

# The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the  
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELEK

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VOL. XXXVIII (No. 10)

OCTOBER, 1924

(No. 821)

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## The Open Court Publishing Company

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## THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF INSTINCTS

BY JOHN J. BIRCH

**I**N ORDER to adequately understand the relationship between instincts and life it is paramountly important to secure a comprehensive understanding of just what is meant by them. There is a formidable difficulty encountered in defining instincts for no agreement has been established as to when they begin to control actions or the relationship between them and reason.

The scientific world, however, has come to the general agreement that their apparent function is to fit the organism to the world; to enable it to battle for existence and to hold its place in spite of opposing forces and enemies and that they are operative in both the plant and animal kingdoms. According to Paley: "Instinct is a propensity prior to experience and independent of instruction." This definition instead of establishing any conception of an instinct, is simply a dogmatic assertion from which questions branch off in all directions. Wundt held that, "instinctive movements were those which originally followed upon simple or compound voluntary acts, but which have become wholly or partly mechanized in the course of individual life or generic evolution." In this definition, Wundt leads one to believe that instincts were not always the same, but have undergone modifications or have lapsed into reflex actions. Spencer, makes a more positive statement than Wundt, for he holds without any hesitancy that "instincts may be described as compound reflex actions." Darwin gives a very broad and comprehensive understanding of the term instinct when he says, "An action which we ourselves require experience in order to enable us to perform, when performed by an animal without experience and without knowing for what purpose it was performed is usually said to be instinctive." He makes this reservation, however,

"that a little dose of judgment or reason often comes into play even with animals low in the scale of nature."

Thorndike, of the modern school, formulates a definition very closely related to the one given by Darwin. He believes "that anything we do without having to learn to do it, in brief is an instinct—an act that is the result of mere inner growth, not training or experience." MacDougall in his *Social Psychology* suggests an inclusive definition of instincts. He holds that they are "innate specific tendencies of mind that common to all members of one species; racial characteristics which have been slowly evolved in the process of adaptation of the species to their environment and that can neither be eradicated from the mental constitution of which they are innate elements, nor acquired by individuals in the course of their lifetime." This author holds, therefore, to the notion that instincts are forces by virtue of which the organisms made their adaptations—obscure directive powers which watch over the development of the organism. W. T. Hornaday, of the New York Zoological Park, adheres to this conception for it is his belief that an instinct is the knowledge or impulse which animals and men derive from their ancestry by inheritance and which they obey either consciously or subconsciously in working out their own preservation, increase and betterment."

Angell defines instincts in terms of neural activity for he states that instincts "represent structurally performed pathways in the nervous system and stand functionally for effective inherited coordinations made in response to environmental demands." He further contends that it is impossible to draw any sharp line between instincts and reflex actions—that there is an overlapping of one into the other. These innate bonds may be ready to function shortly after birth or they may remain inoperative until a later stage in the development of the organism. As Averill has stated, "Nature does not turn the whole force of the racial past into the sluiceways of life at one floodtide, rather many tides are freighted with it."

From these conceptions it may be deduced therefore that by instinct is implied the generic term comprising all those faculties of mind which lead to the conscious performance of actions which are adaptive in character, but pursued without necessary knowledge of the relationship between the means employed and the ends attained. Thus instincts may be characteristic both of

plants and animals for in both there is an adaption of means to ends as well as an attempt to preserve and propagate the specie. Because of structural differences, nevertheless, all of the instincts manifest in the animals do not apply to plants and vice versa. Those which have a feeling nature such as parental love, sympathy or play belong distinctly to the animal type; while food-getting and self-preservation belong equally well to either plants or animals.

#### THE RELATION OF INSTINCTS TO REFLEX AND AUTOMATIC ACTS

There are some authorities who argue that reflex and automatic acts are synonymous with instincts inasmuch as they all operate for the well-being of the organism. Such a belief does not harmonize with experience for the reason that reflex acts presuppose experience, gained in most cases by methods of trial and error and an improvement upon subsequent trials or by muscular motivation—that is, there must be an excitation by a stimuli without the organism. A young child will not unconsciously pull its hand away from a hot iron until after the individual has suffered the heat, but the eyelid will close due to an external stimulus as will also sneezing or pupillary activity. The mind then stores the experience and preserves itself from similar future experiences or unconsciously repeats the acts by the use of reflexes. Automatic acts such as breathing, respiration or circulation do not depend upon either a racial inheritance or muscular excitation, but upon a nervous stimulus, for such activities are wholly, or in part, within the organism itself. Thus the chemical condition of the blood may be responsible for changes in circulation and respiration, or the presence of food in the stomach incite the digestive processes.

There is no experience or nerve excitation necessary in the operation of instincts, for they are obviously further removed from purely physical life than are reflexes or automatic acts. The young birds on their first migratory journey or the salmon on their way to fresh water have not previously passed through a similar experience or are they nervously excited, but are directed by an inner urge or wisdom.

It is probable that instincts are persistently followed from the mere inner force of inheritance without the stimulus of either

pleasure, pain or mental motivation. The spiders as they spin their webs with mathematical precision can hardly be said to be impelled by some exterior excitation. A newly-hatched chick is able to run about and pick up certain small objects which prove to be food and sustain life. It scarcely needs education, and the products of an incubator, having no link with the past of their race, except the germ plasm, thrive as well as those that have a mother's care. Bees in collecting honey and storing it for the winter months; birds as they choose sights for their nests, line them warmly and hide them skillfully, or dogs as they bury their bones and come to scratch for them at subsequent times are all motivated in so doing by instinct. Unlike reflexes or automatic acts, instinctive actions strive towards a change of situation of a particular kind which alone can satisfy the impulse and allay the appetite and unrest of the organism.

#### ORIGIN OF ANIMAL AND PLANT INSTINCTS

In order to seek for the origin of instincts it is not necessary that they be divided into the previously mentioned groupings—namely plant and animal. Of all the instincts, there are only two possible explanations of their origin. They were either all fixed in the organism in its simplest state of existence and unsusceptible to change, or they have been developed from a single potentiality as the environmental surroundings of the organism demanded. This theory does not imply that the organism also contains all the other potentialities of its nature which would have been actualized if conditions had been favorable. Development therefore is not an unfolding of all the innate characteristics but a process of acquisition forced upon the individual by environment. To illustrate by an analogy from the objective world. A lead pencil contains the potentiality or ability to make black lines on a white surface. When in the hands of a child it can be used to make only inarticulate marks of no significance, but when in the hands of a poet or philosopher it can be used to trace the profoundest thoughts of humanity. The pencil is only an instrument in the hands of an individual—it possesses only potentiality not innate possibilities. The environment in which it is placed posits its use. To illustrate this same thought from the animate world. An acorn possesses the possibility of growth. When



planted on an open hillside rich in plant nourishment, water and sunshine, it will build its broad base, send each root deep into the soil and strengthen most the side which must bear the wind. This instinctive law of growth provides for its preservation according to the conditions which must be met; but planted in a shady unfertile spot it will make a brave attempt to grow, but due to a poor environment it will fail. The potentiality for growth was in its possession, but environmental conditions did not augment its achievement. From this single potentiality to grow developed the other factors necessary for its actualization. Activities leave their mark on the motivating dispositions of organisms, that is, environment exerts a profound influence and as a result, there develops through successive trials and errors the ability to cope with environment.

The first theory is untenable. The theories of evolution have undeniably established the fact that animals have gone through various modifications, resulting in the extinction and production of various forms. In the course of this development the environments have been different, thus making it impossible for a single set of congenital, unchangeable instincts to survive. In fact the very process of evolution would be blocked were the instincts insusceptible to change.

The second theory presumes that the lowest forms of organisms possessed a certain physiological construction which was subject to chemical laws. The organism for instance possessed a cell wall through which nourishment passed by means of osmosis, absolutely uncontrolled by the organism but obeying nature's laws. The single potentiality then was the ability to grow or enlarge. The passage of nourishment naturally caused an enlargement of the structure until the cell wall became parted and the organism split in two, thus giving birth to a new bit of life. The one-celled animals are excellent examples of this principle. Figuratively speaking their insatiable desire is for growth and propagation and to do this successfully demanded a nourished organism for its fulfillment. This single potentiality for absorbing food and consequent growth was innate with life—it was one of nature's fixed laws and from it have been developed during the race for existence what are termed the more complex instincts. The young bird just raises its head and opens its bill to be fed. Its first instinct is for food and from it develops the other instinctive bodily activities.

By the effect of habit in successive generations and the struggle for the survival of the fittest, naive mental activities were developed which later became stereotyped into permanent instincts. Just as in the lifetime of the individual, adaptive actions may by frequent repetitions become automatic, so in the lifetime of the species, actions may by frequent repetitions and heredity so write their effects on the nervous system that the latter is prepared even before individual experience to perform mechanically adaptive actions. Environmental demands made upon the organism then tended to modify the original impulses, and caused the genesis of new adaptive measures which in turn developed into instincts and which later through their multiplication and coordination graduated in the course of hundreds of thousands of years into reflex actions, or more properly called instincts, and innate characteristics that have proved beyond measure their genuine value. Instincts are eminently valuable and therefore admit of being modified as modifying circumstances require. Their variability gives them plasticity whereby they may be moulded always to fit an environment however continuously the latter may be subject to gradual change. The leatherback turtles were originally land animals with firm bony carapaces. Later they became sea turtles and lost their armament. Still later they were forced to return to land due to a change of environment and then developed a bony armament quite distinct in design from their former one. Later they return to the sea, lost their armament and acquired their present leathery covering on account of which they are known by that name. Similar reversed or altered adaptations have been found to have taken place in the kangaroo.

Activities leave their mark on the motivating disposition of organisms as well as do environmental conditions—in fact, their influence becomes an integral part of the organism. Consequently organisms become necessarily adaptive since they are to a large degree products of their environments. Adaption therefore is not to be regarded as due to a modification of innate characteristics, or to the fact that certain instincts are finding expression in modified ways. This would be impossible for the reason that the situation or environment precedes the organism's reaction therefrom. Instincts will also not lose their fixed and untaught character and be replaced by others performed by the aid of free will. On the other hand, some intelligent actions after being performed during a number of generations become converted into instincts

and are inherited as illustrated by the domestication of animals and the culture of plants.

