, our faith also is vain." The message which he brought to the Hellenistic world was in its essentials a definite one. Jesus, a man who recently lived in Palestine and did wonders, was raised by God and has become a heavenly man, the guarantee of immortality to those who have faith in him. The last trumpet of the day of judgment will sound and the dead will be raised with spiritual or incorruptible bodies, and those who are still alive will be changed and given these spiritual bodies since flesh and blood cannot enter the coming kingdom of God. This message is the natural interpretation of Christianity by a learned Hellenistic Jew.

But this was merely the beginning of the evolution of Christianity. The next phase involves its interpretation by the Gnostic movement. Let us see first what this Gnostic movement was before we try to determine its direct and indirect influence upon Christianity.

So far as can be made out, Gnosticism was a religious philosophy which grew up in the eastern part of the Roman empire. Toward the making of this theosophy went many strands of refined mythology coming from India, Persia, Alexandria and Palestine. It was an esoteric doctrine representing that free mingling of traditions from all sources so characteristic of the age. Those traditions were worked up by reflection into a fairly systematic outlook upon the world, entirely continuous with mythology yet far more highly developed. Gnosticism cannot be called a philosophy in the technical sense of that term since its constructions did not

have a critical foundation. So far as it used Greek philosophy, it drew from the more pictorial myths of Plato and the conception of subordinate powers or demons advanced by stoicism. Its interest was not, however, philosophical but rather theosophical in character. The relation of the individual soul to the world-powers and the way in which a future state of happiness could be reached occupied its attention in the first instance; and the theology which it developed represented the stage-setting for this personal drama. I do not think it is saying too much when I state that there is nothing in Gnosticism which modern science and philosophy can recognize as having a valid foundation. We can understand why it developed, just as we can understand why mythology arose, but it was a mistaken movement because it followed the old mythological path of explanation. If the direction taken by reflection is wrong, the most strenuous endeavors cannot lead to truth.

Gnosticism possessed certain tenets which were very wide-spread in ancient civilization. The flesh was looked upon as a thing of evil which corrupted the soul. The physical world was in fact given over to the powers of darkness while the spiritual world was ruled by the god of light and purity. This dualism with its accompanying asceticism is to be found in the Persian religion, in India, in later Jewish thought, in the Orphic cults of Greece and even in Plato. It entered into Christianity as naturally as science does into our outlook to-day. All through the early years of the Christian era, and during the Middle Ages, this contrast existed and controlled ethics. All of which goes to show that Christianity was not the creation of a single man but the flowering out of religious mythology.

According to the teaching of Gnosticism, the soul was in danger of destruction or of dire calamities unless it possessed the proper preparation for its journey after death. The best means of safety was the participation in the life of some savior-god who had vanquished the powers of darkness and evil. It is evident that the world-setting of Gnosticism was not far different from that of Christianity. They were products of the same age, outgrowths of a similar soil. The advantage which Christianity had was its connection with a noble personality and the ethical background which this gave it. Gnosticism was oriental far more than it was Greek. Had it been connected with the ethical teaching of the classic Greek tradition, had a myth of the resurrection of some noble teacher like Plato arisen to control the phantasy of the oriental mind, the result would not have been far different from Christianity.

It was only natural that Gnosticism with its belief in a savior-god should feel itself drawn to Christianity with its similar teaching. Jesus was regarded by the Christian gnostics as divine, as an eternal being who had manifested himself historically in fulfillment of his function of mediator. The Christian congregations were thus forced to taken another step in the deification of Jesus. For Paul, he was still a man, the second or spiritual Adam who began a new dispensation. For the earlier Christians, he was the God-selected Messiah. He now became a god who was also the son of God. The evolution was inevitable in the intellectual environment of the time. But the Christian congregations, as represented by their clearest thinkers, wished to avoid gnostic extremes and to keep near the historical basis and the ethical monotheism of the best Hebrew tradi-

tion. Jesus was God, but he was also man. In this way, arose the doctrine of the incarnation. Instead of being a monument of mystical insight as theologians tell us, it was the consequence of a problem forced upon the Church. In other words, the doctrine of the Trinity is the attempt to combine gnostic polytheism and monotheism. The only way three can be made one is by a mystery, so a mystery it became. It is a bit of verbal gymnastic or a formal solution of an impossible problem which the pressure of events had forced upon the Church.

Christianity was now on the high-road to a theology. To enter the Hellenistic world and not be forced to develop a theology was simply impossible. The first fruit of this entrance into the intellectual world of the time was the Fourth Gospel or the so-called Gospel according to John. Scholars have begun to interpret this gospel as an attempt to combine the older Christian tradition with the theological speculations of the age. The beginning of the gospel strikes a new note which separates it immediately from the synoptics. "In the beginning was the Word (Logos) and the Word was with God and the Word was God." What is this Word or Logos with which the historical Jesus was identified? For Philo, the Alexandrian Jew who played such an important part in the theological speculation of the time, the Logos was a second God, the reflection of his glory, the only begotten Son, the actual creator of the world, his active agent at work in events. It is not going too far to assert that, without the speculations of Philo, the Fourth Gospel could not have been written. And yet Philo was merely developing and applying to the Old Testament the writings of the stoic philosophy and the

teaching of Plato. Does it not follow that, in the Fourth Gospel, we have the more theosophic portions of ancient philosophy attached externally to the life of the Prophet of Nazareth? Under such conditions of origin, how can we begin to separate reason and revelation? Gnosticism, stoicism, platonism, the Old Testament, the stories of the life of Jesus, the broadening of Christianity, all went together to make possible the mystic theology of this gospel.

But the more Jesus was transformed into a god, the more he lost his human characteristics. The figure of Jesus becomes elusive and shadowy; he lives among men but is not of them. To make God a man or man a second God was an impossible task. When all is said, the Fourth Gospel performs this task about as well as it could be done, yet Jesus is no longer a Galilean peasant but a mystic being who speaks in riddles.

This vital interplay of Christianity and Hellenistic thought led to the passing away of the older Messianic idea with its distinct limitations. A noble monotheism was the result, while the concrete, human element which the historical origins of Christianity had contributed to it prevented this monotheism from losing sight of human problems. The value of Christianity lies in its ethics but it is doubtful whether the ethics could have become effective unless it had been carried by the more chaotic beliefs which we usually call religious. There can be little doubt that some religious system would have conquered the Roman empire; the educational level was too low to enable the better type of philosophy to dominate the life of the mass of the people. Magic and otherworldism were rampant because the social and political organization was unsatisfactory and mental discipline

was not wide-spread. In brief, the world was still at the mythological level and was not yet prepared for a higher plane. *This being so, the success of Christianity was the best thing which could have happened.*

Later phases of the evolution of Christianity force us to qualify this position that its success was the best thing which could have happened. In order to escape the dangers which free theosophizing brought, the leaders of the Christian congregations felt the need of a firmer organization. The result was the gradual concentration of moral and doctrinal authority in the hands of bishops. The early Church had been democratic in polity but the times were not ripe for such democracy and slowly elders were chosen to be leaders. These elders were shepherds or bishops, that is, spiritual overseers. Soon they claimed and were granted life-tenure and greater authority. Every analogy from the Old Testament and from the larger political organization of the time worked in their favor. This assumption of authority on the part of the bishops is well represented by the letter of warning sent out by Bishop Ignatius of Antioch. "Obey the Bishop as Jesus Christ the Father, and the Presbyters as the Apostles, but honor the Deacons as the law of the Lord. . . . Whoever honors the Bishop is honored of God; whoever does aught behind the Bishop's back, serves the devil." The natural result of this changed organization was the doctrine of Apostolic succession. With this doctrine went another, the belief in the Apostolic Origin of the articles of faith. The flexible growth of Christianity was at an end. There arose a series of dogmas enunciated by Councils of bishops and these were forced upon Christianity as authoritative. Free enquiry and specu-

lation was at an end. A religion with a creed had appeared, a thing unknown before in the history of ancient thought.

When Protestantism arose, it made a half-hearted appeal to the spirit of free inquiry. Protestantism was, however, a complex movement with decided limitations in the motives at work and the knowledge on which to build. The old church organization, molded on the lines of the Roman empire, was discarded and the function of the priesthood was changed, but the intellectual attitude and the creed upheld remained practically the same. Some of the more radical branches of the movement like the baptists of Northern Italy were suppressed too soon to allow their influence to be felt. On the whole, Protestantism was hampered by the New Testament canon which it inherited from the later stages of the evolution of Christianity. It seldom went seriously back of the stage at which Jesus was deified. Its reforms were social and political rather than theological. The tendency was to establish the bible as ultimate authority without investigation as to its origin. The consequence of this establishment of the bible as the final court of appeal was decidedly harmful since it set reason and experience over against a supposed revelation. So far as Protestantism itself was concerned, it did not have in it, as a consequence of this bibliolatry, the intellectual vitality necessary to a true evolution. Had it not been for the larger social, scientific and philosophical developments which sprang up at the same time and founded themselves on reason and experience, the protestant revolt would have ended in a blind alley. There is every reason to believe, however, that it helped to break the tyranny of the theological

view of the world and to free the human spirit for new endeavors. Protestantism, just because it was a revolt, could not attain sufficient unity and power to stamp out intellectual freedom. The modern world was too complex to be dominated by religion. But we have already indicated the conditions which gave rise to the higher criticism whose results we have been summarizing.

We must frankly ask ourselves what features of historical Christianity are congruent with our modern life. The Hellenistic world to which dogma and ritual are mainly due is a thing of the past, existent for no one but the scholar. Ours is a new world with new ideas, new problems and new possibilities. Does the recognition of historical continuity preclude the acknowledgment of very radical changes?

I am certain that the deification of Jesus will be given up step by step. He was not born miraculously, nor was he preëxistent as the Word or Logos. These terms do not fit into an outlook dominated by science. To call him the Son of God in an exclusive sense is not warranted by the facts, nor has it any clear meaning for the present age. To the old Greek, Egyptian, and Roman, the idea was familiar; many of the patrician families traced their descent to Apollo or Jupiter. But such a literal interpretation of the phrase has no sanction for us, and any other than a literal meaning is essentially meaningless. Jesus was a noble and tender-hearted man with the beliefs of his age. To speak of him as ideally perfect and sinless is absurd just because these terms are absolutes where relatives alone have meaning. Like most theological terms they cut themselves loose

from their necessary setting, which, in this case, is human nature and society.

When the necessary critical work has been done, what is left of the stately theology reared by Church Fathers, councils and scholastics? Apparently only a mellowed religion with a universalistic outlook and a strong ethical trend. This mellowness and this universalism were not qualities present in perfection from the start, although we cannot say that Christianity was antagonistic to them. Mellowness takes time. I cannot but feel that men like St. Francis, Pascal, Bossuet, Fenelon, Melancthon, Wesley, on the ecclesiastical side, and men like Plato, Aristotle, Galileo, Newton, Fichte, Darwin, and Mazzini, on the laic side, have contributed to this mellowness. From this point of view, we can best describe modern Christianity as an evolution of Hebrew ethical monotheism along tenderer and more human lines under the stimulus of many very noble personalities.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Christianity passed through a fire of criticism which rocked it to its foundation. To those who lived at that time, the transition from the older, and more dogmatic, form was accompanied by spiritual and moral struggles which seem to us exaggerated. The very indifference of the present age shows that the atmosphere has cleared and that new values have come to the front. A short while since, I picked up Hutton's once famous book, *Modern Guides of English Thought in Matters of Faith*, and read his analysis of the life of Cardinal Newman and his interesting criticism of Matthew Arnold. I must confess that the time-spirit of which Arnold

made so much has done its work. The scene is shifting from a religion which stresses a peculiar form of salvation and a career in another world to social and economic conditions and ideals. Is there not something Byronic in much of Arnold's religious poetry? Is there not too much of the pageant of the bleeding heart in his sighs of regret and farewell? Yet he realized that the old faith was dying and that man had not yet found that which could fill its place. It takes time to make an adjustment in these matters, just as it is time alone that softens the griefs of unrequited love or the loss of dear ones. And it is usually only the next generation, which has been able to make a genuinely fresh start, that settles into a new way of life.

Change is a great physician because it is able to introduce new factors into the situation, and it has been at work since Arnold's day. There are, nevertheless, prophecies in his poems of another world which would before long take the place of the one that was dying; and some of us believe that, in the new democracy which is stirring into life throughout the earth, this new and more creative world is being born:

> "The millions suffer still and grieve,
> And what can helpers heal
> With old-world cures men half believe
> For woes they wholly feel?
>
> "And yet men have such need of joy!
> But joy whose grounds are true;
> And joy that should all hearts employ
> As when the past was new."

In the figure of Jesus, ethical and æsthetic idealization guided by religious emotion has created a person-

ality of a peculiarly appealing type well fitted to remain as an ideal to foster and strengthen the noblest tendencies. But this ideal has become practically self-supporting apart from its mythical scaffolding. Its real foundation to-day is in its appeal to sympathies, natural to social beings, which the spiritual evolution of humanity has developed and given content to. When man succeeds in applying these sympathies rationally, in a social fashion, he may bring upon this sad old earth some measure of that kingdom for which Jesus longed.

But Christianity has stood and, on the whole, still stands for certain beliefs in regard to the universe as a whole and the relation of man to it, which only patient reflection and inductive investigation can settle. By their very nature, these beliefs cannot have an historical justification although they have had an historical origin. Taking these beliefs in their simplest form and separating them from all connection with the figure of Jesus and the developed ethics whose stimulus goes back to him, they become an acceptance of an ethical God, a special providence and immortality. Remove these postulates, and it is doubtful whether theology has not also disappeared. It behooves us to examine the validity of these postulates in the light of modern science and philosophy.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY

The conviction that there is a deep-seated conflict between the religious view the world, characteristic of the past, and the outlook which has been shaping under the guiding hands of science and philosophy is held by an ever increasing number. Those who deny this conflict are judged to be either willing self-deceivers or postponers of the evil day of confession. Many books have been written to detail the warfare between the champions of orthodoxy and the leaders of the advance guard of science. The persecution of Galileo, the burning of Bruno, the bitter attacks upon the founders of the theory of organic evolution are cited as examples of the unavoidable warfare. For the nonce, there is a lull in the battle which was waged so fiercely by Tyndall and Huxley; but this lull does not signify that a treaty of peace has been signed, but only that the combatants have shifted their ground. The forces of orthodoxy have sullenly retreated to another line of entrenchments. The objective observer can entertain little doubt that the intellectual forces of orthodoxy have been worsted in the open field and have become disheartened by the growing revelation of the number and strength and persistence of the workers in the service of science. The prestige of science bids fair to equal, if not to surpass,

that of the church. Hence, the desire of the theologian is to avoid a renewal of the conflict, or else to change the mode of the warfare.

And here I shall venture a prophecy. The new battle will be waged around psychology and philosophy. Already the lines are being drawn between the defenders of an extra-organic soul and the experimental sappers in the laboratories of biology and psychology who are seeking to show that mind and body are inseparable, that, indeed, mind is just a term for certain capacities of control exercised by the brain. The crucial character of this growing conflict, which is yet not much beyond the status of a skirmish, leaps to the eyes, as the French say. Is not even the soul to be spared the siege before which the human body fell? Is it to be placed on the dissection-table and teased apart into its component strands? Even so. The process has already begun, and far more has been accomplished than is generally known. The solution of the mind-body problem is already in the air. And, with it, will come theoretical consequences by no means secondary to those associated with the theory of evolution. With some of these consequences we shall be concerned in a later chapter.

Christianity has been bound up with the letter and even with the spirit of a sacred book. Naturally, this book reflects the view of the world held by people about two thousand years ago. It contains primitive notions of the origin of things, a naïve conception of the relation of the sun to the earth, a belief that demons are the cause of sickness, a conviction that souls merely inhabit bodies temporarily, and an apocalyptic idea of the end of the world in a last judgment. As we have seen, no part of this outlook was particularly unique, but it was

accepted by the Christian Church as inspired because it was found in the canonical writings accredited to prophets and apostles. During the Middle Ages, this biblical view of the world was united with the astronomical and physical teaching of Aristotle and hardened into a system. So intimate was this union between these cosmological elements and Christianity felt to be that an attack upon one was taken as an attack upon the whole. To doubt the primitive notions of the world and man's place therein was to doubt the bible; and to doubt the bible as an inspired compendium of information was to doubt Christianity.

For the sake of perspective, it will repay us to note the order in which these primitive ideas were attacked and replaced by more adequate ones. It will be noticed that the general cosmological setting was first reconstructed and that the growing point passed thence to the center, the nature and destiny of man. As we indicated above, the replacement of older by newer and better-founded views is proceeding most rapidly at this crucial point. Having obtained a different and vaster heaven and earth, man has turned the microscope upon himself. The suspicion is growing ever more insistent that he, also, is a natural part of this procession of things.

When, at the time of the Renaissance, modern science was born, the first field invaded with success was that of astronomy. Copernicus became convinced that the current theory, called the Ptolemaic, was untenable because it led to insuperable complexities in the interpretation of the observed paths of the heavenly bodies. He was led to suggest that the sun was the actual center of the system and that the earth revolved around it in the

course of a year. One can easily imagine the furore such a daring hypothesis aroused. The Copernican theory was scoffed at by learned and ignorant alike, for it upset the whole picture of the world which had been tranquilly accepted from early times, except by such a radical non-conformist as Aristarchus of Samos. To appreciate the intellectual revolution threatened, one has only to read Dante's "Divine Comedy," for Dante journeys from planet to planet and thinks of them as arranged within crystalline spheres revolving slowly about the earth. In the second canto of *Paradise*, he speaks of the blessed motors who make the holy spheres revolve. These motors are angels of various orders resident in the spheres and transmitting to them the efficacy of the Divine Intelligence. Thus infant science had to challenge the appearance of things to the eye, and a system bound up with the religious view of the world.

It is obvious that the old geocentric view of the world, which thought of the earth as the center of the universe, was nothing more than a statement of the apparent relations of the visible heavens to the broad earth which stretches out on either hand as far as eye can see. That this natural view of things was taken up into the religious picture of the universe was the occurrence to be expected. Had it not been and had the priests and prophets enunciated the Copernican theory, there would be reason to suspect a hidden source of revelation. Needless to say such a reversal of the natural sequence never occurs.

It is only when we grasp the naïve outlook of early days that we can realize the full significance of many Christian doctrines. Let us take the articles of the

creed. We are taught to believe that Jesus descended into Hell and then ascended into Heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God. What is this Hell into which Jesus is supposed to have descended? It is the Sheol of the old Hebrews, a misty region below the surface of the earth; it is the Hades of the Greeks, the place of the departed shades; it is the Avernus of the Romans, the lower regions where ghosts flit and gibber. This place of the dead is at first the grave and sinks deeper into the earth as time passes and the myth-making fancy has been directed upon it. But it is thought of literally as in the bowels of the earth. All through the Middle ages this naïve view was held. There was an absolute down and a subterranean Hell, and every country told of some cavern which was one of its many mouths. With the advent of the Copernican view what becomes of these age-old ideas? To save them they must be transformed and given another location or a merely symbolic meaning. But why save them? They are as pure myths as any others to be found in olden days. They are brother to Tartarus and the Battle of the Titans and the Slaying of Rahab. The early Christians believed in a literal Hell beneath the surface of the earth. Their belief was wrong beyond the shadow of a doubt. We cannot make it true by modifying it out of all recognition.

The ascent into Heaven was thought of as a literal ascension of the resurrected body by the majority of early Christians. We have seen, however, that Paul did not teach any such doctrine. But even for Paul, Jesus, as the Messiah, was literally in the heavens directly above the earth. Into this region Paul is caught up in ecstasy — even to the third heaven. It is from

this region, not very far above us, that the last trump will sound and the day of judgment dawn. The account, given by the so-called "Revelation of St. John the Divine," which has led to so much foolish controversy among certain protestant sects, is typical of the apocalyptic literature of the time. No scholar to-day believes that it was written by an apostle or by any one in direct relation to an apostle. It is simply an example of the current religious phantasies of the age just before and after the Fall of Jerusalem. What factual basis could there be for such myths of the end of the world? To take this old picture of the days to come as having anything but historical interest is to live in a mist. Only the scholar can understand the allusions made and connect the ideas with the beliefs of this vanished world. It is poetry, a creation of generations of dreamers steeped in the tremendous idea of a coming destruction preceded by portents and disasters. We can understand how it arose in the motley and chaotic press of the Roman Empire in the East with its memories of oppressions and conquests and changing kingdoms; but to regard it gravely as a revelation, to be taken seriously, of the destruction of the world is impossible. The universe was a small affair for the men of that time and the little planet we call the earth and live upon was the center of all things. We who think in terms of light-years, and nebulæ in which our solar system could be lost, and huge constellations far off in the pathless void, realize that we have outgrown even the imagery of this apocalyptic poem.

Religion was loth to give up the simpler and more child-like ideas of the universe and to displace the earth from its proud preëminence as the one foot-stool of

deity. Man feels lonelier in the tremendous spaces and stellar systems which astronomy has revealed to his eye and mind. But the facts piled up by science in its patient work of investigation were too strong to be ignored, and religion had to modify its teaching by at least a passive acceptance of the new world outlook which would have been so strange to Jesus and Paul. It is evident that this involves the quiet giving up of the truth of the story of creation, as well as the doctrine of a day of judgment. When we once realize that the earth is a pin-point in the physical universe, these stories, woven in days when it was regarded as the stable center of things, are seen to be outgrown myths.

But astronomy was followed by biology with its hypothesis of evolution. No sooner had religion resigned itself to a larger world than its peace was again broken by the teaching that man was the end-term of an evolution of animal life going far back into the dim past. Instead of the neat little tale which Hebrew literature had passed on to the Church, men were asked to believe that ages of slow change had elapsed while one form of life changed to a more complex form adapted to new conditions. Soon facts rained in from all sides to make this new position impregnable. Geology studied the various strata of rock and found fossil remains which could only be dated back millions of years. Strange creatures unlike those to be found now upon the earth were brought to light. Reptiles of monstrous size, fishes of strange shapes, huge trees resembling our ferns, botanically weeds, yet towering into the heavens, were unearthed until the imagination caught glimpses of past ages teeming with life. The teaching of geology was reënforced by comparative anatomy, which showed

the similarity of different animals which had been thought of as quite distinct. Man, himself, was examined and was found to contain traces of an older mode of life. Only in this way could certain atrophied organs, like the appendix, be understood. Before long, comparative embryology arose and it was seen that the embryo passes through certain stages of development which roughly indicate the past life of the organism. On all lines, investigation taught the same conclusion. That there was evolution in nature, so that new forms of life developed while old forms passed away, no one who knew the facts doubted. What factors were at work to produce these changes was not entirely known. The new outlook was set in the place of the old myths; but the details of the evolutionary process required careful working out by patient experiments and observations.

The mythical background of Christianity was thus again attacked. The struggle was violent and bitter. Christians were so accustomed to the primitive myth of man's creation in a Garden of Eden, as narrated in the Old Testament, that they refused for a long time to consider any other view. Bishops and laymen denounced Huxley and Darwin and their supporters, and often resorted to parodies of their position in order to awaken the prejudices of the mass of the people. It was affirmed that they believed that man was descended from an ape or monkey. But the clergy were waging a losing fight as is always the case when the facts are overwhelmingly against an old dogma. The educated people of to-day accept some form of the theory of evolution as naturally as they accept the automobile and electric street-car. They see no reason to believe that

primitive people who made no study of animal life knew more about its origin than those who have devoted their time to careful and earnest investigation. Facts speak for themselves and conquer what opposes them no matter what traditions bolster it up.

The refuge which Christianity has taken is the usual one resorted to by religions which find themselves in conflict with views more adequate than those they hold. The myths are either allegorized or thrust into the background. Allegorization of myth is only a work of fancy, but it always implies a tendency to self-deception. So long as we see tales like the stories of creation in a sanely historical way, we realize that these men of the past were stating their own naïve beliefs and were not teaching our own views in the guise of a poetic version. The only way to be true to ourselves is to give up any attempt at compromise and acknowledge that the account of man's creation given in "*Genesis*" has simply been outgrown.

Thus, step by step, the framework of nature and man's place in it as taught by Christianity has come in conflict with more thoroughly founded views and has had to give way. Before science arose, man guessed at things and appealed to the gods at every step. The gods, as superhuman powers capable of doing anything, were naturally introduced to account for origins and mysterious events. Such an agent seemed a sufficient answer to any problem. How did man arise? God created him. How did the earth come to be? God created it. But science has come to see that an agent which answers every question in this easy-going fashion does not really answer any of them. It is a verbal answer and does not give us any specific information.

Investigation is gradually showing just *how* men did arise and *how* the earth once formed part of a larger whole from which it was whirled off.

The only valid position to take in the light of this retreat of the biblical view of the world is to accept the evident conclusion that those who wrote the various books of the bible told the beliefs of their time. Some half-hearted converts to this conclusion try to take the edge off the admission by saying that the bible does not teach science. Let us put it frankly and say that the bible taught the knowledge of the olden days, their science, but that this does not at all agree with what we have come to know by real investigation.

While the primitive view of the world had the strength which came to it from the sincere belief of Christians, it struggled valiantly against the new knowledge. Unfortunately, Christians were, by their training, dogmatists and sought to silence the rising whispers of doubt by persecution, rather than by frank appeal to fact and reason. Because of this attitude, there developed the tradition of antagonism between science and religion which is so often referred to. The primitive view of the world, woven into historical Christianity, because shot through the bible, was helpless in the face of this vigorous enemy which was nourished by the intellectual adulthood of man. Its partisans were shocked by the denial of beliefs that seemed to them bound up with the most sacred and important facts. What could be more natural than an appeal to force to put down such impious suggestions! The story is not a pleasant one but it should not be looked upon as unexpected. Christianity used its power but was defeated. The fight is to all intents and purposes over; the primitive view of the

world has gone forever and Christianity is in the throes of the effort to loosen itself from it, as a swimmer tries to free himself from the embrace of a corpse which would drag him down.

But this is not the first time that Christianity has been forced to give up a belief that would not fit in with the facts of a wider experience. We saw that the early Christians believed in the coming of the kingdom of God upon earth in their own day and generation. This hope was relinquished by the Church as time passed and it was not fulfilled. The date of the great change was simply postponed indefinitely. But the problem which the growth of modern science caused could not be met so easily. The conflict was stern, and it was only after defeat stared her in the face that Christianity tried to adapt herself to the new view of the world.

Were this adaptation possible simply by giving up the mythical elements in the bible and in the traditional theology, there can be no doubt that it would be accomplished. Many protestant denominations have practically gone thus far. There is reason to believe that, sooner or later, the doctrine of the virgin-birth, with its only too evident dependence upon classic mythology and its obvious violation of biological facts, will be resigned and Jesus acknowledged to have been born as all men are. We moderns see no shame in such biological facts. Since historical criticism and biology point in the same direction, there can hardly be a doubt as to the outcome. However reluctantly, Christianity must yield to knowledge.

Even after Christianity has surrendered her mythical envelope and resigned herself to the less dramatic and pictorial account of the beginning and end of things,

taught by modern science, she is not secure. The struggle has only passed from the outer works of religion to its very citadel. To yield the nonessentials, which were the wrappings of its early manhood, to this stern seeker after knowledge, in the hope of a treaty of peace, will only lead to disappointment. Because of her worship of the book, Christianity has set too high a value upon beliefs which were simply doomed to destruction. Hence she has no right to look upon her surrender of these beliefs as an act of great merit. It is simply a preliminary step to the basic conflict between science and religion. The question which confronts the human mind at the present time concerns the problem of the harmony or disharmony of the views of the world essentially connected with religion and science respectively. Before this fundamental problem, these minor conflicts which have occupied so much attention shrink into insignificance. This problem involves the character of the agencies at work in the universe. Can science admit the reality of a special providence at work in the world? Let us see to what issues this problem leads.

CHAPTER IX

THE LIMITS OF PERSONAL AGENCY

Religion was born from need wedded to ignorance. But needs change, and illusions fade away and are replaced by knowledge. That religion reflects these factors of which it is a function cannot be doubted. Some thinkers, who have sincerely pondered the problem, declare that religion will only be transformed. Others, as earnest, assert that it will disappear, and speak of the non-religion of the future. Is not the question in large measure one of definition? That man will continue to evolve ethically can scarcely be doubted, but it can be doubted with good right that he will continue to seek to fulfill his needs by rites designed to enlist superhuman agents in his behalf. Is there not more than a note of skepticism in that much-approved saying: "God helps those who help themselves?" Already, man is beginning to classify his needs and to believe that his material needs, at least, can best be met by industry and knowledge. He supplicates less and works more. Let us not forget what tremendous economic and social changes have occurred since the days of the little, helpless communities that lifted up praying hands to their gods lest famine and war destroy them completely. Today, man does more harm to man than does nature. The face of things has changed more radically than we are accustomed to realize. Social habits and beliefs

cannot fail to reflect this change. It may very well be that we shall be forced to conclude that what were, in a sense, the by-products of religion have become all that promises to survive when man has, indeed, eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge.

We have seen that primitive man read his surroundings in the light of his own consciousness. Everywhere he saw the evidence of will and anger, desire and caprice. The world was the theater of personal agents not so dissimilar to himself. Technically, we should speak of this outlook as anthropomorphic animism. Perhaps a still lower stage existed in which things are full of *mana* or a mysterious power for good and evil. As man felt his own powerlessness in the midst of tremendous, and often hostile agencies, which overtopped his own meager powers, he was led to feel the desire to ally himself with these agencies and propitiate them in order that all might be well with him. Man was ever more convinced that his own life was bound up with the plans of the gods. To displease them was to incur the most serious danger. The anger of Jove, or Neptune, or Asshur, or Yahweh was not easily turned aside once it was kindled. The winds which threaten shipwreck, the rains which give increase, the drouth which dries up the earth, the plague which brings death are under the control of the gods; and it behooves man to walk warily in order not to offend them. Thus was the path set in which man was to travel until he reached an ethical monotheism.

As time passed, demons and gods gave way, in theory at least, to the sovereignty of one powerful deity who gathered to himself the powers and activities of the old multiplicity of agents whom man had worshipped and

placated. It is probable that this movement toward a consciously held monotheism reflected the changing political organization of society. The old chaos of superhuman agents, each doing what was right in his own eyes, gave way to a growing heavenly order in which one powerful agent exerted his suzerainty over minor principalities. Yet monotheism has always been relative, for the one god has his agents of subordinate rank — agents, powers and intercessors — just as the most absolute monarch has his ministers. Political imagination cannot go beyond its source.

Christianity is usually regarded as the best type of monotheism; yet the early Church Fathers thought of the old gods as demons working their nefarious will upon man. It is notorious that many of the saints of the calendar are only re-christened pagan deities adopted by the Church to meet popular demands. The peasantry *would* believe in the agency of local divinities whose reputation had been great for the healing of sickness, or the granting of children to the childless, or the causing of rain to fall in seasons of drouth; and the Church, wisely enough, controlled and adopted what it could not prevent. The old pluralism of agencies refused to give way more than formally to a single agent. The psychology of this resistance is simple enough. Just as the king is unable to give his personal attention to the requests of all his subjects but must delegate authority to officers to look after details, so the one deity cannot give ear and attention to the incessant cries of his myriads of creatures. I cannot help feeling that the pious catholic has more psychological realism in these matters than the protestant sectarian who wearies his deity with all sorts of trivial matters. Surely a mil-

lion petitions at the same time would distract any conceivable kind of personal deity!

But, in the present chapter, we are not concerned so much with the problem of the number and inter-relations of the superhuman agents at work in the universe as with the idea of personal agency itself. The point I wish to call attention to is that the change from polytheism to monotheism did not involve any essential modification of the accepted notions of agency. Nature — and human life with it — was thought of as under the control of a superpersonal agent who guided the course of events in accordance with his purposes. An ethical refinement of the idea of deity had supervened which lifted it far above the crudities of the so-called nature-religions. Was this not because man and human society had evolved ethically and socially? But no marked break in the setting of the idea had arisen. And this fact presents the thinker with a problem.

In its origins, religion is innately hostile to the extension of impersonal causation to the cosmos, for the obvious reason that such a conception conflicts with the operation of special agency. Religion begins with the postulation of powerful agents whom man can placate. Up to the present, the evolution of religion has not involved a withdrawal of this primary assumption but only its ethical refinement and the reduction of the number of agents. In the Western world, at least, religion and the idea of an ethical control of the course of nature have been inseparable. This latter idea underlies prayer for material blessings, miracles, and the various conceptions of providence. Can this primary assumption be taken from religion without destroying it?

The difficulties which confront this assumption for the educated man of to-day must not blind us to its naturalness in the past. But that is the very point to grasp. The primitive view of the world is not being so much refuted as outgrown. Slowly and painfully, man has learned that events are conditioned by antecedents of an inflexible character, and that his wishes and desires must have hands and feet working for them before they can affect things. He has bettered his condition through invention and discovery and social organization. Of course, the world might have been different, and moral categories might have been the proper ones to apply to nature; but the brute fact of the case is that our particular universe is not of that sort.

Once given the notion of superhuman agents of a social character, the after-development of religion is inevitable. Man adopts toward them the attitude that he takes toward his own rulers. To pray to the gods is as natural as to pray to those who have power and who, we hope, may be moved by our prayers. Psychologically, there is no difference in the attitude involved. Providence is merely the action of an agent who is more than human. For primitive man it did not imply an intervention with nature, for the very good reason that the gods were active in nature. Nature was the sphere of the activities of the gods in the same way that it was, in a minor degree, the sphere of the activity of men. We must rid ourselves of the modern conception, nourished by science, of nature as a realm of causal relations. For ages, man had no such conception; all activities were thought of as acts. Nature, man and the gods acted together in a sort of social whole. Law, as we understand the term in science, would have had no

meaning to primitive man just as it has little meaning for many at the present day.

It is very interesting to study the development of the idea of providence. It means foresight and the care which renders foresight praiseworthy. The more the gods were given character and identified with the life of the community, the more they were thought of as guardians anxious for the good of their people. As superhuman, they were gifted with knowledge of events to come and with plans for the welfare and happiness of their worshipers. The social relations of the gods inevitably brought them into transforming touch with the ethical progress of humanity. They became ideals reflecting back the highest of which man could conceive.

In Christianity, we have a most striking instance of this ethical transformation of the one deity who is the superhuman agent *par excellence.* He is the father, kindly and loving, merciful and bountiful, who looks after the welfare of his children and plans their individual lives and the course of civilization. The evolution of God on its ethical side has reached its high point. From the philosophical side, this evolution was practically a foregone conclusion. Just because God was conceived socially, he could not escape this goal. Hosea and Jesus took the direction which ethical idealists could not help but take.

Let us examine the consequences of this assumption of an omnipotent, omniscient and ethically perfect agent who acts in nature and in human history. Simply by deducing the implications of the concept, we find that it involves a plan for the world. Such a plan is called by theology God's providence. For one who accepts the assumption, the only sane attitude to take is that

of submission to the course of events as manifestations of God's will and wisdom. The heart of religion thus becomes a joyous acceptance of life's portion through a willed union with the purposes of this perfect being. The most religious souls in history have drawn this conclusion and acted it out in their lives. In this way, they taste of an exaltation similar to that which the patriot experiences when he identifies himself, without reservation, with the hopes and plans of his country at some time of crisis. They have, moreover, this advantage that disappointment is impossible, since they can never know the actual plans of God nor the time when they are to be fulfilled. If they anticipate and set their heart on some event which kindles their enthusiasm and it does not come to pass, they can assuage their disappointment with the remembrance that God's ways are past finding out and that he has an eternity in which to work. From the very nature of the hypothesis, the course of history can never disprove this outlook which is the logical end-term of the god-idea. This impossibility of test makes it, however, unscientific. Nothing can be deduced from it. As an hypothesis, it must always remain unfruitful. When we come to treat of the problem of good and evil, we shall see other difficulties which it must face.

But the idea of a grand plan from which God cannot be swerved by intercession and supplication is far from the thought of the usual level of religion. It is the creation of reflective thought, and does not find a ready welcome in the minds of people at large. For them, there is no such thing as complete determination of the course of events. God is a powerful agent who is able to bring to pass what he wills but he does not always

intervene in particular cases unless he is asked. It is this situation, in which God is only one of the forces at work in nature, that gives the setting for the idea of a special providence and the answer to prayer. Is it not evident that we have in these beliefs the expression of personal agency, an idea continuous with mythology?

There are many examples of the appeal to a special providence which awaken the curiosity of the modern man. In cases of severe sickness, prayer for restoration to health is offered in the churches and homes. If God is a personal agent affected by the desires of his worshipers, this act is perfectly logical. Yet the nature of sickness is now so well known that we see in it a cause and effect relation of a definite sort. Knowledge of impersonal agency is undermining the faith in superhuman agency. Perhaps the fact that such prayers have never stayed a plague, while active measures of a scientific sort have done so, has had something to do with the purely formal and traditional character of such prayers among civilized men. Another instance which has caused many cynical comments is the appeal to God to bring victory to the nation in time of war. Both combatants pray to the same deity with about equal fervency and, at the same time, make as careful preparations as possible for the actual warfare. The religious ceremonies appear to play the part of an emotional accompaniment for the grimmer proceedings on the battle-field. To the soldier, God stands for the element of chance; otherwise, the main precept is to keep the powder dry.

When we enter the domain of science, we at once realize that a different conception of agency is held. The universe is regarded as a closed system of causal rela-

tions which spring from the nature of its parts. It is a systematic and self-contained world whose activities can be explained by the discovery of laws which constantly hold and which grow out of the stable properties of nature itself. As the result of a close and accurate study of the various aspects of nature, science has come to the conclusion that the large bulk of the world is lifeless and that its parts react in habitual or mechanical ways which are invariable. The planets circle about the sun in accordance with the pull and haul of forces which work in the same direction from year to year and lead to the same mathematically describable result. By means of measurements and calculations, celestial mechanics has been able to predict eclipses centuries ahead and to test historical records in regard to those which happened thousands of years ago. The paths of comets have been calculated and their return to the solar system foretold. Thus the mass-movements of the universe have been seen to be mechanical in nature and expressive solely of the energies and configurations distributed throughout its parts. The events which happen are inevitable and arise out of the impersonal agency of spatially existent things. In what sharp contrast is this view of nature to the interpretation primitive man made for himself when he read his own emotions and desires into the things around him. Caprice and whim have no place in this regular procession of the heavens.

Impersonal agency conquered, not only in man's conception of the larger relations of bodies to one another, but also in his idea of those events, like sickness and death, which strike nearer home. While the agencies at work may not be considered mechanical, they are yet

seen to be natural and regular in their working. The characteristic of the personal agency to which religion makes appeal is that it disregards space; it works here and there at its own will and leaps across intervening distances as though they had no reality. Just because it is spaceless, it is supernatural. It cannot be localized and brought into definite relations with other things in the universe. The more we conceive the universe as a spatial, self-contained system of things and processes, the more it excludes the presence of an agency which intervenes *in* it but is not really *of* it. So long as events can be explained as the effects of the natural working of things in nature, the assumption of a supernatural agent is unmotived.

The conflict between science and religion has thus passed beyond the stage where a primitive and childish idea of the extent and origins of the visible world struggled against a more rational and better-founded outlook. No educated man to-day would seriously defend the cosmical theories of ancient times. It is simply absurd to deny that we have outgrown them once and for all. But this first victory of science only involved the capture of the weakest outposts of the religious view of the world. The heart of traditional religion seems to be the belief in a personal, superhuman agency at work in nature or, rather, upon nature. Even the religious mind, however, admits that investigation has shown that there is a routine aspect to nature which covers the ordinary course of events. The final crux of the problem comes, then, to be whether there is good reason to believe that there are unusual events which cannot be accounted for by natural conditions. The victorious career of science has undoubtedly cast sus-

picion upon the occurrence of events which cannot be explained by means of regular changes in nature. The appeal to superhuman, personal agency to account for such events presupposes their occurrence, while the belief in their occurrence is psychologically based upon the acceptance of such supernatural agency. Hence it is probable that both beliefs will fall together. In the meantime, they give one another mutual support. He who believes in supernatural agency is the more likely to be credulous in regard to testimony advanced in its favor.

Nature was at first regarded as a realm in which personal agency ruled. Yahweh thundered from Sinai and rode in the tempest. Apollo guided the horses of the sun. The gods did things in nature directly, much as man does them, only they are able to do things that man cannot do. By will and word of command, they make the mountains tremble and the hills to shake. But gradually man came to conceive nature as a self-contained realm in which parts affected one another. We owe the beginning of this view to the Greeks. They developed, from the first, a way of approach to events which was absolutely opposed to the older outlook. As nature became, for man, more and more self-sufficient and capable of explaining what occurred within it, there was less need to appeal to an agent of the old mythical sort.