Therefore adaption cannot be regarded as due to modification of innate characteristics or that the instincts are finding expression in modified ways for instincts are the outgrowths of situations. They express themselves in the only way which is possible to do so. Modified instincts are only products of modified situations and not forces that modify their responses to meet the demands of a particular situation.

### THE INTER-RELATION OF HUMAN INSTINCTS

The equipment of instincts with which human beings are endowed are mostly remnants of instincts which have been carried over from his animal ancestors. They have been of such supreme value that they have remained in spite of revolutionary changes. Yet it was only a comparatively few years ago that James wrote: "Nothing is commoner than the remark that man differs from lower creatures by the almost total lack of instincts and the assumption of their work by reason." However any fair-minded scientific observer of instincts will admit that man possesses a vast array of instincts, yet not anything like the picturesque instinctive repertoire of animals.

The equipment of instincts with which the human being is endowed at most must be considered in two ways. They consist in the first place of definite and unlearned mechanisms of behavior and fixed original responses to given stimuli. These are at the same time the original driving forces of action, very closely related to habit in many instances. Instincts and the capacity to form habits, while related functions, are present in any animal in reverse ratio. Man excels in his habit forming capacity for the reason that from the activity of his mental faculties he cannot avoid reflection; past impressions and images are incessantly and clearly passing through his mind and this ideational activity will in turn produce habits of activity which will tenaciously hold the individual in stated grooves of conduct. It is these which are often mistaken for instincts in man. It has often been assumed that by habit, man learned to be social but animals have a gregarious instinct which has remained with them until manifest in the actions of mankind. Animals in the first place are social

and feel in consequence uncomfortable when separated from each other and comfort while together. All animals living in a body which defend themselves or attack their enemies in concert, must be indeed in some degree faithful to one another and those which follow a leader must be in some degree obedient with those animals which were benefited by living in close association—the ones which took the greatest pleasure in society would best escape various dangers while those which cared least for their comrades and lived in solitude would perish in greater numbers. Thus the promulgators of society were left and this propensity passed on from generation to generation.

The child, in common with certain animals, uses instinctively certain kinds of vocal expression, which are chiefly those of emotions. For example, fear is universally expressed by a cry or shriek, which is the same among all mankind, and which we recognize without having been taught its significance. It came to us from our animal ancestors whose habit it is to utter articulate sounds of a special nature while in pain. In the same way anger, affection, or the finer shades of feeling may be expressed and recognized in the animals, as also in mankind. These forms of tone quality or the inflection by which the emotions are conveyed to others do not merely exist as separate forms of expression, but they proceed as a means of giving definite significance to the words by which we learn to express our ideas. The speech then of man, is both the expression of ideas by articulation of particular words and the accompaniment of certain tone inflections and even gestures by means of which the feeling attitudes which accompany the ideas are conveyed.

A great many of the pleasures derived from communing in solitude with nature have their roots in the remote past, when man lived in far closer contact with her than he does today. Those countless ages which he lived in caves or roamed the prairies as a hunter and of the still earlier days when he lived in the branches of the forest, have indelibly stamped their memory on mankind. Those who cannot spend time or money for long excursions go picnicking, blackberrying, nutting or strawberry picking like their remote ancestors who lived by gathering nuts and berries. All are attracted by the joys of the open road and the open fire. Even garden parties or tea on the lawn are the last feeble response of civilization to the same powerful summons.

Man has carried over many instincts from his tree life. To hold his poise on branches was more important than the quest of food itself, for a single slip might have proved fatal. To avoid this, a highly developed instinct was essential to which all habitual automatic reactions were closely connected with this maintaining of bodily balance. The necessity was paramount for tree life, for every relaxation might have resulted in the sudden cessation of life itself. At night there were many difficulties to contend with. Sleep must come and how then were involuntary movements to be controlled? In particular, how could sudden movements upon awakening be avoided? The answer was found in the instinct to freeze into absolute immobility when startled by fright. Man when violently aroused at night by a loud noise will become rigid with expectancy which is nothing more than the operation of this ancient instinct.

Prenative man was an animal that lived and worked by day. His habits were not nocturnal and he seldom by choice went forth from his lair during the hours of darkness. This love of daylight and the corresponding aversion to darkness was probably due to the great reliance placed upon the sense of sight. It is this instinct which no doubt accounts for mankind's instinctive dislike and fear of darkness.

The sense of place and in particular the power to find one's way back home is very strongly developed instinctively in all roving animals as well as man. As it survived in ourselves, it is called a sense of direction; but it is also a sense of position, of one's own position relative to the landscape and in particular to one's starting place.

It is seen then that a great many of our actions may be accounted for by the survival of instincts which once had survival value, but have outlived their day. They may be referred to prehistoric times in general or to a special aspect or period, such as that during which man lived for the most part in caves. But before the cave period came the prairie period with the conclusion of which we are familiar. It would be strange if cave life, prairie life and primitive civilization had not left many traces in the form of instincts peculiar to those stages of man's evolution.

The most usual explanation of instinct has relied upon the so-called generic method and assumes the social customs which are observed among civilized people and the surviving instincts are the result of stamping in through long experience of some

reaction which has been inherited by each succeeding generation. They all have their roots far into the remote ancestry of the race instead of recent periods. The environment of man has undergone profound changes during the last hundred years and it is not irrelevant to say that as a result of this rapid change in culture, man finds himself with a culture that is far removed from the instincts which proved their fitness for survival in an environment extremely different from that in which they are expected to function at present.

It is of enormous advantage that we possess instincts, for on the whole they act in the right direction and they enable mankind to meet emergencies for which slow-moving reason would be too late. But there is no guarantee that an instinct will stop acting where it should. The difference between primitive and civilized life appears especially in the degree to which rational control has been established for such instinctive promptings. In man, reason must function in conjunction with instinctive promptings in order to secure the rational relation of desire and ultimate ends to be achieved. It is only this which will produce an ethical culture and an enduring civilization.

## LOWBROWS, Highbrows, and National Defense

BY ELBRIDGE COLBY

THE other day a friend argued very strenuously with me against the plea for national defense, which is always advanced whenever a question is raised concerning the maintenance of an army and a navy. He said that this country is not in danger of attack and never has been in danger. He pointed out that the American colonists were really responsible for the Revolution because they resisted governmental methods employed by British representatives. Resisted them by accumulating arms. Started the war by firing upon "red coats" on a little march just outside of Boston and made the war a serious issue by indicting a king and declaring the colonial independence. We prosecuted what has been called a limited war against France in 1798-1800 by authorizing naval attacks upon her commerce. We resented British interference with our own commerce, ships, and sailors; and declared war against that country in 1812. We got involved in a boundary dispute with Mexico and moved our troops to the frontier line which we claimed, and then when our armed advance was resisted, we solemnly announced that a state of war existed by an Act of Mexico itself. In 1861 when certain states attempted to withdraw from the federal union, the North was not defending itself, but was really combining to subdue the South. In 1898 after our ultimatum to Spain had finally been accepted, we decreed a blockade, and voted our army and navy to support Cuban freedom. Our action was accepted by Spain as a declaration of war which Congress was compelled to antedate four days. Our real purpose in going to war with Spain was to put an end to the intolerable disturbances in that Caribbean Island which, continuing for years almost within sight of our shores, had become a menace to our peace and tranquility. In 1917 it was we and not Germany who declared war. All of these things, he said

—arguing that our pleas for self-defense are contrary to the facts of history.

It is interesting that such a plea as ours for National Defense should be so subject to attack on historical grounds. Yet it seems necessary to resort to a simple plea in order to reach the average mind of the average citizen. The normal man is best appealed to on his selfish side. To counteract the pacifist propaganda as to costs of military establishments and the monetary value of tax rate reductions, the defense advocate has to speak of protecting our shores from invasion and hostile occupation. Everyone understands self-defense. It is understood generally to be a sufficient excuse for homicide. It underlies the constitutional provision which prohibits search and seizure of a man's property without a legal warrant. We all have a strong sense of possession and like to retain what is ours. The "defense of hearth and home" is valid logic in the common minds of common men. Yet there is a sounder line of thought for more intellectual men.

The theory of national defense is combined closely with the whole principle of modern government. Even the liberal, socialistically inclined Ramsay MacDonald celebrates his initiation as British Premier by securing additional aircraft and cruiser appropriations from the British Parliament. A responsible statesman sees to the support of his government.

International lawyers are among the few people in the world acquainted with international affairs and with means of international communication and cooperation. They would naturally—one would think—be most likely to be interested in world-wide organizations. Yet those very international lawyers commenced their studies by scrutinizing the principles of national sovereignty, national independence, and national rights. Indeed, it is not too much to say that most of our distinguished international lawyers are among the most ardent nationalists we have in this country. One authority says the right of self-preservation is the first law of nations. Another authority says this right is the first of absolute and permanent rights, and serves as a fundamental basis for a great number of accessory, secondary or occasional rights. An essential condition for the continuance of wars, and therefore the continuance of the doctrine of national defense, is the doctrine of separate sovereignty. Israel Zangwill was perfectly correct when he said that the way to abolish war



was to do away with all frontier lines, custom houses, restrictions on immigration, and separate national sovereignties. So long as separate sovereign states continue owing no duties to higher organizations and insistently maintain their rights—so long as international law, not only permits, but actually emphasizes this condition—there will always be questions at issue between nations that are not justiciable. Arbitration treaties may be drawn. Arbitration courts may be established. Yet the arbitration treaties always exempt from their scope questions affecting national rights, policies, interests and honor. Arbitration courts have no compulsory jurisdiction and are without power to enforce their decrees. For some things the ultimate arbitrament is that of war. It is not by chance that the statuesque figure of justice bears a sword.