Religion is rightly anthropomorphic, just as ethics is. Man's welfare and destiny are properly and inevitably the important questions for man, and he naturally approached the world with these problems in mind. He used personal and social categories in his vague thinking about his environment. The discovery that nature

did not work that way was made slowly and only after comparative civilization had brought leisure and safety. Even to-day, the intellectual restraint, which the application of impersonal and non-moral concepts to nature demands, is distasteful to the majority. But this restraint will become less and less as man is introduced from childhood to a world of law and order to which he can adapt himself with a fair measure of success. His eyes will remove themselves from far horizons and turn to the world around him, nor will he dream of a transcendent realm of which earthly things are only the appearance and veil. He will seek his welfare and find his destiny among his fellows during the normal time allotted to his species. Banded with them, he will become an active and clear-eyed worker for the four great blessings which, he finds, are within his grasp, health, knowledge, goodness and beauty. Many virtues and ideals which religion has sheltered and encouraged will find themselves at home in this valiant and intelligent world, but the religion of the past must shed many things before it will feel in harmony with its new setting. Will sufficient identity remain to make the term still significant? Frankly, it is very hard to say — impossible to say with certainty.

What, then, are the limits of personal agency? The limits set to that incarnated intelligence which organisms possess. The ability to re-direct and distribute the energies which surround them in accordance with laws which study reveals, the ability to build dwellings for shelter and for adornment, the ability to use medicines for healing, the ability to drain marshes, dig canals, girdle the earth with iron roads, the ability to conceive things of beauty and to translate these concep-

tions into sensuous form, all these abilities are theirs. Such agency works within nature as a highly gifted part within a whole to which it is not alien. But experience gives us no hint of a transcendent agent for whom the earth is as a footstool and who whirls stars and planets through space to their appointed orbits.

CHAPTER X

DO MIRACLES HAPPEN?

Do miracles happen? I am often asked this question by young people who are trying to combine religious tradition with modern thought, and find a disharmony. Ecclesiastical authority urges them to the acceptance of miracles, while the principles and conclusions of science as obviously militate against any such belief. Many halt half-way between these two opinions and drift through life without having been able to come to a decision. In their moments of mysticism, when the past religious view of the world with its prestige and emotional appeal gains the upper hand, they are persuaded that all things are possible. They lose sight of nature with its massive constancy, and float back into the sentiment of personal agency so natural to man. As they listen to the poetry of the familiar passage read by the clergyman, their memories awaken, and vague hopes for they know not what are stirred to a restless life. All the surroundings and accompaniments reënforce these suggestions, for that is the transformed purpose of modern rites. The music throbs in their ears, now plaintive and low, now bursting into triumphant peals. Incense fills the air, and the lights burn dimly. Then a new psychological world is created within them. The erstwhile solid earth with its blind driving power becomes transparent and a thing

to despise. The Lord reigneth to Whom all things are possible. His the power to create or to destroy, to bind or to loose, to wither or to make whole.

The next day in the laboratory, perhaps, the same individuals watch the circulation of the blood in the thin membrane of a frog's foot, or measure the transformation of energy in a chemical reaction, or examine the nerve-tissue of the human brain, and another outlook forms itself. They see a world of harmonious movements, of gigantic forces, of delicate adjustments, of slow birth and quick decay. The sentiment of law, the feeling for fact, the sense of nature grow upon them. For the time being, they are the conscious spectators of an immense reality it would be meaningless to set aside. The complexity and autonomy of nature thrusts all thought of superpersonal agency into the background. Thus the pendulum swings back and forth from supernaturalism to naturalism. They believe, and yet disbelieve. What answer must be given to these troubled minds?

Now the question, Do miracles happen? presupposes a single, unambiguous meaning for the term, miracle. Yet to secure such a single meaning requires an effort. It is so tempting for the advocate of miracles to make qualifications when the argument goes against him, to say that he did not mean an act of a supernatural agent but only an extraordinary event, something marvelous and not easily accounted for. We shall concern ourselves primarily with what may be called a theological miracle, an occurrence confidently assigned to the will of a divine agent. Incidentally, however, we shall discuss the logical attitude to take toward marvels which cannot easily be fitted into the usual scheme of events.

To understand the ideas and sentiments associated with our term, we must go back to the past. We are sufficiently acquainted by now with the setting of the religious view of the universe to know that the gods were at first forces *in* nature and only slowly became spiritual agents *outside of* nature. We cannot too often remember that man had no instinctive knowledge of what energies operated in the world and what were the conditions of their operation. He peopled woods and fields and sky with invisible agents who could do almost all they wanted to do, and with no hindrance from distance. We may put it this way: man had no idea of spatial process but thought of all events as acts of will. The gods had *mana*, or power, just as the medicine man had, only greater. And miracles were, for ages, only extraordinary events due to the power of gods or other power-possessing beings. So long as this primitive view of things was prevalent, miracles were only especially significant events assigned to the will of the gods. They were events which transparently revealed their anger, or favor, or purposes. There was nothing illogical or puzzling about them.

The forces which are so strongly working against the acceptance of miracles are just those forces which are antagonistic to the primitive view of the world. If nature is a self-contained spatial system, the complete mechanism of change should be open to study. Even human wills must be connected with human bodies, and shown to act in accordance with psychological and physiological laws. In the place of such vague terms as *mana*, we have chemical and electrical properties, bacterial infection, hypnosis. Magic and miracle are closely connected; and the replacement of magic by sci-

ence put miracles on the defensive. Nature became a realm of recurrent processes. The exceptional, alone, could be assigned to the old type of agency. Thus the contrast came out more clearly, as the religious view of the world found itself opposed to an orderly conception of natural process. Divine agency, on the one hand; uniform processes, on the other.

Etymologically, a miracle is something which awakens wonder because of its strangeness. In former days, all events out of the ordinary were naturally classed as miracles, that is, as events to be wondered at. There was, of course, a routine aspect to nature. People expected the sun to rise in the morning and pass unwaveringly over the sky; they looked for the return of the seasons and had festivals to celebrate them; they anticipated normal young from their animals. Thus the routine aspect of things was fairly conspicuous, and they guided themselves by reference to it. But, in those days, things were less settled than they are in our well-organized society. People were more nervous, as it were, more surrounded by rumor, more credulous. Both the psychological and the social situation favored tales of marvelous events. I cannot help feeling that the religious customs, the constant appeal to the gods for favors and portents, were both effects and causes of this sense for the miraculous which we find so widespread in the past. Sometimes monsters were born; sometimes the wind blew from one direction for an extraordinary length of time; sometimes the sun was darkened at midday. Stories were constantly afloat about wonderful cures imputed to gods or magicians. Credulity awoke at the least encouragement. Priests, prophets, magicians, kings, gods, all were regarded as

the authors of cures. Only the common man was unable to do these wonderful things. The idea that the king's touch had wonderful curative power lingered on into the nineteenth century.

We have pointed out, more than once, that the best way to explain an idea away is to explain how it arose. Add to this a clear statement of how the older view conflicts with the new outlook which has been born of tested knowledge, and the disproof is as complete as may be. Let us apply this method to the stories told of Jesus in the New Testament. Jesus was reputed to have the gifts of an exorcist. That Jesus, if he did actually live, believed in demons cannot be doubted. In Mark, the crowd exclaims: "With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." Again, the scribes from Jerusalem say: "He hath Beelzebub. By the prince of the devils he casteth out the devils." Wherever Jesus went, crowds of sick people flocked to him to be healed of their various complaints. But they undoubtedly did the same to every prophet or medicine-man who came along. A man could not be a prophet if he did not have a special *mana*, or power, either in his own right or as the representative of his deity. And we must not think of these healers as charlatans or imposters. Everybody believed that disease was a matter for religion. Why? Because they did not know anything about toxins and bacteria and amœbic infection. The demon-theory of disease was everywhere dominant outside, perhaps, certain circles in Greece. "It is beyond a doubt," writes F. C. Conybeare, "that Jesus regarded fever, epilepsy, madness, deafness, blindness, rheumatism, and all the other weaknesses to which flesh is heir, as the distinct work of evil

spirits. The storm-wind which churned the sea or inland lake into fury is equally an evil spirit in the Gospel story. In the Vedic poems it is the same; and, indeed, we have here a commonplace of all folklore."

The stories told about Jesus in the synoptic gospels can be paralleled in the literature of the time throughout the Roman world. The use of spittle as a sovereign remedy was universal. In his essay upon miracles, Hume called attention to the story told about the Emperor Vespasian by Tacitus. Vespasian was a little more careful than Jesus, for he had physicians examine the eyes of the blind suppliant before he exerted his touch and spittle as healing agents. But, then, Jesus could not be so careful about such things as an emperor.

When we once clearly realize the emotional atmosphere of the times and the complete lack of the sort of intellectual background we possess, we are not surprised either at the recorded acts of Jesus or at the myths which grew up around his figure. The absence of miracles from the New Testament would be far more surprising than is their presence.

The miracles attributed to Jesus are of two main kinds, the expulsion of demons as a means of curing ills and allegorical fulfillments of supposed Old Testament prophecies. The first kind has been sufficiently examined. The second can be touched upon only briefly. It has been one of the main contributions of the higher criticism to point out how much of the life of Jesus is built up around passages in the Septuagint or Greek version of the Old Testament.

I do not think that I am going too far when I assert that the presence of these tales in the sacred literature of Christianity has done an incalculable amount of

harm. They have given a sanction to all sorts of superstitious beliefs and have helped to carry over into our day an outlook which would otherwise have been more quickly cast off. Had it not been for the miracles related in the gospels, there would have been no problem of miracles to discuss. The idea, itself, would have been outgrown and have died a natural death. And, in the long run, that is what must take place. As a saner view of Jesus is taken and a better knowledge of the outlook of the time in which he lived is gained, the recorded miracles will be explained, not as actual events, but as actual beliefs.

Another period deserves study in this connection. When one examines the literature of the Middle Ages, one gains the conviction that miracles formed the staple emotional diet of the people. They played the part that novels and detective stories do now. Man is naturally dramatic in his interpretation of life, and what can be more thrilling than a miracle? Constance, the heroine of the *Man of Law's Tale* in Chaucer, is rescued from death when in most perilous plight by that Unseen Hand which frustrates the plots of the wicked. Skepticism and realism are slowly acquired habits of mind. The primary impulse is to believe. And, when religious motives and traditions enter to strengthen the sway of this impulse, it is hard to counteract. When learned theologians enunciate the principle, "I believe because it is absurd," it is not to be wondered at that the mass of the people believe because they do not see that it is absurd. For ages, the world was a sort of quicksand, and it has taken far more courage and sheer intellectual capacity and moral daring than the mass of the people will ever conceive to build dykes out into

the unknown and rescue it for the empire of unswerving law.

But we must pass from the historical study of miracles to the systematic, or philosophical, aspect of the matter. The philosophy of miracles breaks up into two parts, the laws of evidence and proof, and the nature of cause. The first part may be called logical; the second, metaphysical.

Theological miracles involve two elements, the fact and the theory. It is only after the fact has been sufficiently proven that its cause can come into question. It is absurd to explain facts either by natural processes or by the will of God until you are certain that these events *were* actual occurrences. If a child took *Alice in Wonderland* too seriously and asked me to explain "Why the sea is boiling hot," I would be compelled to disappoint its craving for explanation. Now I am certain that the situation in regard to miracles is not much otherwise. Were the alleged facts to be proven beyond reasonable doubt, the need for a genuine explanation would press upon us. But the history of the subject points in the other direction.

The logic of evidence concerns itself with the tests applied to statements which purport to be facts. What reason have we to believe in those stories which have been handed down to us from the past, or in the tales of marvelous cures and visions spread abroad in certain circles to-day? Is it not evident that we must apply to them the same stringent tests that the scientist employs? All the canons of evidence, external and internal, must be brought to bear upon them. Accounts of cures in connection with the shrines of saints and the descriptions of cases of healing among Christian

Scientists should be subjected to rigorous, yet equitable, examination. The nature of the sickness or injury should be diagnosed, and the after-history kept under observation. And, unless these religious bodies wish to incur the suspicion of abetting fraud, they should welcome thorough inquiry. Until something of this kind is done, the evidential value of the accounts is weaker than it must be to reach proof. The more the adduced narratives conflict with the usual course of experience, the more does this lack of ventilation weaken their evidential worth. From the standpoint of logic, this attitude is incontestable. Either we must maintain it or we must give up all serious attempt to sift testimony.

The advances made by history and psychology during the nineteenth century have put us in a far better position to handle the question of past marvels than Hume was in. Yet this more concrete outlook has simply reënforced Hume's method of criticism. Hume was, perhaps, a little too generous. The burden of proof rests upon the believer in marvels, rather than upon the critic, because the regularity of experience has been increasingly established. Hence, the historical evidence must be very strong, stronger than it has turned out to be.

When the canons of historical evidence are applied to the accounts of marvelous events, it is surprising how quickly they lose their impressiveness. Let us take, for example, the astounding series of incidents told in Exodus. Were this book written by Moses, an actual eye-witness and chief actor on the human side, we would be forced to assert that he was self-deceived, or intended to deceive, or that the events actually did

happen in some strange sort of way. But when we discover that the Pentateuch was not written until long after the establishment of the Kingdom, and that it contains various strands of popular tradition and priestly construction, we realize that the logical situation is very different. The eye-witness has disappeared. In other words, we have to deal with legends instead of with history. We are no longer reduced to the dilemma of either calling Moses a liar or accepting events which strike us as mythical. We are not even called upon to rationalize these legends and to appeal, say, to the influence of a high wind, long continued, upon some shallow branch of the Red Sea. Such ingenuity is now seen to be misplaced.

When we pass from past to present, we must keep to the same logical methods. In fact, we must often pass from the present to the past. It was Lyell, the famous geologist, who established the scientific canon that the same forces that are working to-day must be used to explain what occurred in other ages. And this canon was of immense value, for it prevented scientists from dreaming of catastrophes and forgetting to study the detailed working of common forces. How far faith in Jesus as a religious healer, a powerful prophet sent by God, led to what are called faith-cures can be answered only by analogy from the present. The nature and reach of mental cures must be studied with the same care that is given to other fields. Only lately is this being done. Physicians did not do justice to the nervous system. Their materialism was too naïve, too mechanical. The individual is an organic whole, and the mind cannot be severed from this whole without falsity. Put in physiological terms, the nervous system

controls the expenditure of energy of the organism, and, if it is wasteful, can soon exhaust the supply. The resistance offered by the organism to disease is, then, likely to vary with the mental and nervous balance of the individual. How effective an abnormal direction of nervous energy toward certain parts of the organism may be cannot be told beforehand. Probably, experimental work with hypnosis and psychoanalysis will throw light upon these internal adjustments. The historian of religious history should keep his eye upon the recent developments of psychiatry. He should, moreover, learn his psychology from experts and not be satisfied with the jargon of spiritualists.

But logic alone will never be able to disprove theological miracles. I cannot prove that there are no fairies, although I can show that there is no good evidence for belief in their existence. The rationalist who undertakes to *demonstrate* the impossibility of miracles forgets that his thinking works within a set of postulates and principles which his adversary will not accept. All he can really show is that his postulates and principles fit in better with experience than do those of his adversary. The final conflict is that between the primitive view of the world and the scientific view. The best that can be done is to stress the logical side and then make the contrast between the two views of the world as distinct as possible. Whether an individual will, or will not, believe in religious miracles depends ultimately upon the view of the world which grows up in his mind. And this mental outlook is a function of his training and his psychological make-up.

The theological miracle is more deductive than inductive. I mean that it is a consequence of a dogma

rather than an independently given fact. The religious outlook comes first in order and dominates the fact. Just the opposite is the case in science. There the fact comes first and the theory afterwards. As I have written in my *Logic:* "Mere speculation uncontrolled by fact is almost certain to lose touch with reality. It may lead to the construction of beautiful systems, but these systems, for all their splendor and subtlety, are sure to lack value as means of interpreting the world in which we actually live." But is not the theological miracle an instance of just such uncontrolled speculation? An omnipotent God could do anything to, or in, his footstool. Of course he could. You are only developing the implications of your hypothesis. The test questions are, first, Is it his nature to want to do these abrupt things? second, Is this conception of an omnipotent God the most satisfactory hypothesis? Does it help us to meet the facts and events of human life? We know how the idea arose, and we know that it was based on interpretations of nature that seem to us now essentially illusory. The rub of the matter is, that it is of no assistance to science and creates hosts of artificial difficulties. We have been discussing one of these artificial problems in the present chapter and shall be engaged in the discussion of others in the next two chapters. A naturalistic metaphysics and ethics is far easier to formulate than a theological system free from contradiction.

But suppose that certain marvels which would not fit into the natural course of things were established. How could it be shown that these peculiar events were the acts of a supernatural agent? Strictly speaking, only revelation could accomplish this feat. But revela-

tion is, itself, a miracle which needs accrediting. And so you are, once more, in a vicious circle. Revelation might be a well-accredited mode of proof if it had an organ of a public character — a voice from heaven, for instance. But such a voice would become a part of nature for us; in other words, its assumption implies another sort of world from the one we are in. But, until this organ is established, we have good right to doubt the *ipse dixit* of self-appointed oracles.

When we examine the whole question of miracles inductively and deductively, I think that we must acknowledge that their basis is exceedingly weak. Already, the educated world is in a fair way to outgrow them; and this tendency will undoubtedly increase as science continues to explore the world we live in.

In conclusion, it seems worth while to call attention to the fact that very few people realize what they are really believing when they accept miracles. They do not know enough about nature to grasp the real content of their beliefs; and, until they do, their belief represents simply a point of view which has not been confronted with its implications. It expresses innocence rather than virtue. Let us glance at a couple of the biblical miracles to show what they involve.

Tyndall has brought out, very strikingly, the difference between the miracle supposed to have aided Joshua in his battle with the Amorites, as this appeared in the eyes of an Israelite of old, and as it appears to a man of science. For the one the miracle probably consisted in the stoppage of a fiery ball less than a yard in diameter, while to the other it would be the stoppage of an orb fourteen thousand times the earth in size. "There is," he writes, "a scientific as well as a historic imagina-

tion; and when, by the exercise of the former, the stoppage of the earth's rotation is clearly realized, the event assumes proportions so vast, in comparison with the result to be obtained by it, that belief reels under the reflection. The energy here involved is equal to that of six trillion of horses working for the whole of the time employed by Joshua in the destruction of his foes." If we pass from the great to the small, from the employment of tremendous forces to the reconstruction of endless, minute relations, the same divergence between superficial appearance and the reality stares us in the face. Let us consider the raising of Lazarus from the dead. It is a well-known fact that the nervous system begins to disintegrate very quickly after death. Now research has shown that there are nearly a billion of cells in the brain alone. Think of the disorganization which would ensue in such a complicated system after a period of four days. Those who are acquainted with the delicacy of organic compounds can realize the condition of the brain when the body was already beginning to stink. But the ancients did not even know that the brain was closely connected with consciousness, let alone its structure. Of the character of the economy of the body, they knew practically nothing; they dealt with wholes, not with parts. How different this miracle appears from these two standpoints! It is the same only in name. It may be of interest to note that this miracle, characteristic of John, is very evidently related to illustrate the principle that Jesus as the Logos is the resurrection and the life. It is a demonstration miracle.

Our answer to the question, Do miracles happen? must be in the negative. While there is nothing irra-

tional in the idea in itself, it does not fit the world as experience presents it. The assertion that God performs miracles, like the similar assertion that he created the world, is purely hypothetical and unverifiable.

CHAPTER XI

THE SOUL AND IMMORTALITY

The hope of immortality is an essential feature of practically all modern religions. Even those oriental religions which lack its clear presence postulate a dim kind of personal continuity. Buddhism has always been a puzzle to the optimistic Westerner who is in love with himself and does all his thinking in terms of personality and personal relations. The idea of re-birth in accordance with a rigid moral law is alien to his traditions; while the impersonalism of the whole process leaves him cold. It is not untrue to the facts to call Buddhism an atheistic religion. Yet it is a religion because it postulates the objective efficacy of moral categories. Freedom from the wheel of re-birth is gained by the Eightfold Path of right beliefs and right acts. Enough of the idea of a soul and enough of the idea of immortality exists even in this religion to make these assumptions important. But what have modern science and philosophy to say about these age-old ideas? Is the soul any longer in favor?

Here, again, an historical approach is worth while, because it gives the proper perspective. If we can understand why people in the past developed and fostered these ideas, we can judge their reasons pretty objectively, even though we realize that we have been strongly affected by the beliefs erected upon them.

Destroy the roots of a tree and the foliage will wither before long. Has science dug so sharply around the roots of these old beliefs that they are bound to decay? The subject is an extremely interesting one.