Almost one hundred years ago, when the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court handed down a decision nullifying the course of action taken by the State of Georgia against the Indian nation of the Cherokees, the gentleman then in the presidential chair remarked, "John Marshall has made his decision—now let him enforce it!" Georgia scoffed at the opinion of the Supreme Court. The mandate was never obeyed. The power to enforce the jurisdiction of the court did not operate. So long as there is no such power, or so long as such existing power does not operate, the courts are useless. But when there is such a power and it does operate, their opinions are the guides to policy. The armed power merely enforces the policy. Without the power, the policy is impotent.

From 1861 to 1865 the United States needed armed forces to suppress a rebellion. The doctrine of state sovereignty without our union had been a series of trouble ever since it was discussed in the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Intensified from year to year by the slavery question a conflict of ideas became a conflict of laws. The conflict of laws became a conflict of peoples until horizontal lines across the continent could have divided the respective forces. The conflict of the two peoples finally became a conflict of rifle and cannon. The conflict ceased to be an argument in constitutional law and became on the one hand a denial and on the other hand a support of the law of the land itself. From 1861 to 1865, as General Sherman later said, the Supreme Court was paralyzed. Its rights and decrees were treated with contempt south of the Potomac and the Ohio. It could not sum-

mon a witness or send a deputy marshal. Armed force was needed to restore the law. Right needed the aid of might.

In one sense this Civil War of ours was a defensive war. It was a war to support the Federal Union. In a military sense it was an offensive war, waged to subdue a revolution as McClellan said, "to crush a population." And here with this single conflict as an example we can see a clear distinction between defense of national policies and defense of a nation. To some simple-minded people national defense may mean the protection of hearth and home against an invader. To others, capable of thinking deeply, clearly, and broadly, it may mean the defense of our policies, of our government, of our citizens against annoyance, injustice and insult. So long as our national policies are defensive and not offensive, the war we wage in support of these policies will be a defensive war, whatever may be the character of the military operations. According to this distinction the American Revolution was a defensive war to maintain chartered rights and traditional liberties. In this sense, the War with France of 1798-1800, the War of 1812, and the War of 1917, were defensive wars to preserve our prestige and protect our people engaged in commerce overseas.

Defensives and offensives cannot be definitely determined as such on any circumstantial or contemporary grounds. We must go back to the causes and the antecedents, else our interpretations are merely superficial and for the occasion and the instance alone. When Lee invaded the North and struck, on two separate campaigns, towards Antietam and Gettysburg, he was tactically on the offensive, but strategically on the defensive. He invaded only to relieve pressure from the Richmond front. For the Confederacy, as I have said, the war was a defensive war, in defense of State sovereignties against the attempts of the North to compel adherence to the Union.

When British forces occupied the town of Castine, Maine, in 1814, our local inhabitants were on the defensive; the British were the invaders. If we look back far enough, we might say that the American Congress was the real offender, for it had declared war. And yet, if we investigate fully, we find that our declaration of war was really a defensive act, it was the last resort of a people whose principles of nationality had been continuously assailed by Britain. It was our only remaining means of arguing our point in diplomatic discussion. The war of 1812 was a defens-

ive war, in spite of our initiating the hostilities by declaring it formally, in spite of our attempts to invade Canada from Detroit and from Niagara. The very invalidity of purely military operations as a single criterion is admirably illustrated by that same conflict. The British invaded our territories at Plattsburg, Washington, Castine, and New Orleans. We invaded the British territory twice, at opposite ends of Lake Erie. The crossing of a frontier line is no standard of judgment for the determination of the offensive or defensive character of a war.

Suppose, for instance, that we should enter a war with a strong foreign nation. In a military sense, we should have to assume an initial defensive. With a population of over a hundred millions and a potential military manpower of over sixteen million, we would still be unready to act aggressively with our forces. With altogether only 500,000 trained citizens—about half of whom are officer material—and with a regular army of only 130,000 we would have to adopt a defensive position in readiness and protect our shores until we could assemble and train our personnel. This in a military sense. Yet the military situation is not the whole of it. We must go behind the military operations and discover what make them necessary in the first place. If the war we entered was brought on because we had conducted a political offensive in foreign affairs, it would be an offensive war. If it was brought on to maintain just and rightful defensive foreign policies, it could be a defensive war, whatever the character of the operations.

People who read history and are accustomed to thinking in historical terms are slow to analyze current conditions. Consequently, for a long time it was thought that wars were the sport of kings. It was believed that they were essentially political in their causes. It was believed that increasing international communication and trade would tend to diminish international political differences. It was really not until the twentieth century that people began to understand that wars are principally economic in their causes. Prior to the World War, Mr. Brailsford's book, entitled *War of Steel and Gold*, made the economic motive clear. Then Mr. Lippman told the people of this country how to recognize "The Stakes of Diplomacy" in European affairs. He pointed out, as a single example, that the financial interests of the Bank of Rome in a north African power-house, actually brought on the Italian-Turkish war which was portrayed in popular terms as a

contest between the traditions of ancient Rome and of the oriental race, between Christ and Mohammed. Since then Lionel Curtis, Mr. Bakeless, Mr. Lowes Dickinson, and Admiral Niblack have insisted that all wars are economic in their motives. We have come to recognize that the protection of citizens, traders and interests beyond our borders are the real causes of war. Speaking in New York in 1923, Secretary Hughes said that we did not like to relinquish our rights under the capitulations agreement, but that we could not go to war to protect the legal status of our citizens in Turkey. When nationalistic Turkey was concentrating towards the Dardanelles, evangelistic organizations who had previously pleaded for peace, promptly faced about and demanded armed forces to suppress the Turk. President Coolidge more recently said in New York, "We are seeking no acquisition of territory and maintaining no military establishment with unfriendly hostile intent. We have come to a position of great power and great responsibility. Our first duty is to ourselves. American standards must be maintained. American institutions must be preserved. The freedom of the people, politically, economically, intellectually, morally and spiritually must continue to be advanced. The world knows that we do not seek to rule by force of arms, our strength lies in our moral power. We maintain a military force for our defense, but our offensive lies in the justice of our cause."

War may sometimes be necessary, but it will be a war to enforce a policy and not a war conducted for the purpose of slaughter. Our troops may actually take the offensive, but so long as our diplomatic policy is defensive, it will be a defensive war. The army and the navy are not war-makers. When statesmen and people decide on war as a means to accomplish the national will, they call upon the army and the navy to uphold our policies against our opponents. In protecting our policies, we protect our nation.

National defense is not a thing in itself. Armies and navies are not maintained to bring on wars. The present excessive armament of France in the air will not cause a war with England, because the policies of those two countries are not bitterly in opposition, but merely divergent. There may be differences and conflicts of opinion, but so long as there is no direct antagonism, there can be no war. Armies and navies are but the instruments of statecraft, the last type of ultimata, where bayonets and

bullets serve as punctuation marks, and the professional decencies of campaigners take the place of the elaborate protocol and courtesies of polished diplomats. National defense is a mode of national action. The nation is the unit of action. Its policy is the cause of war. Military operations are merely the means by which the national will is imposed upon those who condemn or oppose it. Protection at our seaports may be effected by immigration restriction, or by actual exclusion laws. Protection of the Mexican frontier against marauding bandits, has to be effected by troops who patrol the desolate banks of the Rio Grande. If the rum runner invades our territorial waters, he is met by a coast guard cutter—which is armed. If many rum runners combine to destroy the armed ships which deny them passage across, or anchorage along, the marginal sea, the open revolt may be put down by the navy. If the foreign country whose flag the rum fleet flies, presses the issue, naval engagements may bring about a naval war or even a general war. When national policy declares that war actually exists between this country or another, protection becomes a matter needing broader and most intensive efforts. The popular spirit supports the national policy. The defense of policies, when war is flagrant, becomes in fact a defense of national territory.

Several years of agitation and counter-agitation have finally resulted in the pacifist organizations adopting their logical position. They are now frankly coming out and taking the so-called "slacker's oath" refusing to support their government in any war measures for any cause, thus definitely denying one of the primary obligations of citizenship. There are some of them even saying that immigration restrictions and exclusions should go by the board. The issue is not war or peace. The issue is definitely one of national allegiance and nationality. And, strange as it may seem, this very slacker's oath was supported by certain young student volunteers interested in foreign missionary service, who when they go abroad will be protected in China perhaps by the long arm and the strong policy of their own government. In China itself they will learn that a nation without organization of its national power is able neither to maintain peace and tranquility within its own borders nor to preserve those borders against the incursions of foreign peoples. In potential manpower, the United States is noted on statistical charts as the equal of China. In actual power, the United States is superior because of

our superior facilities for organization and our superior armament. China has betrayed her nationality. Shall we betray ours? China has a weak foreign policy. Shall ours be equally weak? China is over-run with foreigners and her aggravated people are restricted from entering many of the states of the world. Shall we likewise be over-run with foreigners, proselyted by missionaries and restricted from travel and settlement overseas? The answer lies in the strength or weakness of our desire to maintain our nationality and in our willingness to support and defend the national policies of the United States. It is a problem of loyalty and the national will of a self-governing people.

## RELIGION

BY T. B. STORK

THAT was a suggestive remark of Dean Inge in his essay on St. Paul, that: "the Gospel of Christ is not a religion, but religion itself in its most universal and deepest significance."

That is to say, there are not many religions of many and divers sorts, but there is only one religion and these many and divers sorts are merely different phases of that one and only religion. For they are all attempts more or less perfect to answer those time-old questions of man: What am I? Where am I? What am I doing here? What, in other words, is the meaning of all that I see about me: the earth with its beasts and plants, the stars in the sky of night, the sun of day, the moon of night? All these are mysteries just as I myself am a mystery in my birth, in my life, most of all in my death. Religion of whatever sort is an effort to answer these questions; it might be defined as the purposeful effort of man to find his place, define his relations to this world and the next. It puts a meaning into life that before was meaningless; for as Tolstoi has said, the most terrible thing to man is not the fear of death but the meaninglessness of things. Until a man finds for himself this meaning he is inferior, no matter how great his intelligence, to the poorest peasant woman who believes in the Virgin Mary and that her soul may suffer in purgatory or gain the bliss of Heaven.