A belief in some sort of an after-life is wide-spread. It is common knowledge that the American Indians spoke of a happy hunting-ground in the West, in which the soul of the warrior would rejoice in abundance of game. Other peoples thought of the abode of the dead as in the East where the sun arises. Still others taught that it was in the sun or the other heavenly bodies, or underneath the earth in a subterranean region. We are seldom able to determine the motives which led to these varying locations.

All sorts of beliefs flourished in the Mediterranean basin a few centuries before our era; but the drift of religious thought was moving rapidly toward a passionate acceptance of another life somewhere in the heavens. Immortality was taking on a more vivid coloring and was being transformed from a passive survival to an event of marked religious significance. New ethical motives were attaching themselves to an old tendency and modifying it almost beyond recognition. The sentiments and rituals built up around the ideas of sin and salvation were reflected into the next world and created the vision of a heaven and hell. What a rich field this was for the mythopeic imagination to exploit! And what an interesting sociological fact is it that the human imagination has always been more fertile in its descriptions of hell than in its descriptions of paradise!

But a few words ought to be said about the earlier conceptions of an after-life. Both the Greeks and the

Hebrews thought of the other-world as a joyless reflection of the present. Death was, to all intents, the end of what really counted. Those who deny that men can live nobly without the hope of immortality forget that men like Pericles were unaffected by that phantom dream. Even the great Hebrew prophets extolled righteousness without the promise of a reward in the next world. What men have done, we can surely do again. The Greek father felt himself a member of a family whose traditions and loyalties he wished to hand on intact. For himself, he desired only the customary funeral rites so that his shade might rest in peace. In the house of Hades dwell the senseless dead, the phantoms of men outworn. The answer of Achilles to Ulysses, when that wanderer visits him in the underworld, expresses this shadowy after-life admirably: "Nay, speak not comfortably to me of death, oh great Ulysses. Rather would I live on ground as the hireling of another, with a landless man who had no great livelihood, then bear sway among all the dead that be departed." The Homeric Greeks rejoiced in life like youths whom everything pleases. The shadowy realm of Hades was felt to be a mockery of the sunlit world. The history of the belief in an after-life among the Hebrews is very similar. Yet it is surprising to notice how few remark the paucity of reference to this idea in the Old Testament. In the book of Isaiah occurs that account of Sheol to which attention was called in an earlier chapter: "Sheol from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at this coming. . . . All they shall answer and say unto thee, Art thou become weak as we?" The passage is a tremendous one, full of the most biting irony and vindictive hatred. This concep-

tion of Sheol evidently scarcely differs from the corresponding one of the Homeric Greek. Toward the Christian era, as a result of the infiltration of the beliefs current among surrounding peoples, the idea of a future life took hold of the Jews. The Pharisees, the popular party of the day, stressed the dogma, while the Sadducees, the Aristocratic party, denied it.

Early religion was largely a state affair, for it concerned itself with the safety of the social group; but it was rapidly becoming an engrossing concern for the individual. The religious imagination was busily painting another world and connecting it with the relations of the individual to divine powers. Given the religious view of the world, what an instrument of appeal and of dread this conception of immortality was! The shadow and sunshine of another world lay athwart this one. Endless vistas of pain and pleasure stretched into the future. No wonder that the true means of salvation became the burning question! From the beginning, Christianity emphasized the fact of another world and its terrific meaning for the soul of man, adopting as an inheritance the current views with regard to a Messianic kingdom and a place of torment. Paul even goes so far as to proclaim the cynical alternative: "If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

The ideas of immortality and salvation were the central features of the great religious revival which swept over the Roman Empire about the time of the rise of Christianity. The desire for personal safety in this world and the next moved men. Fear and hope worked together; fear of the terrors awaiting the soul after death, hope of a happy existence in some paradise.

That early Christianity owed much of its success to its doctrines of final things cannot be denied. It was a period of astrology, theosophy, mysticism, cults of saviors, eschatologies. Few were able to keep their heads above this tide of oracular mythology and superstition. What moorings did they have? None of that tested knowledge of the physical world which we possess, and which keeps numbers of people fairly sane to-day in spite of themselves. When we recall the terror at Salem a few centuries ago, we must admit that these Greeks, and Romans, and Jews, and Syrians did not conduct themselves so badly in the demon-ridden world in which they lived. Yet, while it would be unfair to blame those who embraced the various cults, it would be equally unfair not to give praise to those few enlightened souls who would approve none of these things.

Up to the present, the doctrine of immortality has been an essential part of Christianity. The creeds which have come down to us proclaim the faith that Christ Jesus will appear again to judge the quick and the dead. To the average man, religion is absolutely committed to such a belief. It has gone hand in hand with the idea of retribution and reward until the two have grown together. It is not strange, then, that the suspicion that immortality is not justified by physiological and psychological facts is felt to have a grave bearing upon religion. To the vast majority, religion without immortality is like *Hamlet* with Hamlet left out. Remove the faith in a special providence, likewise, and the edifice around which many religious emotions and values have entwined themselves is no more than a ruin.

But the idea of a soul always accompanies the belief

in immortality. The experiences which led to the one notion naturally encouraged the other. If the soul can leave the body, it is obviously independent, in large measure, of the latter's fate. Let us glance at some of the experiences whose false interpretation is at the foundation of a belief in an immortal soul inhabiting the body for a little space.

It is surprising what an influence was exercised by dreams. We have so completely outgrown this uncritical attitude toward them that it takes some effort to realize how natural it was. For the educated man of to-day, dreams are subjective experiences, that is, experiences which do not contain information about what is happening in the external world. In the jargon of psychology, they are centrally aroused ideas playing about some organic stimulus or some repressed wish. But the savage knew nothing about such distinctions. The dead appeared to the living and talked with them. Patroclus stands before Achilles and chides him. Do not the dead, then, have some sort of life? Many psychological motives combined to convince primitive man of at least a shadowy existence after death. But there was another side to the dream-life. The living went on long journeys, doing strange things, while their bodies rested in the tent. Added to these suggestions, so naturally lending themselves to a spiritistic interpretation, were still others. Certain kinds of sickness are explained by means of the idea of possession. Invisible agents are at work in the world. What can a trance be if not the temporary absence of just such an agent? "Among the Kayans of Borneo, for example, it is the custom for an elderly person learned in such matters to sit beside the corpse, where the soul is sup-

posed to hover for some days after death, and to impart to the latter minute directions for its journey to the land of the dead." We are in the presence, here, of natural illusions, of hypotheses which inevitably arose. Man's first guesses were mistakes. The whole history of science drives this fact home.

The various opinions men have built up around the idea of a soul are instructive. How gravely men have written about such hidden things! Only very slowly have they learned to separate an experience from its interpretation, and to seek a wide range of facts before erecting even an hypothesis. To explain by means of *agents*, visible and invisible, is the plausible method to which man always resorts first. It is only when he becomes more sophisticated that he thinks in terms of *processes*. The following examples of divergent opinion upon the soul, gathered by an able French author, show the vagueness of the idea:

Origen, the Alexandrian theologian: "The soul is material and has a definite shape."

St. Augustine: "The soul is incorporeal and immortal."

A Polynesian: "The soul is a breath, and when I saw that I was on the point of expiring, I pinched my nose in order to retain my soul in my body. But I did not grasp it tightly enough — and I am dead."

Albertus Magnus: "There are thirty arguments against the immortality of the soul and thirty-six for, which is a majority of six arguments in favor of the affirmative."

Rabbi Maimonides: "It is written: 'The wicked will be destroyed and there will not rest anything of him.'"

Ecclesiastes: "Men die as the beasts and their fate is the same. They have all one breath."

The soul was at first conceived in very material ways. The idealistic movement in Greek philosophy is responsible for the concept of an *immaterial substance.* "Under the influence of mystical, religious motives the soul becomes more and more non-spatial and intangible. The words used are negative and abstract. It is generally supposed that Plotinus was the first to describe the soul as an immaterial substance. But this immaterial substance must somehow be brought into relation with the physical body." It was this situation which gave rise to the soul-body problem in philosophy, a problem which has gradually changed into the mind-body problem. This transformation of the puzzle is significant. The very terms have changed and have become more concrete and empirical. A quotation from William James — a man who had no bias against theology — will bring out the essential reasons for this significant change of terms: "Yet it is not for idle or fantastical reasons that the notion of the substantial soul, so freely used by common men and the more popular philosophies, has fallen upon such evil days, and has no prestige in the eyes of critical thinkers. It only shares the fate of other unrepresentable substances and principles. They are without exception all so barren that to sincere inquirers they appear as little more than names masquerading."

I am inclined to believe that, to most people, to-day, the soul means no more than the personality, and the conviction that this cannot be reduced to the body. It stands for consciousness and character as somehow rooted in something permanent. Plato's idea of the

soul as a simple, indestructible substance awakens hardly an echo in their minds — and why should it? Something which guarantees and makes possible the continued existence of their conscious self after the death of the body is the association which is uppermost. Educated people, at least, have outgrown the ghost-soul of primitive times and have put their hope in the inability of the philosophic scientist to explain life and consciousness without appeal to agencies which are inexplicable on naturalistic terms. But it is obvious that such a basis is overhung by an ever-threatening danger. If the mind-body problem were solved in a concrete, empirical way, what then?

It has been customary to examine the question of immortality from three angles which may be called, respectively, the empirical, the ethical and the philosophical. The more recent drift of philosophy toward realism has tended to bring the first and the third methods of approach closer together. It has increasingly been felt that philosophy coöperates with the special sciences and is inseparable from them. The ethical argument in favor of immortality is oftener found in poetry than in serious books on ethics. It cannot be said to have sufficient force to swing the balance established by science and a realistic philosophy in touch with science.

The empirical status of immortality can best be brought out by a glance at the facts of abnormal psychology. In olden days, as we have seen, insanity was explained as the disturbing effect of a demon. Today, experiment and careful observation have proven that it is due to a functional disorder of the brain. That, whenever there is a disorder of the mind, there

is some corresponding anatomical or physiological flaw in the brain has become a commonplace of modern medicine and psychology. In fact, insanity is defined as a "symptom of disease of the brain inducing disordered mental symptoms." A multitude of experiences point to the very intimate connection between the brain and consciousness. Careful observation of clinical cases has, for example, shown that a lesion in the visual center of the brain, that is, the part of the brain to which the fibers of the optic nerve run, induces the disappearance of both sight and visual imagery. Psychology and physiology have been busily engaged in discovering these correlations. So extended are they that the suggestion that consciousness is inseparable from the brain forces itself home ever more obstinately. Mental capacity runs parallel with the finer development of the brain. Is not, therefore, the very meaning of mental capacity connected with the needs and activities of the organism? But the case is still stronger when we note what happens to an individual when something goes wrong with the brain. Can this poor lunatic, who has dropped from the high level of educated manhood to a condition more helpless than that of an animal, just because of a relatively slight disintegration of the cortex, be expected to recover his intellect by means of its total disintegration? Can it be denied that the burden of proof rests on those who assert immortality?

The so-called ethical argument for immortality is associated with the name of Immanuel Kant. Kant's philosophy was agnostic, and it was this agnosticism which made his use of the ethical argument possible. If you can't make any assured theoretical statement

about the nature of the self, you can allow demands, which you regard as ethical and primary, to dictate your ultimate beliefs. It cannot be denied that Kant's argument savors of the popular notion that the virtuous must be rewarded. At its highest, the ethical argument signifies a demand for a future life in order to carry out that development of character which the brief span of earthly life is not equal to. It is this argument which runs through Browning. What shall we say of it?

There are both factual and theoretical objections to the ethical argument for immortality. The more we know about habit, the more we realize that character is pretty well "set" by middle life. The creative period of human life ends all too soon. Character is not an abstract possession separable from human tasks and needs. It is not like a work of art which can be polished and re-polished. But, when all is said and done, ethics must abide by the facts of the case. Take character abstractly enough and apart from its human and organic setting, and the dream of continuous perfecting may have meaning; but so would the dream of continuous intellectual advance. Yet the scholar knows all too well the judgment passed by the coming generation upon the older one: "They can't adjust themselves to this new point of view." Would progress come if the generations did not pass?

The philosophical aspect of the question can be touched upon only briefly and in an untechnical way. The basic problem may be put in this way: Can human personality be included in nature in a theoretically satisfactory way? It has been customary to stress the difficulties which confront such an attempt

and to be silent in regard to the problems which the separation of body and personality has always found facing it. Yet I think that few philosophers would deny that it is the very irrationality of the traditional dualism which makes a living monism of mind and body so desirable and so urgently sought after.

There is good reason to believe that the persistence of the mind-body puzzle has been due to two conditions, the lack of an adequate theory of knowledge, and an ultra-mechanical, or non-evolutionary, view of the physical world. Scientists and philosophers, alike, were possessed by an inertia which prevented them from taking the principle of evolution seriously. They refused to readjust their ideas so as to admit that organization of a high grade, such as characterizes the nervous system, has a synthetic way of acting of its own, not reducible to the mere chain-like action of externally related units. There are many signs pointing to the conclusion that a broader and more flexible naturalism is forming which will sweep away the artificial problems and stereotyped contrasts which have stood in the way of a candid inclusion of human thought and activity within nature. When that day comes, the hesitations which have encouraged the faith in immortality in the face of empirical difficulties of an ever-increasing weight will pass away. I am inclined to prophesy that psychology and physiology will reach an adjustment of their principles before many years have passed, and that consciousness and mind will take their places along with mass and energy in the scientific view of nature. The old dualism of soul and body will pass away and give place to a flexible naturalism.

The belief in immortality and the wish for it will die

out very slowly. The vague appetite for another life will persist as an undercurrent of half-understood desire for a good whose nature has not been clearly thought out. What men really want is an eternal youth in an environment which gives opportunity for self-expression and pleasant companionship. It means rest to the weary, new horizons to those who wish to achieve, a release from fetters to those who have felt themselves oppressed. What a quiet charm there is in such an uncritical play of the fancy! But is it anything more than daydreaming? Can our musings become definite without revealing themselves as fancies? Alas! our souls are old and written upon, and we would no longer be the same were these marks removed. They have a meaning for us and we cannot wish them away. If, for a forgetful moment, we envy the smooth cheeks of a youth, the envy is but momentary. What we desire is his abundant energy and hopefulness with our own humorous and wiser self in command. How completely we are parts of life as it is lived upon this planet! Desires, affections, passions, ideas, habits, all, when analyzed, point to the human organism and its environment. Our personality is like a plant which draws its nourishment from what surrounds it. Remove the old peasant from his fields and plow-fellows, and he will lose interest in life. Remove the business man from the mart and counter, and he will become restless. How can we expect to revive a zest in life by cutting the grown personality loose from what it has fed upon? It is psychologically absurd and betrays that tendency to abstract thinking which is so widespread. The human personality is a function of this sub-lunar life, of this organism, of this sky, of this

soil, of this restless struggle with nature. Immortality is an impossible surgery.

At certain stages of social development, false beliefs are simply inevitable. For example, the Ptolemaic view of the solar system was bound to precede the Copernican. And false beliefs do both good and harm before they are outgrown. How many of the downtrodden have looked to another world to right their wrongs! It gave them hope: but it made them passive and all too meek. Has not the idea of another life encouraged a false perspective in regard to this one? I cannot feel that the belief was ever a very healthy one for the human race. Yet, during the coming period of transition, many who have been trained to hold false expectations will experience grievous pain. People who become used to a narcotic recoil from the idea of giving it up. Their nervous system has been taught to depend upon it. Is there not something parallel to this in ethics? Religious romanticism is a spiritual narcotic which substitutes a dream world for the more humdrum world of every-day existence. It develops a taste for the meretricious and sentimental. In revenge, the enthusiast fails to achieve insight into the significance of common things. Life's real tragedies and triumphs are veiled from his untrained eye. Only a whole-hearted, even joyous, immersion in the sea of struggling human life gives the imagination that iron vigor it needs. The greatest saints have talked the least of heaven.

> "Born into life! — who lists
> May what is false hold dear,
> And for himself make mists
> Through which to see less clear;
> The world is what it is, for all our dust and din.

"Is it so small a thing
To have enjoy'd the sun,
To have lived light in the spring,
To have loved, to have thought, to have done;
To have advanced true friends, and beat down baffling
foes —"

Let those who can meet life bravely and joyously. The stage has been planned by no master artist, and the actors are only amateurs compelled to improvise their parts; but the sunlight is sometimes golden and the spoken lines often surprise us with their beauty. What critic can pass assured judgment upon this continuous play?

CHAPTER XII

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

It is noteworthy that there has never been a problem of good, but always a problem of evil. Man takes the good in his life for granted, while he bewails the presence of evil in all its forms. The Greeks had the myth of Pandora's box to account for the sorrows and ills which afflict the human race; the Hebrews told of the Fall of man from his original state of bliss to a life of toil and sin through the weakness of our first parents and the wiles of the Serpent; the Scandinavians sang of Loki, the Spirit of Deception, whose artful malice led to the death of Balder, the Beautiful. And Christianity has been accustomed to connect evil with a personal devil "who rushes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." At his door, popular thought has lain those temptations and backslidings that bewilder poor humanity. Even the more physical evils, such as famine, sickness and bodily injury, have been ascribed to his agency.

Is it necessary to say that primitive man thought of all evils as due to mysterious potencies which surrounded him on every hand? His ritual of purification corresponds to the signs which now surround electrical machinery. Irrational as many of these taboos were, they yet implied that the actual world was a strange mixture of favorable and unfavorable potencies to

which man had to adapt himself. "To the primitive mind nothing was more uncanny than blood, and there are people still who faint at the sight of it: for 'the blood is the life,' life and death are the great primeval mysteries, and all the physical substances that are associated with the inner principle of either partake of this mysteriousness." This early idea of a miasmic contagion slowly unites itself with the belief in demons, as animistic religion evolves. Bad demons work havoc, while favorable spirits bring blessings to the needy worshiper.

But, as religion developed a more distinctly ethical and personal character, the existence of evil in the world became a problem. In the early days, it was not so much a problem as a fact. But a Jew who believed that Yahweh controlled everything that occurred in the Kingdom had to account for personal and social disasters in a rational way. What was more natural than the hypothesis that those whom disasters overtook had been guilty of some secret wrong? And it was this point of view which was adopted. The Book of Job represents the puzzled reflection of a late period over the difficulty of squaring the hypothesis with the facts. And, so far as I can see, the puzzle is handled as well as it could be within the accepted setting. The whole treatment is deductive rather than inductive. Assume an omnipotent, omniscient and ethically perfect deity, and it follows that, when facts do not square with your sense of justice, you must either suspect the individual of secret sins or proclaim that God's ways are past finding out. In other words, the search for a theodicy leads to agnosticism. Since you don't really know anything about the world, one hypothesis is as good as

another. But agnosticism is a cheap way of establishing a position, and is likely to suggest to the reflective that the whole setting of theodicy is at fault. If the religious view of the world leads to this *impasse*, may it not be better to take a more inductive way of approach to what we call evil? May not reality be of such a character that evil is as natural as good?

When we glance a little more closely at the Christian tradition, we find that the popular answer to the problem of evil is by no means unambiguous. To explain the existence of evil by the agency of the devil (Satan, Ahriman) is a straightforward answer, quite in accordance with the appeal to personal agency so characteristic of religion, but it does not harmonize with the ethical monotheism which Christianity inherited. The query will not down, Why does this omnipotent and ethically perfect deity permit such a being to exist to work havoc amongst his children? Even upon a casual examination, it becomes evident that there are many strands of tradition and doctrine in Christianity. There is the classic monotheism of the prophets, and the more polytheistic tendencies of later times, a contrast parallel to the sanity of classic Greece as compared with the flabbiness of Hellenistic times.

In the New Testament, itself, there are many evidences of the acceptance of a dualistic view of the world. Satan is the Prince of this World. We have already pointed out that the writers of the gospels think of Jesus as casting out demons which have infested the bodies of men and women and made them sick. Yet, strange to say, we are told that not a sparrow falls to the ground without God's consent.

This dualistic strand of thinking dominated during

the Middle Ages. The world is given over to the devil for him to work his will upon it. Here we have both a cause and an effect of the pessimism of the times. For the early Christians, society was corrupt and filled with abominations; the only sure way to achieve salvation was to flee from its lure to deserts and monasteries, there to purge the soul of fleshly desires. No one has painted the situation more keenly and unflinchingly than Anatole France in *Thais*. Humanity was sick. A strong wave of asceticism spread from the East to the West and carried with it doctrines based on the metaphysical extension of the contrast between light and darkness, good and evil. Matter is evil in its very nature and leagues itself with those instincts in the soul which come from its contamination with flesh. The taint of original sin is deepened by the grossness of the material out of which man's earthly tabernacle is made. The body with its passions plays double traitor to the soul. Only by prayer, purification, fasting, and the grace of God can the son of corruption save his soul alive for the heavenly kingdom among the stars.

The number of mythical elements woven into this ascetic dualism is striking. Woman was the temptress most to be feared; the daughters of Eve were considered the most powerful instruments Satan had at his command. It was even debated whether she had a soul. It was even whispered that a woman guarded the gates of Hell. Again, Satan was pictured as a demon leading the unwary astray by the desires of this world. Ethics was an affair of external fighting for the souls of men. The whole setting was mythical and supernaturalistic and full of picture-thinking.

We have already referred to the doctrine of original sin. This doctrine was taken up by St. Augustine who had been a Manichean. Pauline theology, Augustinianism, and Manicheism have much in common. They are all instances of what may be called mythological metaphysics. The dogma is, that, left to his own devices, man tends to take the path of sin. He is, moreover, alienated from God, who, because of his perfection, cannot condone imperfection and demands an atonement which cannot be made by man himself. Hence, the need arises for a savior to mediate between man and God. What a construction is this in which myth, rabbinical theology and pagan dualistic cosmologies are drawn together to furnish the setting for a juridical drama! How can those who accept the teaching of modern science and realize the more subjective and personal spirit of modern ethics conserve any portion of this strange creation of past ages? The idea of evolution, as applied to both nature and man, undermines the whole fantastic drama. Man has arisen painfully from a brutish condition, instead of falling from a perfect state. The contrast between flesh and spirit can no longer be taken literally as corresponding to a sort of physical division of the universe into spheres of good and evil which can have no commerce with one another. This is ethical poetry which is not sufficiently aware that it is poetry. Instead of seeking to re-interpret the belief in an external, sacrificial savior, mediating between God and man in vague, mystically symbolic language which suggests a depth it does not possess, the sensible thing is to drop the whole outlook frankly, as outgrown, and as having essentially lost its meaning. We saw that Jesus, himself, would probably

not have comprehended its intricacies, and certainly would not have accepted it as true of his own mission. Instead, it represents the theosophic speculations of the Ancient World. So long as the thinker toys with these imaginative speculations which have no direct foundation in the knowledge and experience of to-day, so long will he live in a mental fog unable to see the really pressing social and ethical problems of the present.

When we once shake ourselves loose from these mythical, gnostic and rabbinical ideas, with their legal and poetical conceptions of ethics, and their naïve picture of the world as the seat of ethical forces struggling in a physical way against one another; when we once realize that it is meaningless to apply ethical distinctions to matter, we are led to press past these Hellenistic accretions to the simpler and nobler traditions which Christianity inherited from Jesus and the greater Hebrew prophets. Here, if anywhere, religion is in a position to solve the problem of evil. There are passages in the New Testament which breathe the same faith as that held by Deutero-Isaiah, a sort of sublime religious optimism or will to believe. For the Hebrew prophet of the exile, God is the creator and righteous ruler of the earth. "I am the Lord and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and *create evil;* I am the Lord that doeth all these things." Such is monotheism of the creationalistic type in all its vigor and challenging fervor. Yet the prophet speaks and thinks in terms of world-movements and the fate of nations, and his thoughts scarcely drop from this vast setting to consider the fates of individuals. We should note further the absence of the poly-

demonism of later Judaism and the evident impatience with the ancient myths and the belief in a Satan or Spirit of Evil. Had Christianity taken its departure from this high altitude, it would have been more truly monotheistic, but it would not have been the child of its age, and would not have been assimilated by the Mediterranean peoples. Let us examine the implications of this bolder and simpler faith.

There can be little doubt that the position adopted by the second Isaiah is the logical terminus of monotheism. If God be omnipotent, he must be responsible for all the evil in the world as well as for the good. In other words, this must be the best of all possible worlds. He who is a king, and not a marionette, cannot beg off from the duties of his station. To introduce Sin as a sort of hellish entity, as did Saint Augustine, is to mar our conception of deity. We no longer have that old Roman's courtier-like sycophancy, nor his nonchalance when others are condemned by divine caprice to the eternal flames. What was to him a means of manifesting God's greater glory is to us a crime which would sully our ideal of goodness. The educated world of to-day has at least come up to the level of the peasant-poet's indictment of the Calvinism of two centuries ago.

Christianity is on the horns of a terrible dilemma. It has long wavered between the bold attitude of Isaiah, softened by such devices as apologetic ingenuity could invent, and the mythological dualism current at the time of its birth. God must be totally responsible for all physical evils, at least; or else he must be thwarted by something independent of himself, whether this be an evil spirit or matter. Now scholars have pointed out that the idea of a prolonged conflict between a

good and an evil power was characteristic of the Persian religion, and that this view tinged later Judaism and passed over into Christianity. Here it was met and reënforced by Neo-Platonism in the form usually called Gnosticism and Manicheism. At present, the tide has turned in favor of monotheism and against the coexistence of an evil power. We are inclined to smile at a personal devil, perhaps because superstition has made him humorous, perhaps because we know better the seat and cause of what we call evil. Science has helped to do away with the devil; but, in so doing, has it not also undermined the idea of Providence? Must not the same arrow transfix an effective God that does away with an effective Devil?

The God of the past was a realistic God; he counted for everything in the governance of the universe. The God of modern theology is fast becoming an ideal of personality. When God is thought of as a tender-hearted and perfect gentleman, the question of evil takes the following form: Can we harmonize this conception with the facts of life? *Is God an agent or an ideal?* We must bear in mind the fact that God is an hypothesis characteristic of the religious view of the world, and that, like every other hypothesis, it should help to explain the facts to which it is relevant. But does it do this? Is it fruitful?

I am free to confess that theodicies of all sorts strike me as proofs of the inapplicability of the religious view of the world. Yet immense dialectical ability has been displayed in the tireless search for some satisfactory theory of God's relation to the universe. A glance at these theories reveals the working of the time-spirit. When man is harsh, his god is harsh and cruel. When

man is tender, his god is benevolent. And this correspondence does not complete the story. In past ages, the political organization was autocratic and unyielding. The subjects of the monarch did not dream of questioning the justice of his rule. It was not right for common men to think of such matters; it was out of their sphere of control and understanding. Besides, is not might the sanction of right? During these monarchial periods, God was thought of as a heavenly king whose power and glory and dominion was without end. This correspondence between the political organization and the theological picture betrays the sociological side of theology. All of man's ideas are human ideas, and so his idea of his God and the very personality and moral outlook of that God reflect the social standards which are in force around the individual. If human justice is cruel, God's justice is strict and unyielding. What could be more natural than this parallelism? But as punitive justice yields to ideas of mercy and sympathy, a change comes over man's conception of this heavenly replica of his own sentiments and institutions. Irrational punishment with its brutal terrors gives way to thoughts of lovingkindness.

But it is this very evolution of human morality which brings out the problem of evil in all its distinctness. Yahweh could command whole tribes to be slaughtered, and no one felt the least religious discomfort. But the man of to-day, when he allows himself to think, revolts against such heartlessness. God must be at least as merciful as man — and man would not do these things. Yet our experience tells us that pain and disaster are everywhere rampant in the world. How is it that an omnipotent and noble God permits these

things to be? The line of reasoning which leads to the demand for a theodicy is simple and direct. God is a moral agent who has this peculiarity, that he can do what he wills and is therefore responsible for all that happens. But tragic things happen. Why did he permit them?

The various formulations of God's relation to the world turn about this problem. The inherent possibilities are few in number and are soon grasped and developed. If God is a limited deity, then evil can be assigned to something else. If God is unlimited, then whatever is, is somehow right. Let us glance at typical developments of these two main lines of approach.

Mr. H. G. Wells has recently startled the general public by his advocacy of a struggling deity. It is not in accordance with Christian tradition, he admits, but it is truer to the facts as we know them. But he might well have told the public that this view of his was not a new one. Long before the Christian era, the Zoroastrian Persians held just such a theory of a struggling deity combating the evil machinations of Ahriman. The faithful were exhorted to do all in their power to assist Ahura Mazda in his stern fight with darkness and contamination. This dualistic view found its way West and appears in Manicheism. It may not be well known, but it was this Manichean conception of the world that Saint Augustine gave up at his conversion to Christianity. Again and again, it found its way to the surface of Western society. Who has not heard of the Cathars or Albigenses of the Middle Ages? These people were believers in a struggling deity engaged with the powers of evil. Some of them identified the Jehovah of the Old Testament with this cruel

and malignant spirit. In so doing, they showed an absence of all historical perspective, but, also, a keen ethical judgment. This tribal god of the early Jews did not harmonize with their ideals of goodness and mercy. While theirs was a darker and more superstitious outlook than an educated man of to-day would adopt, the logical basis of the system is essentially the same as the one which seems to be rising to the surface in our own times as a revolt against the smugness of traditional Christianity. The atmosphere of religion was more somber in the past; and these Cathars would have been shocked by the fine, careless rapture of the modern novelist; but they would have recognized that his view was akin to their own.

It may not be amiss to mention the fact that John Stuart Mill, the famous English philosopher of the middle of the nineteenth century, suggested that it would be truer to the experience of human beings to assume a God limited in power, though perfect in other respects. It is impossible, he thought, to harmonize the attributes of omnipotence and goodness in a divine agent, with the world as it is. This protest against the high, deductive faith of Christian monotheism was due to Mill's frank empiricism. Life must speak for itself, he held; it must justify hypotheses by their agreement with it. The traditional Christian method has been too dictatorial and too little inductive. It has started from a set of dogmas in regard to God and spun out their consequences, refusing to qualify these dogmas when the consequences did not fit the tragic character of life.

The treatment of the second logical possibility is familiar ground. Christian ethical monotheism followed

Hebrew religious thought in its essentials. God is held to be an omnipotent agent who is also morally perfect. Theology knows two forms of this dogma, the Calvinistic or Augustinian, and the Arminian. Calvinism stands flatly on the thesis that God is just and that, therefore, what is done is just. Within this setting with its easy appeal to ignorance, it makes little difference whether events are right because God does them or whether God does them because they are right. Arminianism turns out, when examined, to be largely an attempt to soften the absolutism of Calvinism along certain lines. But these endless and, in the main, sterile theological controversies reveal the artificiality of the dogmas within which they are carried on. They are, when all is said, only ingenious modifications and redressings of the primary assumptions of the religious view of the world. I challenge any one to develop a really tenable system of theology, a system which is self-consistent and relevant to the world as we know it. I am certain that it cannot be done. As a student of ethics, my growing conviction has for some time been that these traditional controversies and modes of approach to human life are barren and irrelevant, because they cast absolutely no light upon human problems, social or personal. Modern ethics and theology have ceased to have any genuine commerce. The one is in touch with the sciences of biology, sociology, psychology and criminology; the other, by its very nature, can gain nothing from these sciences. Ethics is concrete and inductive. Theology is abstract and deductive.

I have not tried to state and criticize the numerous theodicies which man's restless intellect has constructed. Mystics have taught that evil is an illu-

sion. But illusions have a way of being very real; and a derogatory term does not alter facts. Idealists have declared that what we call evil only increases the divine harmony, as a judicious discord heightens the effect of symphonic combinations. But this æsthetic argument conflicts with moral relations. Surely God would not be so self-centered. Thus there are weighty objections to all the ingenious and profound apologies for the course of events. But why are such apologies felt to be necessary? Simply and solely because events are assumed to be under the control of an intelligent, moral agent. Withdraw this assumption, and the problem vanishes.

When we turn from the religious view of the world to the scientific and philosophical, we are immediately impressed by the different perspective. What were theoretical problems of the most absolute and inescapable kind cease to exist. While the religious view of the world culminates in an attempted justification of the ways of God to man, the scientific studies the system of things as a given whole to which all questions of justification are irrelevant. The world is as it is, and the category of responsibility is inapplicable. Evil becomes a practical and relative problem. There is no thought of trying to fix responsibility upon some personal agent who could have done otherwise and did not. Man is a part of nature, although a self-directive organism adapted more or less adequately to his environment. And just because he is an organism, he must maintain himself in the face of attacks and fluctuating changes. He is not able to claim exemption from the consequences of cataclysms, such as earthquakes and tornadoes, which result from the unstable balance of physical en-

ergies. He perishes in the same way that beasts and plants do, when his intelligence is not able to find a way of escape from a sudden danger. In other words, physical evil is evil only because it hurts man, who does not want to be hurt. From the objective standpoint, evil and good differ not a jot from one another. They are both causal events baptised by man in accordance with his sympathies and antipathies. Events are good to him or bad to him; in themselves, they are neither good nor bad. Rain does not fall in summer in order to nourish the plants; instead, the plants are nourished and continue to exist because the rain falls. Once, it was hard for man to admit this impersonalism. He wanted to find an objective purpose focusing upon his career. But he is at last beginning to realize that his will to live and create is the source of all values. Nature is a thing to be used for his own desired ends.

There are no problems harder than false problems. The great achievement is to see that they are false because they flow from a false assumption. Remove this assumption, and the problem which tortured the greatest thinkers vanishes into thin air. The problem of evil becomes the problem of lessening evil by conquering nature and rendering her subservient to man. It is a problem of engineering, of applied chemistry, of preventive medicine, of social planning. Man must become the master of his destiny through the instrumentality of his intelligence. But what a different setting this presents from the one in which primitive man existed! Then man was needy and fearful and ignorant and helpless. Now he is wealthy, ingenious, sure of himself. It is coming to be that man is less hurt by

physical agencies than by himself. He has freed himself from his environment; he must now free himself from his own passions and hatreds. He must love righteousness and peace, and flee from dissension and all forms of injustice. The problem of evil has become a social problem. It is the task of amelioration by intelligent control.

But science, alone, will never be sufficient to meet the fact of evil. The most optimistic believer in the possibilities of intelligent planning and control does not deny that tragedies of all sorts will still be only too common. Let us hope that there will be less of tuberculosis, less of grinding poverty, less of avoidable accidents. But will there be less of secret disappointment with life, less of wounded affection? More will live happy and noble lives in the healthier society which is within our power than was possible in the past; but there will be mal-adjustments of various kinds. Individuals will seek to control the lives of others, and this control will be resented; friends will fall out over fancied or real wrongs; lovers will quarrel; misunderstandings will arise. None of Shakespeare's great tragedies turn about sickness and natural calamities. The motives are social and personal in character, the quarrels of rival houses, the senile pride of an old man, the ambition of princes, the adulterous love which leads to murder. Men will need strength of spirit and broad sympathy to meet the situations which confront them. And many will fail hopelessly in the struggle, in the future as they have in the past. But, on the other hand, the rank and file will lead vigorous, active lives with a fair measure of those rewards of success and companionship which

sweeten endeavor. What more is there to say? Life is a hazard, and men must take their risk bravely. Courage on the part of the actor will do much; sympathy on the part of those near him will also do much; but risk there will be always.

CHAPTER XIII

RELIGION AND ETHICS

What was the exact relation between religion and morality in the past? Does morality any longer need the sanctions and supernatural setting which helped to support it in other days? These are questions of primary importance whose discussion should throw light upon both religion and human morality. Have human values become self-supporting and self-justifying? Do the decencies of life find sufficient ground in human nature for their continuance and increase? Or is the rescuing hand of a supernatural grace necessary to prevent deterioration? Such questions are peculiarly proper to-day when ethics is seeking to build itself upon a broad study of human instincts. Let us try to penetrate below the surface of the traditional contrasts between flesh and spirit — contrasts which hindered rather than furthered clear analysis — and note the actual basis of the spiritual life in man. In order to do so, we must read human nature as it manifests itself in organized society, sanely and calmly, expecting neither too much nor too little, and not being intimidated by the assertions of men who have built their lives around the traditional theological outlook. Those who have learned to lean upon a crutch or who have cast their spiritual experiences in a certain mold naturally feel at a loss when this is threatened. This is to put it too

mildly, perhaps, for the *odium theologicum* has a reputation which cannot be all unearned. Yet, comprehensible as the protest of the conservative is, it must be viewed in the light of the psychological habits which it expresses. It may well be that new times and new points of view will bring new habits and new molds for spiritual experience. It may well be that the traditional religious sanctions will gradually lose their meaning in the new generation, born into a more social, humane and scientific atmosphere. Let us see what indications there are for this prediction.

In early times, religion was mainly a community affair. The tribe or state had its gods who protected it against its enemies in return for homage and sacrifice. The tribal god was inseparable from his worshipers. A god without a nation was almost as badly off as a nation without a divine protector. As members of the community, the individuals, separately and collectively, were required to perform established ceremonies which were pleasing in the eyes of the gods, and to refrain from acting in ways displeasing to them. Gods and men formed, as it were, one society; and so customs and rituals always received the fearful sanctions of these divine powers. How naturally this outlook developed can readily be understood. And there can be little doubt that the double sanction of social group and divine witnesses was of advantage in those early days when man was more impulsive and less rational than he is to-day. A crime was, at one and the same time, a crime and a sin or act of impiety; and so close was thought to be the responsible connection of the individual and the group that the tribe was held to be in danger because of the deeds of its members.

The gods were living agents quick to anger and ready to punish in the direst ways. Warned by this knowledge of the jealousy of the gods, the fellow tribesmen hastened to punish the offender in order to ward off the divine anger. Thus the sanctions enforcing the customs were both social and religious.

This situation had its bad side as well as its good. While it helped to enforce the tribal laws by means of the awe of the divine witness who could not be escaped, it tended to merge valuable with trivial things. Society was quite irrational as yet, and was as likely to punish the violation of accidental taboos as really serious attacks upon society. It is a commonplace of history that religions have stressed ritual observances more than vital phases of conduct. The greater Hebrew prophets stand out just because of their emphasis upon human morality, upon justice and righteousness and love. Amos and Hosea are social reformers who conceive their national god as a god of righteousness who will turn his face away from the doers of evil. They threaten their compatriots with his wrath if they continue in their evil ways. "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye say. Hate the evil and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate." Thus the setting of religion was used as the leverage for an attempted ethical reformation, the exalted reformer conceiving himself as the mouthpiece of his god. But the prophets were exceptions. The priestly class, the class that has always held closely to traditional ways of thinking, brought the usual multitude of non-moral acts under this impressive sanction.

The struggle between priest and prophet, traditional-

ist and ethical reformer, took place within the religious view of the world, but the conflict was, after all, a purely human process. The prophets loved righteousness because they knew that it was good, because they fell repelled by unmerited poverty and by careless wealth, because they admired the decencies of life. They could not have given the justification of their sentiments as well as a theorist of to-day, but they had these sentiments as keenly as to-day's prophet has them. When we read their wonderful discourses, we are thrilled by the depth and intensity of their ethical life. But we are too apt to forget that the social situation in Palestine was the stimulus to their denunciations. They were noble enough to feel that conditions were intolerable, and it was not a far step to believe that Yahweh would not tolerate them. A noble man has always a noble god. That is the reason why the god of Amos is noble. The theological view reverses the true causal relation. Morality is always human morality, expressive of human nature and human conditions. Man may assign his ideals to some superhuman source because he is convinced that this source has selected him as its interpreter; but the fact that he has thought and judged in this moral way is indubitable, while his theory that Yahweh is speaking through him is merely an expression of the religious view of the world common to the time. When we stop a moment to think, we realize that Amos and Hosea were certain to put their views under the sanction of their national god. Not to have done so would have been far stranger psychologically than the ideals which they championed.

Did the prophetic claim that social justice was sanc-

tioned by Yahweh help its advance? Probably. I see no reason to doubt that it did somewhat — how much it is impossible to say. So far as the claim was accepted by the nation, it would assist the forces working for reform. But religious sanctions are far more powerful when they are explicit and detailed, as the history of Christianity has shown. And we must remember that the prophetic claims were not always accepted. Religion is usually conservative and more or less conventional. The ritual element plays a considerable part in religious morality. It is as hard to change the people's ideas of God as it is to change their conceptions of justice and goodness. For this reason, I am not convinced that the religious sanction was of much advantage in the evolution of morality. The old has even more of the use of the sanction than has the new. Moral forces need to be vigorously based upon human nature and human relations if they are to dominate society and control the ethical standards which public opinion demands. The presence of religious sanctions simply beclouds the real factors at work. Morality can never, in the long run, be something pressed upon man from outside; it must express his life and its needs.