It follows therefore since there can be but one rightful place for man in the world, so there can be but one religion; but one answer to his question, no matter how many fantastic shapes he may invent in his effort to find that answer. All religion so-called from the African fetichism, through the highly philosophical Brahminism of India, the cold, practical doctrine of Mahomet, the warm emotional teaching of Roman Catholicism, as well as the

intellectual refinement of Unitarianism, all the various modes of Protestant Christianity are but examples of that one effort to put meaning into life, to solve the mystery of living, to find man's place and purpose in the Universe.

The one characteristic common to all is the deep ineradicable conviction that there is an answer, competent, complete, satisfactory, could it be found, and a righteous discontent until it is found. The man is like a traveller lost in a vast unknown region full of pitfalls, traps for unwary feet, precipices for rash adventurers, he seeks the path that shall show him his place and his way through the apparently trackless wild. Like the traveller he seeks in his religion a knowledge of his whereabouts and he longs for the safety, the sure confidence which the finding of the right path gives the traveller. All his surroundings prompt him to this quest; the material world extending on all sides with its lofty mountains, its vast plains, its boundless seas, its infinite varieties of life, men like himself, animals, birds, fishes, reptiles, all the wonderful phenomena of life in all its manifestations, fill his soul with questioning wonder. What is the meaning of all these? How do I come into it? Where do I stand? Whither do I go? What are my relations to it? Is there any over-seeing power that governs and directs, or is it a mere chaotic go-as-you-please without purpose, without reason, without premeditated cause or calculated end?

These questions insist on some sort of answer; they are self-born, the natural reaction of intelligent mind to its surroundings, which to still its uneasiness must find some answer. And religion is the answer; religion is the attempt to still this uneasiness. Even those rabid enemies of all religion, the Bolsheviki, recognize this when they place in Moscow near one of the great churches in the Kremlin, an inscription declaring: "Religion is the opium of the People"; that is, religion answers these questions, tranquilizes the mind disturbed by the puzzle of the world and its life. This instinct of religion as it might be called is as primitive, as natural as hunger or thirst, and there seems no reason why it should not be accepted as a fact quite as real and credible in the psychological world as they are in the physical.

By his mental constitution, by the laws of his thinking, man is compelled to assume that there is a law, a method, a reasoned plan running through this apparent medley of the world. It is only by this assumption, whether true in reality or not, that he



finds satisfaction for his thinking. That the world is governed by laws, shaped by purpose, is a necessity of his thinking. He may not be able to discover those laws and that purpose, but he feels assured that they exist.

Expressed in the simplest terms this impulse to find his place and the equally strong conviction that there is a place not of chance, but of reason, planned long before his birth, spring from the desire for unity, for harmony with the world, with all things, with God. Separateness, disparateness, is abhorrent to man's soul, to escape it he seeks religion, which by showing him his place, his duties, his rights, his destiny, shall establish some reasoned relation with all that he sees about him and so make him one with it, with the all. To some the world may present no problem; it is all simple, requiring no explanation. They eat, they sleep, observe the daily routine of life, asking no questions, troubled by no doubts. Men are born and die, the world rolls on, all as a matter of course. But to the man who contemplates all this, who thinks, no matter how superficially, awkward doubts, strange questions arise. His regular tasks go on each day endlessly, monotonously, with no final purpose apparent, nothing is accomplished by his daily task beyond getting something to eat, something to put on. The whole race of men no matter how engaged is in the last analysis only marking time, doing things to enable it simply to exist. Finally all die to give place to others, their posterity, who occupy themselves likewise in similar tasks. They work for their living and then die. This has been going on for century after century. What is the meaning of it all? Why should man go on thus, generation after generation? What means this eternal march, this great unceasing procession of human beings from the cradle to the grave?

His efforts to examine into the great riddle only plunge him deeper in its mysteries. He discovers traces in the earth of past centuries of human and animal life, men scarcely recognizable as such; beasts of a size and shape now unknown, marks of glaciers, of fires, of earthquakes that wrought destruction centuries ago. All these proclaim the existence of the world possibly for thousands of years during which strange happenings are indicated but not revealed. So with the starry heavens where we behold extinct planets, stars so distant that the light that makes them known to us must have set out on its journey before we have any historic records of man's existence on the earth.

Religion is thus born of man's awe and wonder and of his irresistible impulse to orientate himself, to place himself in the world, and so to in some way understand the world and himself. It is the fashion of those who attack religion to ignore this vital and essential view of religion and to devote much unfavorable attention to the widely different answers which men have found in their various religions. Like men observing sailors struggling in the tempestuous sea, these critics devote more attention to the kind of vessels employed than to the vital issue whether the mariners can safely make the land. They argue that all religions must be false because so divergent and often apparently antagonistic to each other. They neglect the great fundamental identity of them all, namely, the endeavor to find satisfaction of soul.

This satisfaction of soul is the very heart of all religion, the content that comes with a sense that the individual is in harmony with this world, with all things about him, with God. For the individual by himself and for himself alone is an error whose correction is the Universal, the whole, which God is. This is the truth of religion, content, happiness of soul that comes from the consciousness that the individual has found his place, is in the path assigned him. The truth of religion is, therefore, not to be tried by physical external facts, by its correspondence or want of correspondence with scientific or historical truth, they are entirely beside the matter. The truth of religion is a spiritual truth and can only be tested spiritually. A religion which satisfies the soul of its place and destiny is always true for that soul. Souls are not all alike, are not all equally endowed. To one soul that may be the highest truth which to another may be grievous error. To each according to his capacity the answer of religion comes. An Eskimo cannot know or enter into ideas that seem simple and self-evident to your highly-trained Unitarian believer any more than he could appreciate the poetry of Tennyson or the higher flights of eloquence of St. Paul. To some the warm emotional religion of Roman Catholicism seems entirely unsatisfactory, while to the Romanist the cold logical dogmas of the Presbyterian appear banal and lifeless. If it be objected that this view of religion is purely and simply Solipsism, that thus every man is judge and final arbiter of his own religion, it must be conceded that it is so and necessarily and unavoidably so, if we believe that the state of the soul is the vital and only significant thing in religion. This has often been declared by inspired

writers and by others. "As a man thinketh so is he." But the logical inferences from this declaration never seem to have been fully grasped; namely, that there is no test or standard by which one man can try the truth or falsehood of another man's religion, for there is no test or standard save the man's own soul and that we have no means of judging. It is true we are told by Christ that by their fruits ye shall know them and that the fruits of the spirit are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."<sup>1</sup> But these tests apply to the soul, enable us to draw inferences which we are given to understand are trustworthy for the soul, they do not test the falsehood or truth of any particular religion, but rather seem to refer that to the state of the soul so that if the soul produces legitimate fruits its religion will be judged by that. False and true are terms which when applied to religion ought rather to be changed to perfect and imperfect, implying by those two terms that religion like education is a thing of degrees, of steps, in a spiritual progress. The various ceremonies, the beliefs intellectual, the dogmas ecclesiastical of the divers forms of religion are merely aids to the state of soul, steps in its education; to some they are helps, to others hindrances. The Friend or Quaker attains this state of soul by the avoiding of all ceremonies, all outward signs of inward grace; the Roman Catholic finds in his elaborate ritual, his gorgeous colors, his splendid music, the enunciation of highly artificial dogmas, the inspiration for that same state of soul which the Friend attains without them. For in the course of the spiritual growth of men through the ages—a growth which has necessarily been closely associated with their intellectual growth and their material progress in the arts and industries of life—many original beliefs and ceremonies have become obsolescent, many new ceremonies and dogmas have been invented, not deliberately but have sprung into existence naturally as better expressing their advancement in spiritual life.

A religion that causes rightful fruits of soul in conduct must never be held false, however imperfect, when compared with another more advanced since it must be inferred from external acts that the soul's state is one of content and satisfaction of harmony with the world and with God according to its capacity for content, satisfaction and harmony.

<sup>1</sup> Galatians v.22-23.

How else can religion be tested; have the Schopenhauers and Nietzsches and the host of smaller critics any standard by which they can measure religions, distinguish the true and the false? Do they expect by some intellectual examination to detect falsehood, religion eludes all such; for it concerns the soul and its state can be tested by no such process. The character of false or true cannot attach to such a test: it is a matter of immediate apprehension by each man for himself. He is harmonious honestly contented and satisfied in soul and that is the end of it.

Does this seem a strange conclusion for those who believe in Christianity to reach? Is not Christianity and the belief in its doctrines the only true religion? The answer must be not that it is the only, but that it is the highest and most perfect form of religion which we know. A little consideration will make evident that any other conclusion would lead us into a perfect bramble bush of difficulties, moral and intellectual. The *reductio ad absurdum* within its limitations is an effective weapon of argument. If it were contended that Christianity were the only true religion and that as a natural and logical sequence all other religions were false and the professors of them mistaken and so lost for all eternity, it would follow that we must condemn Abraham and Moses as wanting true religion because they knew not Christ, had no knowledge of the Trinity, for the simple reason that they had never heard of them. Or going a step farther we must condemn every man however good to eternal punishment if he has lived in ignorance of Christian doctrines and precepts.

Thus considered we may gather some faint light on the place and function of doctrines and ceremonials in the spiritual life of the soul. For it is that life which alone is of real consequence. Thus we see how the belief in Christ's sufferings and death drew the souls of men into a sympathy and love for God such as no belief in a stern all-just Jehovah could or would. So the belief of the Jews was superseded; became obsolescent in the higher belief in a Christ who was both God and man. The Jewish religion was not false, it did not fail in its work and place but the idea of a God favoring an exclusive people was less moving to the soul than a God who came to all men. Their Jehovah guided and delivered his people from their oppressors; the memory of it was perpetuated by the ceremonial of the passover. His majesty and glory were symbolized in the Ark of the Covenant, visible and present as a physical reality to all, so awe-inspiring

that to touch it without authority meant death. How different was the picture of God as man healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, sharing the common life of all men and finally giving his life on the cross. That earlier conception of God served its purpose, was suited to the people and the period, but this later and higher conception, now that it had in the ripeness of time become possible for men to receive it, superseded the first and the veil of the temple was rent in twain when Christ died.