It cannot be denied that supernatural sanctions have often been very effective for certain types of people in certain anarchic periods. The robber baron of the Middle Ages, credulous and superstitious, was restrained at times by his fear of the penalties threatened by Mother Church. But so is a burglar by a pistol pointed at him, even if it is not loaded. In the past, a code of morality much in advance of the times has, no doubt, often been aided by religious sanctions. But

it is foolish to base one's theories upon exceptional conditions. We must remember that the situation confronted by the Christian tradition after the breakdown of the political and social life of the Roman Empire was abnormal. A turbulent mass of barbarians faced the ethics and theology of an overthrown civilization. It cannot too often be pointed out that this situation was unhealthy in many ways. It is not good for a people to have codes of morality thrust upon it from outside. Especially is it bad when the code is in many ways untrue to human nature under normal conditions. Ascetic, other-worldly Christianity distorted the impulses of mediæval man. And it is certain that religious sanctions, alone, enabled it to control society.

We have seen that religion and morality marched together as long as the evolution of the society was healthy and natural. Often there was a struggle over the ritual and mythical elements in religious morality; but, as a rule, the civic type of morality gained the upper hand. Religious sanctions were called in because of the faith in divine powers interested in the welfare of the community, but these sanctions soon ceased to be creative. While the gods remained, these sanctions would necessarily remain; yet they tended to become benevolent and secondary.

But Christianity, by reason of the forces at work at the time of its origin, nourished vicious interpretations of morality. The despair of human nature which we note in the writings of St. Paul tinged the outlook of Christian ethics. Man is by nature evil; only the working in his soul of a supernatural grace can lead him to value the things which are pure and of good

repute. This pessimism cannot be too sharply spurned. Man is neither angel nor devil; he is just man. And the modern thinker is pretty well convinced that morality is a purely human affair growing out of the instinctive tendencies which man has inherited in the course of evolution as these find themselves in various situations. Moral problems are meaningless apart from their setting on this earth. Man is moral because he can pass judgments upon courses of behavior and decide what best conduces to his welfare. He is moral because he can build up standards of social and personal conduct and adhere to them more or less completely. The assumption that man is immoral is psychologically untrue. The asceticism and pessimism of mediæval Christianity was a reflection of false ideals and of an unhealthy social system. There was an element of strain in the demands held up before the individual. The spiritual life was a task which he had to accomplish because it possessed a supernatural sanction.

But the inherent pessimism of much of Christianity was not its only fault. It taught men to suppose that morality was not something which paid for itself. So much did it stress the necessity of supernatural sanctions that it led the majority to believe that no man would be good unless he had to, unless he was afraid of the external consequences which would be meted out to him at the bar of judgment. But how false such a view is. We know to-day that morality pays here and now, in the specie of a happy, healthy, well-developed life. Any other view makes morality irrational and unnatural and, consequently, dependent upon sanctions which rest upon the will of some agent apart from

this concrete life of act and fact. To put this criticism in the technical language of ethics, Christianity has tended to think of conduct in terms of heteronomous ethics, *i.e.*, in terms of precepts and laws coming from outside of human life and pressed upon it by authority, rather than in terms of autonomous ethics for which ideals and customs are wise adjustments to the natural relations in which man finds himself.

This assumption that morality is a hardship played into the hands of a juridical notion of the sanctions of conduct, for which the conception of immortality furnished the grandiose opportunity. The arm of society is eluded at death, but death offers no escape for the wicked from the outraged deity they have offended. It is the motive of fear which is here employed. Human beings are to be scared into being good. Morality is on the defensive because it has no real charm and natural loveliness, because it does not grow out of a rational study of human relations.

How tragically false this view was! Its existence can be explained only as an expression of an ill-organized society in which impulsive violence was not enough held in check. Supernatural sanctions could be used to restrain malefactors of great power in less happy times. Society has grown beyond this need. Courts of law and outraged public opinion are quite able to deal with criminals. If the reason for punishment is prevention, it is certainly true that punishment by society is more likely to be effective than the postponed pains of an hereafter, because of its immediacy and power of being repeated. But it is very doubtful whether fear is a moral motive or whether it is a very effective deterrent. Social thinkers are agreed that punishment is a very

bungling method at the best. It does not show the presence of a very constructive imagination.

Hell has always been a magnified torture chamber. It has been the reflection on the gigantic background of the next world of the penal ideas of the time. That is why it has always been more interesting than heaven. Man feared to make a social utopia out of heaven because he conceived it as a kingdom in which he was to play a very minor rôle, while he was quite certain of his importance in hell. But the morbid results of his imaginings were tragic in their effects when connected with such damnable doctrines as infant damnation and eternal punishment for lack of belief in a particular creed. What distorted ethical notions, what mixture of horrible fear before a world-tyrant and callous delight in the punishment of others are revealed in these pictures of a place of eternal torment! Thank goodness, the civilized world is outgrowing the whole savage set of ideas.

Before we leave these juridical religious sanctions, it may be well to call attention to the fact that theories of punishment have radically changed during the last century. The purpose of modern justice is less to uphold the majesty of an outraged law than to protect the citizens of a state and reform the character of the criminal. Crime is studied genetically and its conditions determined so far as possible. It is well known that criminals are products of biological and social conditions over which they have little control. The modern ideal is coming to be prevention by means of the betterment of social organization and negative eugenics. Healthy and capable persons in a decent society would be unlikely to turn out criminals. I do

not see how we can escape the conclusion that the saner penology of the present has completely undermined the whole juristic basis of the next world. Human ethics and a supernatural ethics of an eschatological sort cannot be dovetailed together. The scene and motives of a crime cannot be laid in one world with that world's peculiar conditions, and the punishment dispensed in another. And a final punishment is a veritable absurdity. Is punishment an end in itself? Are the wicked such hopeless creatures? Or does it simply mean that men have never before thought of such things as indeterminate sentences and reformation? Prisoners were hustled away and never seen afterwards. Punishment and reward were easy matters in the old days when justice was external and terroristic; we see to-day that they are the most difficult of problems. Final judgments by omniscient judges strike us as romantic and even melodramatic. Again, we doubt such facile divisions of our mixed humanity as that between saints and sinners. We have a keener and more democratic eye for the good in the most unprepossessing of our fellow creatures. We know what he has been up against from his babyhood days, what his chances, temptations, joys and sorrows have been. And we have the deep conviction that ghostly judgment after death would be absolutely meaningless.

In an earlier chapter, we pointed out that the belief in, and desire for, immortality is stronger in periods of social disorganization than in periods of marked social unity and happy creativeness. Christianity arose in just such a time of pessimism and stifled social life. The Roman Empire had become barren of joyous hopefulness and spirited endeavor. The citizen was only a

unit in a dreary and monotonous whole ruled from above. All through the Middle Ages, something of this suspicion of the world, this longing for release from earthly things tinged the interests and judgments of the more spiritually-minded men and women. The inevitable ethical result was a disregard of genuine human problems and a tense exaltation of attitudes of self-control and negation. Disciplines became ends in themselves, which rejected all relation to the life of every day. The direction of ethical life was away from creative activity and concern with the more homely things, and toward an abstract contemplation of ideals seldom put to the test of positive application. The religious setting of life withdrew human energies from their rightful and fruitful sphere of activity and applied them to tasks of self-analysis and never-ceasing self-criticism. Such an approach to life produced men who were saints, men who were unselfish and admirable in almost every way; but this saintliness grew at the expense of significant human achievement. It was as though men forged splendid instruments and did not know how to use them. The pity of it all is, that this mediæval world-view stimulated men to devotions of soul which looked away from the arena of human life rather than into it.

But religion only revealed what human nature, itself, possessed. These capacities for sympathy, love, persistent self-discipline, and devotion to ideals were natural to man. The primary fault with Mediævalism was the inability to see the worth of human things and the hypnotic fixation of the mind upon unreal relations and demands. The modern man admires these cloistered saints and, at the same time, feels the tragedy and

futility of this goodness which wearied itself out in vigil and prayer. The human cost of this virtue was so high and its objective use so small. It is only as an artist that I can enjoy reading the *Prayers and Meditations* of Thomas à Kempis. When this mood is not upon me, I am repelled by the picture of this white-faced monk in his cell, holding in restraint all his natural impulses by means of the thought of a reward in paradise after death. Virtue was the winning of a goal set by his Maker, for reasons which he did not dream of questioning. "When I weary of the long night vigils, or of the Lessons, longer perhaps than usual, give me grace to remember how great are the rewards in heaven which I have now a chance of gaining. When the days of abstinence from food and drink are many, give me the power to fast, and good health to enable me to carry on my work; give me pardon for the sins which I have committed, keep me from falling into them again, relieve me from the punishment they have deserved, and give me a good hope of everlasting happiness with the elect in the Kingdom of God." We feel that this ethical energy should have been used otherwise and in the service of human beings. Better Thomas à Kempis than the man who is mad for wealth and the lusts of the flesh; but far better than either is the sane worker for things of good repute. His goodness is a social goodness which makes life happier and fuller of activities and things worth while.

The traditional religion has not only been, frequently enough, anti-social, but it has also been morally inefficient. Why? Because it has made too much of tension and too little of intelligence. Instead of pointing out that morality paid because it was only the applica-

tion of intelligence to human needs, it set a standard of moral discipline before people and then sought to drive them to its attainment by sheer force of will and subjectively aroused emotion. The modern ethical thinker is convinced that morality is but the harmonious adjustment of an individual to his social group; it is the sensible foresight which selects the active values which attract and express man's nature.

This rather blind tension of traditional religion appears quite clearly in the conception of sin. The setting of this idea has been monarchic and terroristic. It has exhaled an atmosphere of sharp, mystic contrasts which were as unreal as they were vicious. To set a goal too high is almost as bad psychologically as to set it too low. Christianity vaguely felt this flaw in its dramatic ethical scheme and was led to bring the doctrine of God's saving grace to the front to bridge the fearful gulf caused by the opposition of God's perfection to man's imperfection. But the man of to-day who is sincere with himself knows that this religious world-ethics is a meaningless fiction. He can understand why it arose in the olden days, with its supernaturalism and juridical ethics, yet he feels that this absolutism is a product of monarchism and pre-evolutionary thinking. Goodness is a human ideal whose content is always undergoing change, while it hovers just beyond man's reach. I must confess, then, that I have little sympathy with the gross exaggerations associated with this word sin. I know that I often fall short of my better moral judgment and, at such moments of moral insight, I experience a keen regret and try to strengthen those tendencies and activities which will aid me to do better next time. But I know too

much of personality on its biological, psychological and social sides, too much of its complexity and its foundations to retain the old notion of the self as an entity which, having the ability to be godlike, chooses evil. Paul's God was an oriental monarch; to the modern, he is a cad. Why, no sensible teacher asks the impossible of his pupils! Yet this strange relation conceived to exist between an omnipotent deity and his frail creatures, when intensified by the horizon of another and eternal world, was bound to develop the tensest and most paralyzing of attitudes. No novel has been able to unfold a plot which has such psychological possibilities. And the morbid and exalted religious imagination has done more than justice to them. While I do not for a moment deny the strength and leverage this ensemble of ideas possesses when faith is present, I do contend that the whole creation is unhealthy and blinding and involves inefficiency as regards the real and pressing problems of personal and social development. The ecclesiastic seldom has a normal perspective. Take Cardinal Newman, for instance. Can one deny that this subtle personality, for all his gifts, brought distorting values into the current of life? Such a man is certain to misread movements and activities and to magnify the subjective at the expense of the social. The individual who identifies himself with social projects, able to elicit his energy and enthusiasm, is more apt to forget the pettier interests of the moment in the broad sweep of creative endeavor than is the person who morbidly catechizes his conscience. A formal morality which looks inward and never outward is bound to be inefficient. Tension is no fit substitute for intelligent insight.

Many theologians assume that ethics has a choice only between reliance upon some supernatural power for its sanctions, and a sort of harsh and haughty stoicism, in which the individual stands alone and by sheer force of will establishes and maintains ideals which are alien to his nature. The fallacy in such an assumption is not hard to detect. By his training in the ascetic traditions of Christianity with its acquiescence in the doctrine of original sin, the theologian is initiated into a distorted conception of human nature and of human relations. While man is a complex being with many instincts and possibilities to adjust and organize in an efficient and progressive way, it is slanderous to assert that these instincts are evil or that man, on the whole, does not relate them quite satisfactorily to a plan of life. Human nature is a sweeter, saner thing than the ascetic admits; man is capable of heroic idealisms and of far-reaching sympathies which express themselves in the mold of society. As a matter of fact, the haughty stoicism of which the religious writer speaks with so much pity, as the only alternative to supernatural relations and sanctions, is a product of times of social disruption when the high-strung individual is thrown back upon himself. To-day, people live and think in groups, with common hopes, standards and plans. Their conscience is a social conscience which finds its supporting echo in the deeds and sentiments of their companions and fellow workers. It is the supernaturalist who is an egoist at heart. Even Mr. Wells is so dominated by this anti-social point of view that he falsifies both psychology and fact in his tirade upon the sane worker for human values. No one who knew the elements of modern ethical thought

based, as it is, upon an evolutionary social psychology would subscribe to the following nonsense: "The benevolent atheist stands alone upon his own good will, without a reference, without a standard, trusting to his own impulse to goodness, relying upon his own moral strength. A certain immodesty, a certain self-righteousness, hangs like a precipice above him. . . . He has no one to whom he can give himself. He has no source of strength beyond his own amiable sentiments, his conscience speaks with an unsupported voice, and no one watches while he sleeps. He cannot pray; he can but ejaculate. He has no real and living link with other men of good will." Of course, one can write such things if one wishes to. But the social reformer knows that his problems are human problems whose solution rests upon sentiments of sympathy, enlightened and directed by intelligence. They who seek for the advent of a better day for humanity band together as naturally and loyally as ever did the believers in the second coming of Christ.

The remark is frequently made that the modern world is tending to return to the Greek view of life. If by the Greek view of life is meant the outlook characteristic of the Greeks of the classic period — the era of Plato, Pericles, and Sophocles,— there is much truth in the judgment. Human values are again coming uppermost in men's minds. This life is not a sojourn in a vale of tears, but the scene of the attempts of socially-minded, conscious organisms to achieve a temperate and fairly happy existence. But the centuries intervening have not been without their effect; man's moral horizon has been both deepened and enlarged. Since those halcyon days, man has eaten of the tree of good and

evil, he has fought with shadowy monsters and wandered for years in the wilderness of helplessness and pessimism, he has worshiped at the shrine of strange gods and prostrated himself before the terrors of his own imagination. Slowly he has come to stand erect and look about him and see the world and himself as they actually are. Knowledge has become his most trusted instrument, and democratic sympathy with human life his most cherished guide. With such a guide and with such an instrument, he will before long set about to mold his life in accordance with those mellower ideals which have grown in his heart during his long pilgrimage. At last, man is becoming an adult able to stand upon his feet and to look keenly around with a measuring glance at things as they are. Will he not work for the sweet fruition of those human values which are dear to his very soul — home, children, kindly social intercourse, work which gives self-expression, art, knowledge, contentment, all suffused with the vigor of healthy bodies and the sleep of quiet nights? Man will surely come to desire greatly, and achieve magnificently, and live courageously.

Now that the ethical degradation of the industrial revolution has been stayed and society has turned its face from the clatter of mass-production for its own sake, now that ethical reflection has been united with reason and science in a sane realism, now that sympathy is abroad in the land, now that democracy with its conception of human brotherhood is astir throughout the world, ethics has secured a firm foundation in the free aspirations of free men. If noble character and rational conduct cannot maintain themselves in such a society, then the theologian can rightly say that man is

by nature corrupt. But the present is a time of growing loyalties to the common good and of vigorous search for the efficient means to attain it in greater measure. The great spiritual adventures of the future will surely be human and humane.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CHURCH AS AN INSTITUTION — THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Even a cursory glance at the institutional history of Christianity is instructive. Beginning as an essentially democratic brotherhood of fellow-believers in which wisdom and experience, rather than authority, guided affairs, the Christian community gradually adopted the political form of the society in which it found itself. The very names of the church officials of whom we read in the later canonical epistles are taken over from the municipal governments of the time. The presbyters, or elders, were old men selected by common consent from the members of the congregation as a sort of advisory council. They were committee-men, ripe in experience and capable of dealing sensibly with the various problems sure to arise from time to time in the social group. From among these elders, overseers, or bishops, were chosen who had administrative functions of an indefinite sort. Besides these officials, there were deacons, prophets and teachers, men who took a more or less conspicuous part in the life of the brotherhood.

As time elapsed, the Christian communities took on a more formal organization, an evolution which was due to the stress of problems which could not be met without a more centralized structure. New heresies were

constantly arising and leading the members into confusion; moral disorders, like those against which Paul had to thunder, were continually appearing. It was only too easy for members of unorganized groups to miss that sense of a common outlook which is so important and yet so difficult to maintain in an age of intellectual and moral turmoil. This situation was grasped by leaders who had decided views of their own as to the proper doctrines to be taught and the proper mode of life to follow. Under their guidance, a centralization of authority was evolved. The bishop became the head of the community with power in matters of doctrine and morality. Naturally, the heads of the more important communities, Rome, Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople, had a prestige which gave their opinions differential weight. Before long, councils of bishops were called to decide questions of doctrine. The period of fixed creeds had arrived. Once this direction was taken, it was no long step to the formation of a church organization comparable in complexity to that of the Roman Empire and as undemocratic in character. Such a development was most natural; and it would, indeed, have been surprising had it not occurred. Institutions always possess the imprint of their age. It is foolish, because unhistorical, to expect ideals out of their time.

The primitive Christian association was more than a church in the modern sense. It was a loyal group of like-minded people. It was a state within the state, a social unit dominating the main part of the lives of its members, and not merely a center for worship. It is this aspect of the early religious associations which I wish to stress; for it is the question, whether this phase

of the church still exists to justify the church as an institution, into which I wish to enquire.

In the vast loneliness of the Roman Empire, men felt the need to draw together in order to escape the dreariness of life. The teeming interests and intense loyalties of the old city-state had disappeared and left men stranded in a cosmopolitan State, ordered from above, in which they had no vital participation; it was too gigantic and formal to touch them in a personal fashion and to kindle those enthusiasms which lift men beyond economic cares. It was well to be a Roman citizen, but such an honor did not suffice for the more homely needs of everyday existence. In the days of Athenian greatness, the individual was lost in the citizen; in the Roman Empire, the citizen was lost in the individual. Man is a social animal — to adapt Aristotle's famous expression — and the inhabitants of the various countries sought to create associations of various sorts to fill this gap caused by the destruction of the old political interests. In other words, men tried to weave a new social tissue of a private type to answer their craving for companionship and for the chance to do something worth doing. Remove the business, artistic, political, trades-union, literary and social interests in their present free and varied form from modern life, and we can gain some idea of the unsatisfactoriness of human life under the Empire for the lower and poorer classes. Monotonous as village life is to-day, it is throbbing with life as compared with the village or tenement district of ancient days. The farmer has his newspaper, the farmer's wife the magazine, and the piano, and the trip to town. Small wonder that these men and women of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds

formed clubs and associations in which to escape from a disheartening loneliness and feel themselves members one of another.

But the Empire essayed to stamp out these brotherhoods, in order that it might be all in all and receive the loyalty and affection which these private organizations evoked. The ancient state was unable to conceive that division of interests into public and private which is so marked a feature of modern civilization. As Renan points out, the Empire "was trying, out of homage to an exaggerated idea of the State, to isolate the individual, to snap every moral tie between man and man, to defeat a legitimate desire of the poor, the desire to press together in a little corner of their own to keep one another warm. The intolerable sadness inseparable from such a life seemed worse than death." Associations, or clubs, in which a complete equality reigned sprang up on every side in spite of the laws against combination. Human relations of the most kindly and intimate sort were established which sweetened life and made death less lonely. Now the Christian communities were just such associations; while they added religious emotions and hopes to the attractions of companionship. They were social units of a humble and spontaneous type within the formal structure of the Empire. They justified themselves in a human as well as in a superhuman way. An adequate psychology of religion remains to be written. Religion has always had its markedly social side.

Upon the foundation of this combined social and religious function, the superstructure of the Church was erected, much as on the political nature of man the Greek city-state arose. Creed and hierarchy were

inevitable products whose appearance could have been predicted, but they were expressive of a certain growing cumbersomeness and a slowing up of the thought and action of the mass of the people. Henceforth, one of their religious duties was to believe fanatically what bishops and councils promulgated and to obey the advice of their superiors in matters of conduct. In this way, Christianity became a religion of authority. We must not over-idealize the early Christians — a reading of Paul's epistles would help to guard us against that tendency — but the spirit of the primitive congregations was, beyond much doubt, nobler than that which characterized the mobs of Alexandria and of Byzantium. A perusal of *Hypatia*, for example, is very apt to sober one's enthusiasm. We must remember that the bars of admission were lowered as Christianity became powerful and popular. Selection, which is one of the most attractive features of a new movement, no longer acted. It was at this period that Christianity developed its *cult* aspect. It became a religion of the imagination, of the sensuous, as well as of the will and the intellect. Ancient art and liturgy gave their contributions and Christianity moved from the catacombs to the basilica and the cathedral.