To each according to his capacity, to the Jew the Almighty and in some aspects terrible Jehovah, to the Christian the human love-inspiring Christ. To the Jew the just doctrine of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, to the Christian the turning of the other cheek. These represent the spiritual growth of man's soul, the progress toward that unity of the individual with the Universal which is the goal of religion in whatever form it takes.

Miracles which in Oriental countries and according to Oriental ideas were part of the accepted credentials of Divinity, the authentication of Divine teaching, have become to many an intellectual stumbling block, a hindrance to higher spiritual life. To the early Christian the belief in them was an inspiring, sustaining power, helping his soul in the heavenward way, just as a belief in the wonders portrayed in the Apocalyptic book of Revelations fired his imagination with pictures of an earth-depicted Heaven with golden crowns and harps with the great white throne and the multitude of the redeemed in serried ranks of white.

To a man more highly developed intellectually and spiritually these vivid pictures make little appeal. His conception of Heaven is that portrayed by St. Paul when he expressed his feeling as "having a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better."<sup>2</sup> In the gradual evolution of man physically into his present bodily form we must not refuse an equally great evolution spiritually. His body now requires for its well being what it did not need in the past, and so his soul in like manner asks a different sustenance, a nourishment more spiritual than golden harps and crowns. These spiritual helps of the past are not therefore to be pronounced false or mistaken; for their time and place and for those who required them they were true and right, but unnecessary, if not harmful, for those who, passing beyond this childish age with its miracles, its golden harps and crowns,

<sup>2</sup> Phil. i. 23.

all its gorgeous oriental imagery, the paraphernalia of the vivid Eastern imagination, have risen to Paul's great conception of Heaven that is to the being with Christ in close communion and love. It must always be borne in mind that spiritual teachings by miracles, by the recital of the wonders of the next world portrayed by a vivid imagination or by dogmas the product of ingenious intellects, all come to us very largely through the imaginations and the minds of human beings like ourselves, colored by their individual feelings and obsessions, that is the feelings and obsessions of their particular time and their particular limitations intellectual and moral.

In the gradual evolution of religious thought, the Oriental imagery, the wonders and miracles of the earlier forms of religion make way for the dogmas and doctrines which are more consistent with the severer and colder intellectual imagination of the modern man. Both serve their time and do their work as props and aids to that state of the soul toward God and the world which is the goal of all religion. But again like their predecessors in the spiritual progress of the world dogmas and doctrines have no virtue in and by themselves, it is only as they contribute to the spiritual state of the soul that they have meaning or value. There is no life in a dogma or creed any more than in the loaf of bread on the baker's shelf. Both are dead until taken up, assimilated by the living organism for which they were made. Their saving grace lies not in the truth or falsity of some physical material fact with which they deal, but in their effective influence on the soul. The great doctrines of the Church, the Trinity, the atoning sacrifice of Christ, its most sacred rites, baptism, the sacrament, have their value only as they enter into and fructify the soul of the believer; only then do they work salvation in him. By what secret process these various agents, rites, ceremonies, beliefs, dogmas, do their work is one of the mysteries of the human soul. How a belief and faith in Christ engenders a love for Him and a devotion which drives his martyrs to death with a smiling face, we cannot fathom or explain any more than we can explain the apparently simpler process by which the dead loaf of bread of our daily sustenance is transformed into life, energy, thought, all the activities of the human being who consumes it.

But this we know, that beliefs and dogmas and rites of the Church may so transform the man that we can observe in external

signs the tremendous change wrought by them. Observe how the mystics of religion are carried away into visions and ecstasies; how their souls are so wrought upon that their very physical bodies suffer change and we behold in the stigmata of saints the outward evidence of the great internal change.

Perhaps by considering the somewhat analogous processes of our human affections, we may gather some notion of the spiritual process by which love to God and to Christ become vital parts of the man's soul. Our affections for our father and mother, our friends, are not external intellectual ideas by which the man says I love my father or I love my child, but this love is the gradual development of his feelings; the why and wherefore of which he cannot explain: the fact or belief that such a person is his father or his child undoubtedly has its part in the matter just as the fact of Christ's life and death and the belief of the Christian has its part, but these must be followed by much more than this. His meditation upon it, his interest in it, and his bringing it home to himself in this way must in some way culminate in personal feeling before that belief can have its proper effect on his soul.

When this belief has thus fructified in the soul, made itself part of the man, at once it enriches and fills out his spiritual life; he lives on a higher plane of life. See, for example, how so simple a belief as that in God's protecting care helps and raises to a new key the man's thought of life so that the Psalmist could say in the abundance of his belief: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Psalm 91:1.

What a charm for the fearful and the apprehensive soul to bear within it such an assurance of tranquility, of safety, amid all the perils of life. David undoubtedly spoke out of the wealth of his own confidence and trust in God the fruit of his belief in God's over-seeing goodness to his servants. Here was the belief made vital and life-giving by being taken into and made part of the soul's own substance. The transformation thus effected in the intellectual belief which first brings the thought to the man's soul is profound; it is the alchemist touch that turns the base metal to gold. The difference between the two aspects of belief may be realized by a little incident of recent occurrence in which a man sought to prove the lawfulness of strong drink by instancing the turning of water into wine by Christ at the marriage in

Cana. He treated the miracle and the story of it as a logical proposition, capable of having inferences drawn and arguments made upon it; to him it was simply a positive fact with all the consequences that ought to be inferred from a fact; to the man to whom it became a live and vital thing, it was an illustration of Christ's humanity, the manifestation of human interest in the humble life of men on earth and so it brought to his soul a realizing sense of Christ's nearness to men; it bred in him feeling; it was transformed from a cold statement of fact to a life-giving inspiration. It is manifestly absurd to suppose that the merely intellectual acceptance or rejection of a rite or a dogma of religion can have any spiritual effect. It is only when that rite or dogma comes into the spiritual life of the soul that we can attribute moral and spiritual value to it. It is equally absurd to suppose that ignorance or even a refusal of some rite or dogma proclaimed by some human authority can have any damning effect spiritually. There are many dogmas of the Church utterly unknown to Abraham, to Moses, to David; they are not condemned to outer darkness by reason thereof. That ignorance is their spiritual loss but not their spiritual condemnation: they never had that realization of the love and nearness of God to his people which in later days came to the Christian Church in its belief and faith in Christ and his sacrifice for them. This does not stamp the earlier religion as false, but simply as less vital, less rich in its spiritual power. May it not be said of those who now perhaps have no belief in miracles, who may even doubt the material facts of Christ's life and death, that this is their terrible spiritual loss, that thus their souls miss that tenderness of soul which a belief in Christ's life and death would give them; that thus deprived they will be more distant from God, will have a colder less fruitful spiritual life, that they will be far back in the spiritual progress and growth of their souls toward unity with God. That it should condemn them to eternal punishment, it would be trespassing on forbidden ground to even think; that again is one of the mysteries of our life. We do not know, we cannot even presume to guess, the answer to that question, what will become of those who reject all spiritual teachings. If it be suggested that a continual rejection, resulting in a continual spiritual loss to the soul, either by a refusal or an ignorance of these helps to its spiritual life might eventually end, if persisted in, with the spiritual death of the soul, there would seem little to be said to the contrary.



## INCONSISTENCIES AND INCONGRUITIES IN JESUS' REPORTED TEACHINGS

BY VICTOR S. YARROS

MODERN scholars of the unprejudiced and enlightened type recognize, of course, that our sources of information concerning the personality and actual teachings of Jesus of Nazareth are as meager as they are unsatisfactory in quality. The composition of the gospel of Mark, in the words of Prof. S. J. Case, of the University of Chicago—an acknowledged and high authority on New Testament literature and interpretation—"must fall near the year 70 A. D." The same author continues:

"The gospel of Mark, though composed somewhat later than the epistles of Paul, belongs near enough to Jesus' own day to come within the lifetime of some of the original disciples; while the more extended reports of Jesus' teachings now found in Matthew and Luke seem unquestionably to have been derived from common written tradition whose composition very probably antedates that of Mark." In the words of Dr. Julicher, "the gospel was virtually completed in the home of Jesus even before his generation passed away, and believing Jews wrote it down at that time in their own language."

I have made the foregoing quotations in order to show that we cannot be at all certain that Jesus actually said what he is reported as having said, or that he used the exact words attributed to him, or that his precise meaning was always comprehended, or that his pious and very simple-minded followers did not eke out their recollections of Jesus' sermons, fables and parables with notions of their own and with rather free interpretations of fragments they cherished.

If, therefore, there are inconsistencies and incongruities in the reported teachings and sayings of Jesus, the fair-minded and earnest student, and especially the student who is in sympathy with the quintessential message of the Nazarene, will naturally be disposed to

account for them by assuming carelessness, defective memory, unintentional or well-meant amendments, additions and "tendency" interpretations on the part of the men who, in the role of active disciples, or propagandists or devout worshippers, wrote down what is today the Christian gospel.

But, whatever the explanation may be, *the inconsistencies and incongruities are there to note, consider and frankly discuss*. It is scarcely necessary to say that the present writer believes Jesus to have been a man, a mortal born of human parents in the natural way, but a man of unique moral and mental qualities, of genius, a man of profound insight and lofty ideals. Though he spoke the language of his time, shared many of the errors of his race, age and environment, and was a poet and prophet rather than a scientific philosopher, his wisdom is gladly acknowledged by the most exact and critical thinkers of our scientific age and is seriously challenged by very few—the few who, with Nietzsche, call Christianity a slave religion and Jesus' ethical teachings slave ethics. It may be remarked, in passing, that since the death of Nietzsche neither science, modern scientific philosophy, nor empirical thinking have confirmed the "slave" theory of essential Christian doctrine. Science is *not* in conflict with the humanities. Even biology is reverting to "the greatest of these," charity, and throwing overboard the crude notions of the half-baked professors of false eugenics.

From the point of view indicated, we start, then, with this definite theory, or this fact—that Jesus, who well knew the old law and the old way of life and found them wanting, and who had a new way of life, a new and revolutionary gospel to preach and teach, was not easily or rightly understood in his own life-time, and had to contend with many difficulties begotten of mental habits, ignorance, superstitions, memories of Jewish rebels and pretenders, inaccurate use of language, and the desire of most men to believe what is pleasant and reject what is disturbing or disagreeable. It was, therefore, necessary for him to repeat, reiterate, emphasize the vital, original and radical essence of his gospel. It is reasonable to assume that trivial, foolish or captious questions, or questions intended to tempt and entrap him, were either dismissed by him, somewhat impatiently, as unworthy of attention, or else answered only for the purpose of re-enforcing and stressing his fundamental conceptions and doctrines.

Let us take first the alleged illustration of the penny in connection with the embarrassing but natural question concerning the payment of tribute to Caesar. It would have been grist to the mill of Jesus'

opponents and enemies had he answered the question with a yes or a no. The Jews were divided into two hostile camps; one favored submission to Rome, the other urged rebellion. Jesus could not advise either submission or resistance and rebellion without arousing bitter opposition of a powerful section of the people, and he could not sanction rebellion, moreover, without instantly facing charges of sedition and treason to Rome. What he is reported to have said seemed astute and wholly disarming to the writers of the gospels, and no doubt to many others. In truth, his alleged answer was no answer at all. It is safe to assume that "believing Jews" put it in his mouth because *to them* it seemed remarkably effective. It is nothing of the sort. It is question-begging.

Suppose an Irish republican of the irreconcilable type were asked whether it was right and proper to pay tribute to Great Britain, which even now claims overlordship and sovereign control of Ireland; suppose he were to look at a British coin and say, Render to his majesty, the king and emperor, the things that are his. What would intelligent and honest men say of the reply? They would call it a dodge. The coinage and circulating notes of a suzerain are in no sense "his"; he does not make presents of them to his willing or unwilling subject; they have to work for the money—hard or soft—which they receive in industry or trade; the taxes and tribute they are made to pay represent their toil and self-denial. If Caesar has no right to rule them, he is not entitled to taxation or tribute, whether his image is on the coin of the colony, dependency, protectorate, or not. The coins turned over to his agents are not his; they are the property of those who earned them.

What Jesus, if correctly reported, really advised the inquiring Jews to do, therefore, was to continue to pay taxes and tribute to Rome; only, the simple-minded believing Jews failed to detect the evasion, the fallacy, in the alleged reply—if he made it, which, I repeat, is distinctly doubtful.

It may be asked: What answer should Jesus have made; what other answer was open to him? The philosophical student of the gospels, who is able to distinguish between what is significant and vital in Jesus' message and what is accidental, casual, superficial can have no difficulty in evolving an answer that is thoroughly consistent with Jesus' central doctrine and with the deepest and most significant of his reported sayings. Let us ask whether some such answer as the following—based strictly on the spirit, essence and pith of the gospels—would not be truly and characteristically Christian:

“The question of tribute to Caesar is of no importance and moment to the Son of Man and his faithful followers. They care little how it is answered by the worldly who neglect to lay up treasures in heaven. The kingdom of heaven is at hand, and both those who obey Caesar and those who defy him have strained at gnats while swallowing camels. Repent ye all and believe in the gospel; there alone is salvation; love your neighbors; nay, love even your oppressors and enemies; resist not evil; God is your father and all men are your brothers; let humility, charity and service govern all your actions.”

The answer just framed is the answer which is implied in and almost dictated by the teachings of Jesus. It is, indubitably, the answer consistent and sincere Christians would make today in a situation similar to that reported in the gospels. It is the answer Count Tolstoy actually made to anti-czarist Russian radicals who accused him of reactionary tendencies. He was a true Christian; he did not trouble himself with the abuses of autocracy; he was not interested in political or economic reforms; he was preoccupied with the problem of the meaning of life and the destiny of the human race. He had a mission—to preach salvation—to which everything else had to be sacrificed and beside which everything else was trivial. To Jesus, with the kingdom of God within him, and with the possibility of like superiority for every man always before his mind, how could a question of tribute to Caesar—or any other ruler, native or alien—seriously concern him? It could not, and did not; the answer imputed to him was not the right, logical answer.

Let us take another of Jesus' alleged answers to a question put to him by the Pharisees—namely the question about divorce. Was divorce lawful? It was under the Mosaic law; it was under the Roman law; the question was, therefore, what Jesus himself thought of divorce and what he proposed to do with the old law that permitted it. We know what the alleged answer was. Moses had “suffered” bills of divorcement because of the hardness of the hearts of the people he sought to lead, but Moses had been too lenient and mistaken. Divorce was really repugnant to God's law, because “from the beginning of creation he made them male and female,” and “what therefore God hath joined together let no man put asunder.”

It is difficult to believe that Jesus is correctly reported in these strange pointless utterances. The Protestant sects disregard them, and decline to believe that to put away wife or husband is to com-

mit adultery. They are obviously right. The fact that God created males and females proves nothing. It constitutes no argument against any form of marriage, or against any ground for the dissolution of marriage. Sex is not confined to the human race, and in nature sex union is not always essential to reproduction. Besides, the state not God, enacts marriage laws, and there is no reason why the same earthly authority should not enact divorce laws. Where true love exists, God may be said by Christians and others to have spiritually and emotionally joined together two human beings of opposite sexes, but if love be the real marriage—as it indeed is—then, when love goes, marriage goes. If God decrees love and attraction, God also decrees repulsion, indifference and separation. Jesus would have distinguished between love and mere passion; he could not possibly believe in building family life on habit and empty convention. The question how many times a person is permitted by the state to marry another person must have had but little interest or significance to him who cried, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? . . . Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother"!

Be it noted that Matthew's version of Jesus' dictum on the question of the propriety of divorce is radically different from that of Mark. According to the former, Jesus said: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, *except it be for fornication*, and shall marry another, commiteth adultery." In this version adultery is recognized as a valid ground for divorce, and no mention is made of the number of marriages a man may contract if he is so unfortunate as to divorce his wives for adultery.

Which is the correct version? No one knows; no one can ever know; it is probable that neither is correct, and that "believing Jews" attributed to Jesus their own different opinion on the subject of divorce.

We take up next the Gadarene swine incident, which caused Huxley to return a special indictment, and a most bitter and wrathful one, against the alleged act of Jesus in sending devils into two thousand valuable animals, the property of innocent men, and bringing about the drowning of the animals. Huxley thought the act immoral, wrong and senseless—and it would be, of course, all these things, as well as plainly inconsistent with Jesus' teachings in regard to respect for contracts, established standards of wages and relations between masters and servants. But it is permissible to doubt if the alleged episode, as reported, had even a shadow of a basis of

fact. The superstitious and believing Jews must have invented it. They believed in devils and in the possibility of ordering them to leave one set of beings and invade another. They regarded such a transfer as a miracle calculated to bring converts into the fold. The story is grotesquely irrational and may be rejected without hesitation.

Hardly satisfactory or probable, again, is the reply attributed by the believing Jews to Jesus in connection with the question of the scribes and hypocrites, "By what authority doest thou do these (miraculous) things?" He is represented as knowing that the question was tricky and as resenting it. Yet what does he do? Decline to answer, treat his questioners with deserved contempt? No; he is said to have asked *them* a question about the baptism of John—a question they could not answer without getting themselves into trouble. Since, being hypocrites, they naturally gave an evasive answer, Jesus found in that evasion a sufficient reason for refraining from answering their question respecting his authority. The placing of Jesus on the level of the scribes and hypocrites is not exactly a tribute to his person or mission. Because *they* were cowardly and insincere, it did not follow that *he* was justified in his refusal to give a frank answer! If he wished to defy them and expose their cunning and treachery, other episodes recorded of him show that he knew how to do that without comparing himself with men he despised and often chastised. Again, we must doubt the accuracy of the report of the incident.

Finally, we come to the most astonishing riddle—or paradox—in the whole narrative—namely, the alleged complaint and cry of despair on Jesus' part about the ninth hour after the crucifixion. Matthew and Mark give virtually the same account of the alleged outburst. To quote the latter:

"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani, which, being interpreted, is My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? . . .

"And Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost."

The account of the alleged episode in Matthew is, except for verbal differences of slight importance, identical with the above. Not so with Luke's version, however. According to Luke, Jesus, after crying (something) with a loud voice, said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." According to John, Jesus uttered no cry at all while on the cross, but said, "I thirst" in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, and

after receiving the vinegar, only said, "it is finished." bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

Which is the correct version? We cannot answer this question unless we consider the probabilities of the case; unless we ask whether Jesus could have uttered cries of despair and astonishment without contradicting some of his most solemn and deliberate previous sayings and interpretations of his high and unique mission. Many theologians are sorely perplexed by the alleged bitter cry and complaint, and some, absurdly enough, see in it a consistent reference to that very mission. But the latter cannot, by any amount of ingenuity or sophistry, reconcile the alleged complaint with the following statements of Mark:

"For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day."

"Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

How can the Son of man, after thus foretelling his fate and glorying in it, complain of or to God of the failure to save him from that fate? Is it reasonable to assume that Jesus was at the last unequal to his ordeal, though he had expected it and appreciated its significance in the whole drama? Inconsistency is human and pardonable, even in a genius, but why assume it?

That Jesus said *something* on the cross is morally certain. Just what he said, and the words he used, we shall never know. The recorders of his final sayings were not present at the crucifixion; they had to accept the dubious testimony of believing Jews, who, perhaps, relied on the impressions and recollections of other believing Jews.

Enough has been said to demonstrate the proposition that in studying the gospels the only safe and rational course is to disregard incongruities, contradictions and divergencies, and to form a *conception or image of Jesus on the strength, solely, of his most vital and essential doctrines and sayings*. To do that is entirely legitimate; it is the course adopted by all philosophical historians and biographers. But, alas, to do that is to arrive at the depressing conclusion that few of the self-styled Christians care to live up to the cardinal and central teachings of Jesus. Some day Christianity *may* become a religion—a guiding creed and way of life for civilized men and women; so far, Christianity has been a barren ideal, a form of lip service. Jesus is admired, but not obeyed or followed. A religion men do not live by is not a religion.