As Church and state became reconciled, the early breach between public and private life was filled. The religious interest and its duties joined themselves to those of secular life. For the mass of the people who did not surrender themselves to religion in the intensive way reserved for the clergy, Christianity simply forced a new alignment of social relations and values. The ideal was a Church-directed civilization in which the next world overshadowed this. For ordinary life, how-

ever, a practical adjustment was soon reached. Life was lived in a conventional enough way and the compromise was balanced by the efficacy of sacraments administered by the servants of the authoritative Church, the continuation of the incarnation upon the earth.

In the chaotic West, overrun by barbarians, society lost its ancient form and became stratified in accordance with a decentralized, military régime. The strongly organized, international Church maintained itself and saw an opportunity to realize its ideal, a civilization, or order, guided by itself and obedient to religious values. Should not the vice-regent of God rule upon the earth and make the divine law the law of the nations? In the conflict between the Roman Church, as reorganized by Hildebrand, and the Holy Roman Empire, we have a striking instance of that recurrent struggle between the supernatural and the secular so peculiar to the Christian world. Had not the emperors possessed some religious sanction for their claims and authority, they would have been completely overridden by the popes. It was the growth from beneath of national and human interests and of a more varied and stimulating social life that ultimately defeated the political aims of the Church. Humanism always flourishes when peace and contentment are abroad, and humanism is the deadliest enemy that supernaturalism has to meet. Thus the tradition of the Roman Empire tided secular authority over until the rise of vigorous nations with distinct customs, languages, and loyalties ceased to make the imperial and theocratic aspirations of the Church practical. But we must never forget that these aspirations of the Mediæval Church were natural outgrowths of the re-

ligious view of the world. If man is but a sojourner here, undergoing his tests for the life to come, who can be a better guide in all things than the divine institution established by God himself? The center of gravity of man's life falls outside this world.

But social tendencies and relations are always more complex and uncontrollable than theory or doctrine wishes to allow. Human values have a way of asserting themselves in all sorts of unexpected ways. The very act of living forces man to feel and achieve, to strive for this thing and for that, to enter into warm human relations which lead out into ambitions and desires. So, in spite of the official, and generally accepted, denial of human values, these sprang up at the least encouragement and flowered in custom and art. Thus, even during the Middle Ages, social activities had their innings and fair measure of attention. Men loved, and sinned, and fought, and dreamed much as they did in other days and do now. The thought of another world only tempered their moments of reflection and deepened their periods of contrition. There is good reason to believe, moreover, that men alternated between extremes of mood more than we do to-day with our settled horizon. The mediæval outlook did not favor that quiet temperance which the Greeks achieved in their happiest days.

With the rise of the cities and the national states came the revival of learning and a fresh interest in all phases of human life. The complete control of human life by a supernaturalistic religion was then no longer even a theoretical possibility. Life became a thing of interest for its own sake, something frankly to be enjoyed. Humanism had once more appeared in the world.

But the Church had an organized breadth which went far beyond the purely religions functions which Protestantism is inclined to associate with the institution. Within this socially flexible organization arose the monastic orders whose ideals varied from age to age. To establish industries, to clear the land, to preach the nobility of work and to foster commerce, to nurse the sick, to found schools and universities, to distribute charity, to offer hospitality to wayfarers, to nourish art and literature, all these activities grew out of the initiative of noble men who found the atmosphere or associations of organized Christianity favorable to their endeavors. It was under the shelter of religion that the finer phases of morality manifested themselves. Secular life did not possess a stability or organs adequate to the tasks of social ethics. Whatever new movement appeared naturally drifted into contact with the Church, even though the Church was not certain what to do with it. Sometimes these vital movements, in which ethical idealism of a rare type was displayed, almost threatened the existence of the hierarchical body which was in control of the organization through which they had to work. This was the situation which developed as a result of the spread of the ideals of the mendicant orders of the thirteenth century. Such an occurrence makes us realize that the social life of the time was creative, and that this creativeness could with difficulty be kept within the control of the formal Church; yet the organs which were necessary for the application of these ideas and enthusiasms were molded in accordance with ecclesiastical institutions, because no other model was at hand. Secular life was too narrow to give either financial support or suggestions. It

had so long been accustomed to assign the moral field to religious institutions.

In spite of the undercurrent of criticism against the worldliness of the clergy which discovers itself to the historian of the later Middle Ages, the social movements connected with incorporated Christianity were vital enough to justify the existence of the Church. It acted as the traditional center of philanthropy, and its immense wealth made this feature a real force among the poor. But the other associated functions were slowly separating themselves from their original connection and striking roots in the secular life of the time. In place of the cathedral towns clustered around the cathedral and the bishop's palace, the commercial towns pushed to the front both in wealth and importance. The wealthy merchant or banker vied in riches with the churchman. Art and literature passed from the hands of the Church to the laity. This process was very gradual, but steady and persistent. By the time of the reformation, it was in full swing. Beneath the framework of feudalism and the Mediæval Church, a new society had been forming, far more complex than the old and full of potentialities which we are only now beginning to measure. Industry, commerce, geographical discovery, national literature, guilds, municipal governments, courts, science, secular art, philosophy, all were present either in bud or in full flower. Out of the fertile and fearless life which came from the interplay of these tendencies and activities, new ideas and values were born and soon found or created appropriate organs for their expression apart from the Church. Try as it would, Mother Church could not cover them with her wings. Many of these activities were alien to

her genius and, as they waxed in strength and confidence, stepped boldly out into the arena of secular life.

One has only to take a broad survey of modern society to realize how completely secular life has found means to perform functions which were formerly carried by the Church. The very control which the Church wished to exercise repelled them and drove them into the world with its freedom and tolerance. Free association, individual enterprise, the creative fervor of genius, and, later, governmental policy have worked wonders in overcoming the meagerness of secular life. Education is now almost universal, and so the masses live lives which touch a myriad interests never known to them in other days. Art has broadened its scope and now touches with magic fingers all phases of human life, nature and man being alike raised to a higher spiritual level by her work. Science has reached out into all parts of nature and thrown a transforming light upon all things. Philosophy has left the old scholastic concepts and mated with science to explain the world in which we live. Charity is giving way to a broader conception of social justice. In short, the old division of life into two spheres, the earthly and the spiritual, no longer has its old significance. The spiritual has made its home in man's daily life, in his reading, his art, his thinking and his doing. *Wherever there are genuine values, there is the spiritual. Is not loyalty to these spiritual values of human life coming to be the sole meaning of religion?* Is it within the power of an institution, still dominated by beliefs hostile to this frank humanism, to cherish and guide the unfolding of the spiritual life of the present? That is the query which I bring with me when I contemplate the

Church. Has not the free life of the present outgrown any centralized and institutionalized control?

To-day, ideas and enthusiasms find their organs in the teeming secular world. Moral idealism is at home upon the earth in fellowships and loyalties in which men discover much of their reason for being. The pulse of society beats time to the songs of its true poets, and throbs at the call to battle for some noble achievement, while the Church dreams of the past and the days of her greatness, or tenderly stoops to comfort those who cling to her sanctions and her vision of a heavenly kingdom, not of this world. She played her part, and she played it greatly — that much we must avow, even while we point out her present limitations — but the world has passed beyond her tutelage and runs lithesomely and courageously into fields where she cannot bring herself to follow. Thus is it, and thus has it always been — institutions and ideas have their period of usefulness when they serve as organizing centers for social tendencies; but the time inevitably comes when they lose their creative power and are outgrown by the life which has made them and is greater than they. And yet there is hope. Will the dethroned monarch recognize the inevitableness of the massive revolution which is surging round her and give up her outgrown pretensions, willingly consenting to play a lesser rôle in full harmony with the spirit of the time? Not yet will this voluntary abdication come. But, some time in the future, the new loyalties will surely seep into the Church and prepare it for the great sacrifice in which it will find its saving service. Modernism can afford to wait patiently, for time fights on its side.

CHAPTER XV

THE CHURCH AS AN INSTITUTION — PROTESTANTISM

The rise of Protestantism was the consequence of many factors which temporarily combined and worked in the same direction. There are those who maintain that it was an unhappy accident, which threw back the wheels of progress some hundreds of years. But those who bewail the division of the Christian Church forget that division is a sign of incompatible tendencies within a body not flexible enough to contain them. Strife is irrational only when we cease to be realists. The appearance of Protestantism in the sixteenth century is only one instance among many of the inadequacy of any one institution to comprehend the life of its time. Were we to call the roll of the heresies of the past, the names which would appear upon the list would be far more numerous than popular history records. Just because Christians believed that they possessed a final truth they were intolerant and persecuting. The natural desire of an institution to maintain itself and its interests intact added its force to this unfortunate characteristic. But the tragedy of the situation was, that this final truth could not prove itself by an appeal to experience and reason. It had, therefore, to resort to violence. The logic of revelation is the logic of the *auto da fe*. The logic of science is the logic of tested

fact. Science can have hope of agreement; theological religion has no right to such a hope.

Protestantism had its ethical, political, economic and doctrinal sides. It was not merely a religious movement. Had it been so, it might more readily have run its course as a reform movement within the institutional life of the time. Had the Northern nations possessed greater power in the councils of the Church, it is just possible that the change would have been brought about without the occurrence of an open rupture. But the Church was too centralized and too rich to escape conflict with the growing nationalism. For our present purpose, however, this larger social setting of Protestantism is not important. What we wish to study is the religious tendencies covered by this term. What advance did they contain? What was the weakness of the movement?

The setting of Protestantism was entirely supernaturalistic. So far as the fundamental doctrinal assumptions are concerned, there is practically no difference between Catholic and Protestant. Protestantism represented a reform, and not a revolution. Or, to put it more deeply, human nature is such that the real revolutions take centuries of growth and come like the thief in the night. The modern scientific view of the world is revolutionary in the philosophical and true sense of the term; while the sharp sectarian conflict is only a battle over secondary things. Since it has so commonly been assumed that the Protestant reformation represented a decisive break with the outlook of the Middle Ages and somehow marked a milestone in man's intellectual progress, it may be worth while to consider whether such really was the case. A disinterested study

of the reformation must, I feel sure, convince the student that the crisis in the Church was concerned more with matters of theological doctrine and church polity than with the ideas underlying Christianity. It brought no essential change in the inherited and firmly entrenched tale of the past. The puritan poet, Milton, sings of "man's first disobedience" in much the way that St. Augustine would have done. The weapons of the great advance had not yet been forged We are the ones who will be called upon to face the vision of the New Spiritual World and to be faithful to its demands upon our loyalty and integrity. "The defection of the Protestants from the Roman Catholic Church," writes Professor Robinson, "is not connected with any decisive intellectual revision. Such ardent emphasis has been constantly placed upon the differences between Protestantism and Catholicism by representatives of both parties that the close intellectual resemblance of the two systems, indeed their identity in nine parts out of ten, has tended to escape us. The early Protestants, of course, accepted, as did the Catholics, the whole patristic outlook on the world; their historical perspective was similar, their notions of the origin of man, of the Bible, with its types, prophecies and miracles, of heaven and hell, of demons and angels, are all identical. . . . Early Protestantism is, from an intellectual standpoint, essentially a phase of mediæval history."

But when we look at Protestantism as a social and religious movement rather than an intellectual movement, we see that it stood for certain relatively new emphases which did indicate a breaking loose from mediævalism. Many sincere men felt the need for a deeper, more personal assurance of salvation than that

offered by the traditional, substantial sacraments of the Church. Religion seemed to them a more personal affair than it had overtly come to be. By means of an act of faith, the individual hoped to secure a new relation to God in which his sins were forgiven and salvation attained. Salvation thus became a more internal act than it had been, and particularly one in which the ecclesiastical institution played a far less important part. The new tendency emphasized the individual and personal as against the institutional and formal. Catholicism had inherited too much ritualistic and magical trapping to harmonize completely with the keen ethical sense of the younger and simpler people who were growing to adulthood.

A new movement is on the defensive and, when too completely estranged from the institutions of which it is a reform, almost inevitably tends to be narrow and intense. Now Protestantism was essentially an emphasis on the soul's salvation by meeting certain requirements of a doctrinal and ethical type, and so it tended to drop those functions and relations which the Mediæval Church included within its scope. It is this clear-cut intensification of one factor and the exclusion of others which we must bear in mind when we compare the early Protestant sects with the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages.

Deep religious fervor easily leads to narrowness, especially when the spiritual values regarded as essential are subjective and rather formal. Because confessional Protestantism was as other-worldly as the Mediæval Church, it cut itself loose from aspects of life which might otherwise have mellowed it and saved it from formalism and hardness. We may laugh with

Swift at the freaks of Jack, at his dourness and savagery, his strained interpretation of the scriptures and his lack of social tact, but we must, if we would be just, always bear in mind the outlook which Jack had inherited.

The Protestant of to-day does not usually realize how different the Protestantism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was from that which he sees around him. Protestantism has mellowed and absorbed values and interests which it would once have repudiated as irrelevant to the tremendous drama of salvation. Take mediæval Catholicism, with its ideal of a Church-directed society, its doctrines of sin and redemption, its belief in another world overshadowing this one, its strain of asceticism, and remove the sacramental power of the Church, and you have early Protestantism before you. Instead of fleeing the world and its temptations, the Christian was ordered to live in it like a sentinel on his guard. He was not to set his heart on creaturely comforts nor love the things and interests of this life overmuch, but rather to trample them underfoot while gazing upwards. No wonder that the early Protestants were a stern people; they were a community of secular monks. They had the joy of union with God and assured redemption from sin, but this world was not their true home. Whereas the Mediæval Church had tempered the asceticism of historical Christianity by the distinction between what was imposed upon clergy and what was demanded of the laity, Protestantism was unable to continue this distinction because all believers were priests. All had to come up to the same high standard or risk damnation. This exaltation has in large measure departed from Protestantism, and we who

have grown into a mellower idea of salvation are inclined to judge this set of ideals as narrow and even morbid. We forget that puritanism was the expression of an ascetic religious view of the world.

It was in the sphere of church government that Protestantism made its great changes by attempting to return to the polity of the early associational form of Christianity. The more radical forms of Protestantism, especially, inaugurated a movement in the direction of what we now call democracy. There can be little doubt, in fact, that these waves of religious individualism assisted the growth of democratic and republican forms of government. This influence was unplanned and relatively accidental because religious individualism was more concerned with the right to worship according to the dictates of conscience than with political rights. But man is a psychological whole, and so a reform along one line is bound to affect other phases of life.

As we have already pointed out, the alterations introduced on the theological side were by no means revolutionary from an intellectual standpoint. And yet the spirit and mood of religion was deeply altered. The process of salvation was differently conceived, and this led to the thought of a more direct relation between man and God than had been admitted in the older Church. God was believed to have guaranteed redemption to those who had faith in Jesus Christ as the redeemer. This tenet led to an emphasis on the bible and on personal experience. It was through a study of the bible that men were led to this personal faith, and the bible was accordingly conceived as the representative of God upon earth. What wonder that it was

substituted for the Church and tradition as an infallible and unchanging authority! The logic of the movement is clear. It has been pointed out by one scholar that Protestantism introduced the doctrine of infallibility before the Roman Catholic Church did. Calvinism selected the Augustinian dogmas of election and original sin as its foundation, and used them in such a way as to become a fighting church, a congregation of the elect, fearless and self-reliant.

Bibliolatry soon flourished, and sects sprang up on every hand, ready to suffer persecution for their particular interpretation of passages. Theology became a series of fanatically held dogmas supported by copious quotations. And the intellectual atmosphere within which these dogmatic theories arose was of the most conventional and limited sort. Broadness of outlook upon life was the exception rather than the rule. The general assumption of the Christian scheme of the world remained unchallenged, while the bitterest disputes broke out in regard to points which seem to the educated man of to-day quite unimportant. Such a course of events was to be expected, and could not have been prevented. Perhaps it did more good than harm, because it encouraged independence on the part of the masses. Its only cure was not authority but education. And the world was not yet ready for universal education. At certain periods, a tremendous waste of mental and moral energy is simply inevitable: men cannot help going around and around in the same circle of ideas in the most pathetically earnest fashion. The conditions of progress are not always ready. Take the knowledge of the clergy. It was confined to the classics, the patristics, to massive tomes of theology, to

the bible in its Hebrew and Greek original. It was not from these fields that enlightenment was to come. The truth is, that Protestantism was slowly modified and mellowed, almost in spite of itself, by the pervasive influence of the great world civilization that grew up around it and to which it was more susceptible than was the reorganized Catholic Church. Let us look at this point more closely.

The reformation was an effect as much as a cause. The nations were coming to their own in the midst of a more complex social life full of human interests and values. The Confessional Churches which sprang up were unable to establish themselves securely enough to dominate the civil powers. The consequence was, that secular civilization was released from the sway of religion and its supernaturalism. Government, science, art, industry, and literature flourished in a freedom they had seldom before experienced. The disorganization of religious institutions enabled many tendencies, hitherto kept in the background of men's consciousness, to push to the front and reveal their power over the human soul. Do we not know that many great mediæval doctors had to fight against their love of literature and art? Protestantism may be said to have been an unintentional cause of the modern world.

Protestantism broke up into an array of sects and tendencies as it fell upon the prism of human temperament. Radical sects appeared, like the Independents, the Quakers, the Baptists, the Pietists, and the Congregationalists. These were radical in a social way rather than in an intellectual way. They were subjective variations of the inherited motives. Largely, they represented a revolt against authoritism, and em-

phasized the inner light or a very mild appeal to reason. Yet we must call them sects, just because they had much the same spirit and assumptions, and exaggerated what must be regarded as slight differences. Still their very number gave a milder direction to religion and made the idea of toleration more natural. There was safety in numbers. On the intellectual side, the Unitarian movement deserves attention for its aid in the dethronement of the old dogmatic structure. Alongside of these more subjective and emotional offshoots of Protestantism arose philosophical idealism to add a touch of vague pantheism and a flavor of kindly mysticism. In short, the confessional type of Protestantism mellowed under the influence of a more rational social organization with its gentler life. Reason was gaining in concreteness and power, and human values were gaining in attractiveness. The Old Testament gradually gave way to the synoptic gospels of the New, while asceticism dropped away like a mantle. I, myself, well remember when religion was largely a matter of taboos on the moral side. "Thou shalt not" outbalanced by far the suggestion of concrete lines of positive endeavor. Such spiritualism was passive and suspicious rather than active and creative. During the last thirty years, Protestantism has passed insensibly into a gentle religion of the spirit, sentimentally inclined toward life and permeated with popular notions of science and philosophy. The sermon of the Puritan concerned itself with the two dispensations; the sermon of the modern minister is full of quotations from the poets and reveals the growing influence of the social sciences. The negative note is hardly audible. This

world and its spiritual problems occupies the focus of attention.

Modern Protestantism is not over certain of its creed. In fact, so uncertain is it of the doctrines it wishes to champion that it much prefers to discuss human problems, and to expend its enthusiasm in the advance of a gentle code of ethics attached to the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. In a very real sense, this attitude is to its credit, for it is positive and genuinely spiritual. Moreover, it bears witness to a consciousness of the decay of the supernaturalistic perspective which dominated and misled the world for so many centuries. The spirit and knowledge of the present age has undermined the traditional beliefs, and the average protestant is too well educated and too much in touch with current movements to be unaware of this situation. He is not certain whither he is being led nor does he so very much care; he is content to drift with the tide of human development, assured that the world is becoming better and broader in its purposes and possibilities. Creed and dogma are dropping into the background and will soon be discarded, while the spiritual values which grow out of, and express, human nature and life are steadily forging to the front.

The church as an institution is only one among many. And it must further be remembered that the life of society reaches beyond institutions, much as the life of an organism is greater than the habits and structure which it uses. Religious institutions did not create the modern world with its gigantic advances in commerce, its acute applications of science, its subtle art, its daring adventures in living, its bold philosophies, its high

level of education, its experiments in new social forms. They have had their share in the work, no doubt; but they have been acted upon even more than they have acted. Because of its lack of internal unity and its antagonism to authority, Protestantism could offer no effective barrier to the growth of the new outlook. Often suspicious, it yet fought in the open. The trial of strength went against it ultimately because its foundation was inadequate. Myth cannot fight against science and hope to win. The verdict of the hard-fought contest is becoming evident to both winner and loser. Let us hope that the loser will take his defeat manfully and gradually adapt himself to the New World that is dawning. The Protestant Churches may then become groups of voluntary associations filled with high spiritual purpose and ministering to the growth of a finer social and economic life. The main necessity is to find a function that is real and vital in the judgment and conscience of the time.