## REVERENCE OF RANCOR AND REVENGE

BY HARDIN T. MCCLELLAND

ON FIRST notice, a contradiction would seem to be here given, but there really are some sects whose members grow devout and dignified only when there is a program of umbrage and intolerance, rancor and revenge. The destructive spirit is purposely cultivated and refined until the whole ritual and rubric is given over to nihilist procedure, blood sacrifice, eternal damnation and malicious ceremony. The Kamitok celebration of the ugly Siberian Chuckchi, with its orgy of sensual pleasure and its wild climax of war dances and the depraved sense of filial piety expressed in murdering the sick, aged and infirm, gives full play and free hand to anyone wishing to exercise his vengeance on an enemy even within the same tribe; one good feature of the feast is that when a killer hesitates or appears to be unwilling to perform the ritual atrocities he is considered sick or infirm himself and straightway becomes a victim of the ceremony, thus quickening the tribe's approach to extinction. Internecine practice is not so horrible when it offsets increase of offspring by incest. In the rites of the Burmese Buddhists great license of speech and action is allowed, and advantage is often taken by vindictive priests and almsmongers to read into the text a private plea for sacrifice and succor; when the occasion for sacrifice is near at hand *some* victim must be found and fattened so as to appear worthy and acceptable to the gods. But neither of these malicious phases of religious practice and devotion can be considered as suave in subtle vengeance as the creed of the Yezdis who worship death and the devil, bowing to the peacock symbol of creation through pride and destruction, immolation and phoenix rebirth. Although their great patron saint, the last Sassanian king, Yezdegerd, was completely routed when the Mohammedans conquered Persia, there are many secret rites of death and devilry still practiced here and there throughout Armenia, Mesopotamia and Kurdistan.



But we of the professedly Christian nations are little better or different, except that our methods of approach and assent are more seductive and insidious; both sorts of rituals or rubrics are *red*, theirs with blood and ours with ink, theirs is honest and realistic, while ours is specious and symbolistic. By all manner of promised reward and threatened torture, equally questionable salvation and damnation are held ever imminent over our lives. Historical Christianity is a bloody chronicle of eristic controversy, passionate conflicts, sacerdotal assumption, stratagems and spoils; it has tried to cudgel its proselytes and bribe its devotees into submission; it has even attempted with occasional success, to compromise philosophy and secular government. It has almost invariably sought prestige in this world by simony of rewards in the next; advancement and expansion making little treasure for the humble. Church doctrines, whether Christian or not, usually advance first a program of persuasion and inducement veiled more or less thinly under promise of power, knowledge, influence or other reward; and when these tactics fail, the true disposition comes forth and recourse is had to a more coercive policy, while if the opposition is specially well directed or entrenched, "good old Bourbon Orthodoxy" will parry with a program of retribution and revenge. It is quick enough to assume a title to a tithe of this world's treasure, but loathe to assume any responsibility for its trouble, sin or sorrow; this is the usual happiness-philosophy of every worldling who ever wanted the sweet without the bitter. The Church idea of religion is "Catch fish while you may though suckers are better than none; the world is full of religions and the Devil rules all but one." (Heinie: *Gods in Exile*.)

The first pronouncements of the Old Testament largely affecting problems or conditions of the present life only, are carried further in the New and are made to apply even more inexorably to our lives hereafter. Conscious bliss or torment is prescribed for the self-same reason that any other joy or sorrow is predicted—because no power of persuasion exists in an argument which has nothing personal to offer, which promises an impersonal disembodied future full of unconscious rewards and inexperienceable punishments. Dogmatic religion used the ruthless bludgeons of corrupt desire and superstitious fear to discipline(?) a phase of human nature which is still incorrigible and irreverent. It took more stock in cupidity and credulity than in commonsense and courage; that alone accounts for half the fools and knaves which swarm and buzz in futile industry around our flourishing religious pragmatism. Utility and power

have no honest sense of creative genius, courage, devotion, love or piety. We are venerated to smothering, but we are really very little more civilized than Izedi or Chuckchi. Any malicious eschatology is no more fallacious than one which offers us all the heavenly beatitudes for a mere pittance of learning and lip-service.

All the crawfish apologists in the world, whatever religious code they champion, have evaded the challenge of scientific criticism with this or that imbecile quotation, irrelevant issue, textual anagoge, Gnostic hermeneutic or intellectual entrechat. But they do not once acknowledge or try to see that a few pagan and patristic traditions can discount not one title of life, much less render effective categorical imperatives against the immutable laws of the Universe. Institutional Christianity, or churchianity in any creed, is indeed a weak religion casting desperately about for *grounds* and *proofs* and *sanc-tions*, especially when, failing in this, it has to resort to vulgar subterfuge and bribe or threaten its way into the hearts and minds of men. But I do not believe it would resort to this picayune procedure if it were not basically fallacious and corrupt; in fact if it did not covet the very power and authority over individual citizens which ancient kings and modern states have for ninety centuries been strangely able to exercise. It is uncommon that vested authority, whether secular or "spiritual," is ever very effectively opposed by the private individual until he himself has assumed some appreciable degree of authority, copying the vestry tactics of superior power or subtle persuasion, while sometimes having to fall back on those less subtle tokens of moral suasion known as penalties and persecutions, conscription and confiscation, condemnation and exile (or excommunication).

Dante, the most atrocious and melodramatic chronicler of Hell's freeze-over, gloried in devising endless agonies for his enemies. He claims blithely that eternal punishment is necessary to prevent the sinner's relapse after having once been aroused to be good. (I know of many church members in good standing who will wish that their own particular form of relapse had not been quite so worldly and gregarious.) But some excuse is allowed to Dante, as it was a popular fad with the poets and priests of the medieval days to refine and enlarge upon the different kinds of evil, culpability, retribution and damnation; all sorts of pre-arranged sortilege, seduction and suppression were in vogue, the common policy being shaped to fit the cynical humanism that everyone had either to be bribed, wheedled, blackmailed or forced into formalist virtue or conversion. All this

neoclassical revival seemed to lay emphasis on automorphic postulates and included many farfetched predications which were mere personifications, apotheoses, or diabolizations of human moods and passions. The early Hebraic motto of revenge, eye for eye and tooth for tooth had come to flourish all too luxuriantly; the pagan polymonstrosity of Euhemerist theory (that the gods and devils of mythology were but exaggerations of human power and mischief) had come to an all too actual fruition, often lacking in the proper element of deification and noble temperament. And so, even to this day of vast carnage, Billy Sundays and Lyceum Lectures, is it any wonder that the popular pragmatic religions have more about Hell and the Devil than about Heaven and God in them? Persuasion through promise of power and plenty having failed, resort is had to blood-curdling scenes of eternal torment depicted with all the rhetoric of coercive vengeance. The everlasting carouse of umbrage, imputed sin and malicious accusation, wicked assumption and impassioned condemnation, is enough to make anyone disheartened and disgusted, if not susceptible in time to actual sin or mischief and soon hellbent on the very debauchery and depravity of vision against which he has heard so much preachment and prophesy. The whole program and eternal picturing is meant to be persuasive, the glory and satiety of Heaven being supposedly more desirable, a more potent catch-phrase, policy or scheme of salvation than plain example or exhortation to virtue or commonsense; the misery and insatiable appetites of Hell being supposedly more dreadful, more appalling and more to be avoided than ordinary folly, vice, meanness and mischief. It may be alright to capitalize the world's rancor and revenge, but why exaggerate them in the name of religion and morality? Why take advantage of people's innate cupidity and selfishness to play the role of *custos morum* to their better natures? Such tactics as these make our religious programs look suspicious and insincere.

After long centuries of bickering and bloodshed the notion of a halfway station was devised and acknowledged as necessary to accommodate the great majority of spiritual Laodiceans who were neither devilish nor devout. Those who were only partly mean and wicked still had a chance of recovery, so it was found necessary to invent Purgatory, a probationary period between Death and Eternity in which judgment was suspended or rather delayed for further evidence, as Spencer says, while the probationer awaited the final verdict with dread and uncertainty. It was certainly a manoeuvre more encouraging than outright condemnation, but whatever actual

purification could thereby be had was left to the indefinite imaginings of sorcerers and soothsayers. Pope Pius IV confirmed the conception of Purgatory as part of the traditional machinery of religious revenge at the Council of Trent in 1564, and ever since then the Catholic world has been cursed and abused by all sorts of mercenary nuncios, "practical" Devil's advocates, hypocritical Angelos, and other ad captandum tactics of self-advancement, the worst of which is that corrupt traffic in Papal Bulls and Indulgences which has all too nearly made protestants and modernists out of every honest thinker or pious hero throughout the world. Predestination and Purgatory are the two members of a shyster opportunist firm long since outlawed as vicious and arbitrary spiritual brokers. They cannot do legal business with intelligent people because they lack the references and credentials of free moral choice, commonsense and social amiability. They are ghouls of a graveyard long since deserted and grown desolate.