It is undeniable that the various churches will long play a beneficent rôle in the social economy, but the question may well be asked whether this rôle would not be more significant and sanely creative if the hampering traditions and beliefs of the past were shaken off. For these traditions are the shelter of interpretations and social habits which are ill-adapted to the needs of the present. They slow down the energy of institutions and cloud their vision. They lead the sincerest of people to use tools which have lost edge. For instance, is not civic and moral education far more effective than melodramatic revivals which stir people's emotions and leave them without chart and compass before the problems of their every-day life? The church must

learn prevention; it must go to school to the social and mental sciences. Only so will it conquer that dilettantism which accompanies the absence of methodical intelligence.

But the churches have the right to respond that they are not the only sinners in this regard. Institutions of all kinds display the same tendency to retardation, to conservatism, to waste of energy, the beliefs and habits of the past clinging heavily about them as impedimenta. It is seldom that a new life wells up quickly enough within them to break this inertia. Perhaps all that the younger generation has the right to ask is a spirit of tolerance and even respect for all loyalties which attach themselves to things of good repute, and a more catholic admission of all human values into the class of spiritual things. The scientist is working for things of the spirit, and so is the artist, and so is the social reformer, and so is the educator, and so is the day-laborer who does his work for the sake of some dear one.

The sea of faith of which Matthew Arnold sang is indeed at its ebb; but a new sea of faith is welling up in the human soul, faith in humanity, in this life here and now, a faith in common things and common people, a faith in noble things and their gifted creators, a faith founded in sympathy and in mental integrity and rooted in the actualities of life. It is a faith grounded on the high will to assimilate and carry further the spiritual values which the human race has slowly achieved in its travail of the centuries. Not to relinquish but to surpass, not to deny but to transform: thus will the new day be won. Let the spiritual forces which have grown up around religion, industry, science, philosophy, citi-

zenship and art fall to with a will, to bring some fuller measure of the long-dreamed-of Kingdom upon this earth, which has been and forever will be man's sole home.

CHAPTER XVI

THE HUMANIST'S RELIGION

In the preceding pages we have no doubt often hurt — but we have hurt to heal. The good surgeon probes deeply in order that he may not have the operation to perform again. Even a minute amount of diseased tissues left behind can prevent the return of vigorous and creative health. Thus what may seem to the anxious patient unnecessary cruelty may be the greatest kindness. A sentimental compromise is never welcomed by the mature judgment of the brave man. And in this day when so many have willingly given their lives for the sake of a human ideal, is it just and right to flinch in the spiritual warfare which confronts our generation? We are seeking nothing less than a renaissance in which men's energies will be wisely and loyally directed to what is greatly human and humanly great. In such a service we must will to be hard on ourselves and on others.

In the past, religion has only too often been formal and negative and world-fleeing. It has said nay to life rather than yea. Past religion rested upon man's sense of his own helplessness in a world which he did not understand. By the very instinct of self-preservation, he created supernatural powers which were to be on his side in the grim and unequal struggle in which he was engaged. But this subterfuge by which he thought to conquer had its treacherous effects, for it turned man

from comprehending and mastering his world. He became but a pilgrim here, intent on heavenly joys and splendors, which threw this world into darkness. What these joys and splendors were he hardly knew: yet he hugged the thought of them to his heart and despised things merely human. And if, as often became the case, the world grew upon him, his conscience was torn and tormented. He was a man divided against himself, unable to throw himself whole-heartedly into any enterprise.

But the humanist's religion is the religion of one who says yea to life here and now, of one who is self-reliant and fearless, intelligent and creative. It is the religion of the will to power, of one who is hard on himself and yet joyous in himself. It is the religion of courage and purpose and transforming energy. Its motto is, "What hath not man wrought?" Its goal is the mastery of things that they may become servants and instrumentalities to man's spiritual comradeship. Whatever mixture of magic, fear, ritual and adoration religion may have been in man's early days, it is now, and henceforth must be, that which concerns man's nobilities, his discovery of, and loyalty to, the pervasive values of life. The religious man will now be he who seeks out causes to be loyal to, social mistakes to correct, wounds to heal, achievements to further. He will be constructive, fearless, loyal, sensitive to the good wherever found, a believer in mankind, a fighter for things worth while.

When old ideas become enfeebled, they clog the spiritual system. Conventionality, routine and sentimentalism take the place of the fresh vigor which always accompanies profound conviction. A gospel cannot be

a heritage enjoyed: it must be a portion earned. And to-day, especially, there is pressing need for a brave criticism of past standards, succeeded by an act of intelligent will which presses fearlessly on to a reformulation and reaffirmation of values. Because the old religions did not have this power to exalt significant human ideals, relevant to the changing crisis of the times, the nations drifted into the materialism of commercialism and militarism. And a religion insistent upon a rational and wise interpretation of the ways of life will, alone, be able to rescue them. Watchwords by themselves, if they remain vague generalities untranslatable into new directions of effort, will fail. What is necessary is a new goal, or else a pragmatic development of past dreams into programs which awaken loyalty and hope. But the center of gravity and endeavor of such a religion will lie within society. It will be, to all intents and purposes, a humanist's religion. It will save men's souls by making them worth saving. For it, salvation will be no magical hocus-pocus external to the reach and timbre of man's personality: it will be his loyal and intelligent union with those values and possibilities of life which have come within his ken. To convert will be to educate and redirect the energies of the soul. And society will need conversion as pressingly as scattered individuals in slums and tenements. Does it to-day stress the most important things? The State has been the servant of things as they are, not of things as they might be. A humanist's religion can admit no cunning division into the things which are God's and the things which are Cæsar's. Human values are as jealous as the Yahweh of Moses. To sin against them is to die spiritually.

The common opinion that critical work is ever merely negative is a great error. It is the willing error of a dogmatism which feels itself insecure. It is the error of a spiritual plane which has settled into ease and hates to be disturbed. Sooner or later, criticism leads to something positive, to a new vision and a new goal. All that is needed is the patience which is founded upon faith and is willing to try all things in the firm belief that the truth will prevail. Moreover, criticism has a positive psychological effect in that it calls attention to the actual situation and directs attention to the living problems. It is that spur to the soul which prevents it from going to sleep. Without it, problems are avoided rather than sought. Who can deny that this lethargy has been the disheartening temper of the Christian Church, now when every domain of life cries aloud for vigorous thought? Surely religion has to do with more than the common decencies of life, important as they are. Its place is in the van of the fighting; it has to do with last hopes and glimpsed visions, with what is to come as well as with what is. Religion at its tensest has to do with ultimate loyalties. Habit and tradition are helpless in such matters, which are of things hoped for — upon this earth.

But enough of the critical side. We have said that the coming religion will say yea to human life. Yet it will not affirm it in a blind and sentimental way. It will be realistic and striving. All great religions of the past have recognized the tragic aspects of human life, its brevity, its littlenesses, its fussy selfishness, its lack of vision, its suffering; but they have too often been led to despise humanity by seeing it on the illimitable background of celestial omnipotences and perfections.

Religion as loyalty to human values will lose no whit of this tragic sense, and yet the palsying background of supernaturalism will disappear. Some measure of tragedy will remain; but its morbidity will have been separated out and courageously rejected. Social groups will fall to with a will to live largely and widely. They will seek a tingling welfare woven of the threefold values of truth, beauty and goodness. The saint will not be the groveling sinner, but the man of mellow wisdom. He will be immersed in the currents of life and yet master of himself. He will be at once the servant of concrete and compassable ideals and their possessor and enjoyer.

The shadow of the Great War will lighten to the coming generation soon after peace is declared. Then will come the time for the taking of stock and the revaluation of human endeavor. Man must ask himself more seriously than ever before what things are worth while, and thereupon bend his political and economic instrumentalities to their furtherance. And here the religion of human values must be the leader. Does democracy yet accord with such a religion? Or is it still too timid, negative, thin and uninstructed? America, for example, has a soul; but it is a soul which needs discipline, instruction, contemplation. The religion of human possibilities needs prophets who will grip men's souls with their description of a society in which righteousness, wisdom and beauty will reign together. It is hard to say what thought such a society calls up before us. Yet does it not mean that, more than now and increasingly, selfish luxury will be scorned, property subordinated to welfare, economic fear lessened to the utmost, knowledge unenviously exalted, and art called

into service? Loyalty to such an ideal will surely constitute the heart of the humanist's religion.

The ideals of a religion can never be easy. The prophets were stern critics and hard taskmasters; Jesus knew that his true followers would find their way no primrose path; the Mediæval saints were hard on themselves and their disciples. We can generalize this history for the future.

And yet a larger measure of joy and human satisfaction will play around religion in the future than has been the case in the past. Because of its supernaturalisms and distortions, religious demands have often been morbid and full of unnecessary friction. Religion has sought to thwart and repress human nature rather than to guide and express. But a religion of human loyalty can be kindly as well as exigent, mirth-loving as well as stern.

As never before, spiritual values sing to us from life. They sing to us of the patient love of the parent for the child, of the conquest of nature by trained intellect, of the quiet labor of the skilled workman, of the steady loyalties of every-day life, of the willing coöperation of citizens, of the sweetness of music, of plans for greater social justice, and of a world made free from war. Spiritual values are everywhere around us inviting our service. He who asks where they are is like a man who asks for water when a spring is bubbling beneath his feet. And yet we have been so blinded by the old ascetic supernaturalisms that we are slow to realize that these simple human things are nobly spiritual. So long as there are things worth while, there will be spiritual values. Is not this positive enough? Need he who has an inalienable treasure fear robbery?

To put the situation bluntly, religion must be separated from the other-worldly pull of the traditional theologies and be sanely grounded in the outlook of modern knowledge. There is no need for a rabid antitheism. The truth is, rather, that mankind is outgrowing theism in a gentle and steady way until it ceases to have any clear meaning. This is a hard saying and requires justification. In part, I have given the justification in the preceding pages; in part, I have given it elsewhere.[1] But the drift among thinking people is unmistakable. With the imminent solution of the mind-body problem, the last bulwark of the old supernaturalism will have fallen. Man will be forced to acknowledge that he is an earth-child whose drama has meaning only upon her bosom. It is my firm conviction that the clear realization of this fact will startle men into insights and demands of far-reaching import. May it not remove a dead-weight of inhibitions which has kept the human spirit under bonds to past attitudes and methods? There will no longer be a divided interest and an uncertain horizon. To many it will come like a plunge in cold water: but may not such a plunge do them good by waking them from their dogmatic slumbers?

The interpretation of the physical world of which man is a part must be left to the coöperative work of

[1] Those who are interested in a constructive philosophical position which meets the results of modern science may be referred to my two books, *Critical Realism* and *The Essentials of Philosophy*. I have there shown that the mind-body dualism has been due to a false way of approach. Psychology gives knowledge about the functional capacities of the nervous system additional to that given by the physical science, and in no way conflicting with it, and consciousness is in the brain.

science and philosophy. These will give to us tested and critical knowledge of the processes which go on around us, of the drift of the stars in the world-spaces, of the spiral movements of nebular matter, of the evolution of the elements, of the integration of organic forms, of the development of historic life. The universe *is:* it is meaningless to ask whence it came, for it always was, and time is but a term for the changes which go on within it.

But, having explored the universe by telescope and microscope, and having thus come to some understanding of his world, man must return again to his own pressing problems and possibilities, to his need to interpret his own good, to his desire to further and maintain those interests and activities in which he finds self-expression. His own life, as a realm of affection and action, must rightly be for him the significant center of the universe. These urgencies, interests, possibilities, satisfactions, loyalties are inalienably human and valid. He can no more ignore them than he can his hunger for food and his thirst for water. Nothing can rob him of the values which he has created, nor can any one take from him the burden of courageous endeavor. He is the master of his own destiny and the prompter in his own drama. In his tenser moments, the physical spaces around his planet will but contain

"The endless, silly merriment of stars."

As religion learns to relinquish theology and accept the modern view of the world, the spirituality which it has fostered will mate with reason. Reason by itself is not enough; feeling by itself is not enough. What the world awaits is the sane and kindly ministry of a

concrete reason to the goods of human life. Thinking and experimentation must be instrumental to the progressive betterment of life. This idea is not new. Many have grasped it before in whole or in part; but the setting has not always been simple enough. Comte meant just such a humanism in his religion of humanity, but he was unable to cut himself loose from his associations with organized Christianity. There is no adequate motive for the retention of the ritualism and worship of Comtism, nor is there any good reason for the deification of humanity. Humanity is not an entity, nor is it a sort of supreme personality which may be worshiped. Religion will mean the valuing of experiences and activities, the striving for their realization, the loyalty to their call. Taken in this way, religion will agree with and commend the purpose expressed by Huxley: "To promote the increase of natural knowledge and to forward the application of scientific methods of investigation to all the problems of life to the best of my ability, in the conviction which has grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength, that there is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind except veracity of thought and action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is, when the garment of make-believe by which pious hands have hidden its uglier features is stripped off." This outlook has been called the marriage of naturalism with philanthropy; it is better to speak of it as the marriage of naturalism with humanism. It is the belief that a rational spirituality is possible, natural to man, and, above all things, desirable.

But if men find their salvation in love for, and loyalty to, values of various kinds, the practical question be-

comes that of the furtherance and support of these values. What are some of the social conditions of a noble life? Surely education, opportunity and free association. It is no longer granted to trust the coming of a supernatural grace which will illuminate life. Such subjective illumination is only too apt to reflect the temperament of the individual and to lack that training and breadth of interest which only education and opportunity for a varied experience can give. Many of the values which we prize most highly to-day need the soil of culture and of a complex civilization before they will flourish. To distribute them widely is the dearest hope of a democracy which looks beyond the merely political aspects of social institutions. But such a distribution is a goal which has conditions which must be mastered by the bending of a keen social intelligence into the service of a genuine desire for the extension of well-used leisure. I mean that the task of modern democracy is the securing of economic well-being and a fair degree of leisure for the mass of the citizens in order that they may have the time, the energy, and the opportunity to develop themselves and to put themselves coöperatively into touch with the pleasant and creative side of life. But I have already touched upon these problems of social method and aim in another volume.[1]

It is time that I discussed a question which, I have no doubt, has been hovering in the background of many a reader's mind. Is it justifiable to retain the term religion when its ancient setting has been so completely discarded? I have myself asked this question many a

[1] See especially *The Next Step in Democracy*, ch. 5.

time. For many years, I felt that it would be better to give up the word entirely as indissolubly bound up with those ideas and beliefs which the modern trained mind is outgrowing. But I could not hide from myself the fact that the consciousness of the time was beginning to employ it in a freer and more constructive way. It had sensed the element of devotion and loyalty which religion had, in spite of its many shortcomings, nourished. How common the phrase is that a man has made a religion of some interest! The socialist is said to make a religion of socialism, the social reformer of his work of constructive philanthropy, the artist of his art. We mean that he has thrown himself whole-heartedly into some one of these fields. And, positively, this means that he has found that concrete and living salvation which ideal effort always brings to a man. He is filled with the spirit of consuming loyalty to what he values. He has left the mere conventionalities, the run of use-and-wont behind and has exalted himself with a living purpose which illuminates and concentrates his being. I think that this spirit and attitude is coming to be called religious, no matter to what objects it attaches itself. Have we not here a mark of identity which justifies the retention of the age-old word? Morality is too cold a word in the ears of most men. Besides, moral values are only a part of the immense throng of appreciations to which man responds. There is need of a comprehensive term, able to take in all those interests and activities which give life its variety and glory. Is there a better term than religion?

But there must be no mistake about the new setting of the term; no casuistic ambiguity must be encouraged. We must be firm in our negations of the old as

well as constructive in our affirmation of the new. I have tried to show that the belief in superhuman spirits arose in primitive times when man knew little about the world in which he found himself. Investigators in the history of religion trace the steps from polydemonism to polytheism and thence to henotheism and monotheism. Along with this evolution, which reflected changes in social organization, went a corresponding moral transformation of these divine beings. Yet the setting of the outlook was largely the same as in earlier days. Social relations were supposed to control the universe as a whole. Nature recognized her master in God much as the subjects of a king greeted him as their lord. His was the might, majesty, dominion and glory. There is a pathetic incident related of Carlyle which has meaning in this connection. Mr. Froude told Carlyle, not long before the latter's death, that he could believe only in a God who did something. With a cry of pain, Carlyle answered, "He does nothing." How can we harmonize this cry with his earlier faith in an Everlasting Will and a Providential Government of the world? It is impossible to do so. Romantic spiritualism must give way to a humanistic naturalism which sees clearly the place of man in the world. Morality, science and art are man's creation and distinctive possession. What he needs is a stable, law-abiding environment within which to work. He has this, and has gained some mastery of it. The further necessary step is mastery of himself and of those huge institutions which have grown up and now threaten to make him circle within their orbits. Man has battles still to fight.

The religion of the future will increasingly be concerned with two things, virtues and values. The Greek

virtues have been made tenderer by the Christian virtues and more steadfast by that training of the will and character which we associate with puritanism. The experience of the ages has deepened and broadened man, made him less hasty in judgment, more aware of his limitations, more realistic, more efficient. At the same time, it has added that touch of pathos which spiritualizes the beauty of life. We believe, also, that it has nourished that sentiment of tenderness for the homely fate of the average man that will some day find expression in a fuller democracy than has as yet dawned upon the earth.

But, above all, religion must be catholic in its count of values. Wherever there is loyal endeavor, it will acknowledge the presence of the spiritual. It will reverence the philosopher who has found salvation in the solution of complex intellectual problems, the scientist who has given himself to the whole-hearted study of nature, the missionary who has devoted himself to the spread of an elevating conception of life, the kindly physician who has sought to alleviate human suffering, the social reformer who has spent his life in agitating for a saner social polity, the artist who has had a vision of beauty and has labored to express it in such a way that all men could share it, the man and woman who have met the tasks of every day with courage and charity. And it will seek to bring these values to closer acquaintance with each other than has hitherto been the case. The guidance of a kindly and clear-eyed reason will not be regarded with suspicion, for this human faith will have nothing to fear, because having no tottering creed to sustain. What a relief it will be to have the narrow sectarianism, the cruel bigotry, the obscurantism of

supernaturalism purged from religion! These unlovely features of man's spiritual life had their rootage in the distrust of human nature and of human reason, in a certain slavishness of soul continuous with the distant days of man's ignorance and fear. They will lessen and pass away as knowledge increases, as liberty becomes concrete and significant, as a more spiritual courage grows among the mass of men. And, in my opinion, there is nothing more calculated to hasten the growth of this buoyancy and moral courage than a larger measure of social justice in the common affairs of life.

And, in this mission of adjustment and service between the various values of life, reason will have a coequal as a helper. Surely, art will come more and more to its own in the life which is opening up before us! Man's soul will crave gracious surroundings, the harmony of well-constructed dwellings, the restfulness of dawn and flowers, the elevation of noble buildings. Ugliness and squalor will be repugnant to him, for he will know their spiritual cost. But man will not only seek healthy and beautiful surroundings, he will also be desirous to interpret all phases of his life to himself. And in this effort at interpretation he will succeed ever more fully in seeing the various sides of his life as parts of a whole. Art will set itself the task of giving significance and depth to nature, to industry, to the home, to public life, to science. And, as art begins to perform this mission of interpretation, it will cease to be thought of as a mere decoration, the plaything of the rich. It will be conceived as the means for the expression of those various loyalties which will ennoble and spiritualize life. As the human race grows healthier

and happier it will employ to the full that gift of all gifts it has in its possession, the capacity to clothe things with gracious forms and give its deepest feelings a human voice. Art will be the high-priest of the religion of loyalty to the values of life.

To those accustomed to the old mythological setting of religion with its glance away from human life as a whole, this prophecy will but confirm their conviction of the revolutionary character of the thesis which this book has sought to champion. But I feel certain that, if they will permit themselves a dispassionate study of the facts, they will, sooner or later, be forced to acknowledge the inevitableness of the conclusion. If religion is to survive, it must be human and social. It is they who insist upon a supernatural foundation and object who are its enemies. Man's life is spiritual in its own right. So long as he shall dream of beauty and goodness and truth his life will not lack religion.

THE END

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