Religions whose ambition is the mere numerical increase of congregational attendance, and the acquisition of political power or economic influence, or whose procedure rests on the subtle tactics of coercive hypocrisy, pragmatic persuasion or casuist equivocation, always preach about rewards and punishments, they always argue redemption for credulity and damnation for doubt, rosaries for the righteous and our vengeance for the wrong. Little is said to reveal their true motives, the actuating will that dictates how their propaganda shall run; and even less is intimated to show the monstrous lies on which they thrive. There is still no scientific proof under test conditions of the truth supposed to underly either theosophy or spiritism; there is no non-casuist conciliation between modernism and the new papal Syllabus, between Unitarian Nature-love and the Baptist "fundamentals" of pseudo-science. That there is going on right now an internecine conflict of religious opinion affecting the very life and prestige of sectarian institutionalism, witness the recent religious socialism in Germany and England, modernism in France, Fascisti concessions in Italy, the Ghandi non-cooperative revolt in India, and in our own contemporary America the Episcopal panic over Bishop Manning's charge of heresy against Dr. Percy Grant and Rev. John Holmes for denouncing the clerical hypocrisies of today. Since when did it become a crime, heresy or taboo for anyone to reveal the fallacies, profits and follies of "sacred" church power if its theory and practice are really innocent and clear of such culpability? Presumptuous power resisted gives rise to retaliation

and revenge; it seems to forget the Arminian maxim that even those who resist or relapse from Divine Grace are still entitled to redemption through regeneration of mind and heart. This is not the age of Inquisition or Amende Honorable; nor is it timely now-a-days to conceive devotion or piety in terms of demonology from Zoroaster, Ukert or Eschmayer. Hedonism, happiness, sophistry, eudaemonism, hypocrisy, pragmatic rituals, casuist codes and rhyomistic propaganda are in full swing and style these days, and anyone who has the temerity to tamper with any of the "Follies of 1923" might as well have also the patience and fortitude to bear all sorts of persecution and malicious mockery. We must remember that Nietzsche's Anglophobia was significantly centered on Carlyle instead of Gladstone or Tennyson.

In many of the Greek myths we find expressions of their notion of religious vengeance; Sisyphus, the Danaides, Tithyos are three examples of eternal expiation through useless toil in the hereafter; the Furies, Fates, Homer's demonology and Hesoid's description of Tartarus were conceptions devised to presage the tortures of the wicked and corrupt. Right here and now we have Chaos, Hades, Gehenna, El Araf, Purgatory, Hamast Gehan or whatever verbal label you wish to pin on the world, but we have not yet tasted the bitter belladonna of Tartarus. Sheol, Hell or Kismet. In Rome, before the civil strife ending plebian subjection and punishment for debt, laws were always favorable to the aristocracy because the aristocracy made them, political power being vested in the patrician families who alone had ancestral gods and hence authority to govern (?). It was several centuries later, during the last years of the republic that the plebians found measures of relief and obtained a voice in the way they were to be governed. It was partly through the patrician decadence, the growth of the new merchant class into a more democratic plutocracy and the Marian confidence in yeomanry as the backbone of the whole state preservation, but principally through the simple fact that the plebians had been wise enough (or at least fortunate enough in having leaders capable enough) to establish moral and ritual relationship with the divinities of the public pantheon.

Another phase of the subject is this: Seventeen years ago, when a separation of the Church and State was effected in France, much umbrage and imputation of ulterior motives were in evidence on both sides of the controversy. Both the Papal Encyclical of Pius X and the manifesto of Cardinal Gibbons voiced loud protest and condem-

nation of the action with arguments that American examples of pragmatic religion were really expressions of hatred and revolt against Catholicism. But the automorphic judgments did not avail, and Paul Sabatier's *Lettre Ouverte* offered the very effective rebuttal that clericalism within the Church itself was more dangerously radical and subversive of the progressive Cultus than any secular body because they made merchandise of their office and sold their sanctuary to gain favorable governmental decision of property rights, increased appropriations and sovereignties. Boutroux says this shows that religion proceeds not from power to duty but from duty to power, taking for granted that the problem of evil is solved—a chimerical assumption, indeed!

Dostoievsky confesses naively that "Reality has caught me on a hook," and writes whole volumes to describe how the same hook has also caught narodniki and intelligentsia alike. It was his literary ambition to lay before us the significance of all cynical subjects, and as much of our difficulty is in moral heaviness, so does his treatment of this significance and difficulty become ponderous and voluminous. However, his mystical terror is to him the supreme reality behind all novel situations of dramatic significance. The eventual, the actual, be it pleasure or pain, happiness or horror, virtue or vice, is the great absorbing objective of his mental curiosity and character-analysis; and this objective aim, even, is actualized, included and solidified into a supplement to the cosmic chronicle of facts, calamities, laws and events. But Gogol, Pushkin and Tyutchev were his predecessors in this refinement of actualism; even some metaphysical relation might be established or recognized between Dostoievsky and Duhring. Both had a double-edged but non-scientific psychology, both were extremely anti-religious, anti-historical thinkers; they differed only on the question of mysticism, value and destiny in man's life. The former was too self-conscious, too much a slave to the fearsome introspections of a soul-fascinated epileptic, to let the world retain its aesthetic aloofness and cultural continuity; that is, its rare moments of ecstatic beauty-thoughts, its exaltation of "special spirituality and sudden idealities," were too stimulating, too narcotic for his religious equilibrium. Hence, he divided history into two eras: one from savagery to the annihilation of God, and the other from God's annihilation to the ultimate transcendence and transfiguration of man. But these climacteric epochs, even, are yet only members to his spasmodic train of peirastic efforts at being and loving, thinking and doing; they are the dreamy work of a

sleepy but insomniac world. Dostoevsky's is a purely racial (i. e. Russian) type of religion, and hence is full of the Slavic abruptness and obtuse soul-chaos of simple spiritual desire. To be either angel or beast depends on whether we seek civilization and progress or delinquency and atavism, whether we live inwardly and upwardly or outwardly and backwardly. With life presented in a vast moral dilemma, as it was to Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky finds that we are up against a sort of Schopenhauerian problem of choice; to either assert selfishly or deny resignedly the will to live, the will to think, and even the will to suffer. Thus angel or beast is the only alternative allowed in his Gadarean answer to the problem of good and evil, or as they are in his ethical superlativism, Super-good and Infra-evil. Holy aspirations jog along side by side with the basest desires and the ficklest, most absurd convivialities. This is what discomposes the philosophies and disaffects the glamor, disenchants the fascination and disgusts the passion with which we of less chaotic notions look around at life and Nature, religion and morality. "The Idiot," "The Possessed," "Crime and Punishment," "Injured and Insulted"—all breathe (or as it would rather seem to our own literary sense suffocate) in a close, gruesome atmosphere of absurdity and insipidity, doubt and debauchery, sclerosis of heart and paresis of mind. Not atheistic rebellion but merely the indifferent irreverence of "something else" is often at the bottom of many of our derelict religions; they see only the rancor and wreck of a starving world, and make preachment from the meagre observation.

The world may well be the same old "Devil's Vaudeville" that it was in Balzac's day, perceived only by the pernicious sniffers after trouble and applauded only by those devotees of malicious mysticism who thrive on vengeful self-consciousness and crimson wills to power. The life of man as cockroach opportunist is aimless and precarious, narrow and despicable; but the life of man as hero and divine aspirant is clear and true and aims straight toward the heavenly gate. Constance Garnett, who has translated many of Dostoevsky's works into English, says that his religion is largely a recapitulation and recital of the various phases (from the Russian viewpoint) of that eternal conflict between the humble and the proud, between the mystic and the machine, between original genius and academic tradition, dreams and despotism, just freedom and mandatory exploitation. This reminds us of Tolstoi's apologetic for violence on the ground that it frees us from the strain of dreary attention and from the wearying labor necessary to overcome an obstacle or solve some dif-

ficult social problem. Alexander's penchant for violence is illustrated in the story of his cutting the Gordon Knot with his sword without even trying to untie it. It was Tolstoi who befriended the "spirit-wrestling" Doukhobors in their flight from czarist conscription, and said that "a certain variety of church Christians do not want to serve God, but want God to serve them; that is the only reason they join the church." He also ridiculed the automorphism and self-seeking assumptions of prayer, saying that "Prayer is directed to a personal God, not because God is personal (I know as a matter of fact that He is not personal, because the personal is finite, while God is infinite), but because I myself am a personal being." This sort of humanism in the motives of prayer show that it is more rhyomistic than religious and less worthy than the out-and-out wheedling beggary of a presumptuous persuasion. It leaves plenty of room for umbrage and imputation, rancor and revenge. Emerson, however, has refuted this view by holding that "with a truly reverent heart prayer is no selfish petition, but is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul." Yes, and with an honest piety and aspiration, prayer is the sesame which opens the magic doors of wisdom, peace, virtue, justice and social joy.



## WORDS AND MOODS

BY FREDERICK HERBERT ADLER

Man's words are various as are his moods—  
The tones of some rouse melancholy thought,  
With memory of friends now long since gone.  
The drowsy scent of poppies whiffed from these  
Recalls the ether ante-room of Death.  
All gray words bear the lapsing wail of waves,  
Or travail-cry that means beginning life.  
Great by-words of the centuries seem veiled,  
Like sighs escaped from heart that's soon to break.

Still others make me sad, with pensive moan  
Of withered grasses on neglected graves,  
A threnody oft sung by autumn winds;  
The broken words, as mumbled by the soul,  
When quivered stroke is piercing its own core.  
Then those that wreak of dank and mouldered vaults,  
Of lichened tombs in groves of spirit shades.  
And these whose gently uttered sound soothes grief,  
As voice of one most dear through silence heard.

Unspoken words can cause a wonder grow.  
With lyric flow of molten tropic seas.  
While some convey spring's bloom-entangled notes,  
Or slender tunes from horns of Elfland blown;  
The pulsing quiet of the heath, which broods  
With floating whispers of a lost banshee.  
The awe of Sabbath forest others yield,  
And secret code of silvered hill at night,  
Like message sent by God to earth in sleep.

With Beauty's gift those words seem all aglow,  
Whose tones resolve in music, soft and sweet.  
With magic cadence, rhythmic, throbbing full.  
These echo splendor of another realm :  
Retell the murmurs delved by ear of night,  
More ancient than the rivers, rocks and rills.  
Still others quicken strains of dead refrains ;  
Stir thoughts of sun-steeped spaces, lying hence.  
While time-worn words can sing like thin-spun gold.

But some I know will make my heart rejoice—  
The living words that my whole being cleave,  
As hidden, mystic phrase, enraptured mood,  
All filled with cosmic notes of God's Own Love.  
They, too, purl forth a vision, heaven-breathed,  
The sun-borne promise of an ampler day.  
Such words will set the chords of Life in tune,  
To join with Nature in her voiceless prayer  
Of worship in Eternity's grand hymn!

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