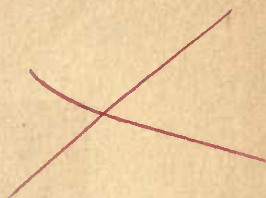

OURSELVES AND THE UNIVERSE.

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Studies in Life and Religion

BY

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AUTHOR'S NOTE.

I HAVE given to the following Studies the title they bear because it expresses the fact which all religious thinking needs to recognise, that spiritual teaching must henceforth be a cosmic teaching. The facts and experiences on which religion is based, if they are to make to us their legitimate appeal, must be set in the framework of that new Universe which modern research has opened to us. The themes discussed, as will be seen, are sufficiently varied, but it will be found, I believe, that they are united in this one conception.

J. B.

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Ourselves and the Universe.

I.

A Roomier Universe.

Our English winter compensates for its gloom and rigours by offering us now and then a night of extraordinary splendour. The solitary country wayfarer has, on these occasions, his gaze irresistibly drawn by the solemn magnificence of the spectacle above. He is tempted to forget earth while he has speech with the constellations. The starry hosts, "that great and awful city of God," gleaming with a lustre rare in these latitudes, send their mighty message straight to the heart. From the beginning men have pondered that message. The earliest theologies have been astronomical. The European and classical names for God go back to the old Sanscrit word for the sunrise. Stonehenge is a temple of the sun, and our

leading ecclesiastical festivals of to-day are baptized survivals of customs, existing in the dawn of history, which had their origin in observed movements of the heavens.

To-day our theology is again being touched from the stars. The telescope has proved a veritable instrument of revelation, and what it has revealed stirs our inward life to its centre. Since it began to sweep the heavens man has had to domesticate himself in a new universe. In his earlier thinking creation was a comparatively snug affair. The earth was its centre and man its *raison d'être.* Our planet was the fixed point round which everything revolved. The sun was created to give man light by day, the moon and stars to shine on him by night. At a handy distance above him was a paradise for the good, and beneath, within equally easy reach, an avernus for the wicked. The astronomer has overturned this theology for us. The scene he discloses is one in which our earth is found to be the insignificant satellite of a sun nearly a million times bigger, but which in its turn is only a speck in the surrounding immensity. He talks to us of fifty million stars as visible with the telescope, each one a mighty sun, the centre probably of

planetary systems full, for aught we know, of conscious life. He describes the distances of these worlds by the centuries of years which it takes light, flying at its rate of inconceivable swiftness, to cross the gulf between themselves and us; or, what is not less bewildering, by showing us that a star viewed by us in January, and then again in June, when we are one hundred and eighty million miles from our earlier standpoint, has not altered its apparent position by a hair's-breadth. We are indeed the denizens of a roomier universe!

But the point for us here is in the effect which this immense widening of the human outlook has had, and is likely to have, upon man's religious conceptions, and his accompanying spiritual life. The first result has been undoubtedly one of profound disquiet. It is hardly worth while to blame the Church for her treatment of Galileo. She was acting here strictly in accord with average human nature, which dislikes nothing more than to be turned from its old familiar thought-habitations into a fresh one to which it is not yet accustomed. Man is bound to the old mental home by a thousand ties, and suspects that he will catch his death of cold in the new. Our religious

teachers are a long way yet from having got accustomed to the roomier universe. Hazlitt's gibe that "in the days of Jacob there was a ladder between heaven and earth, but now the heavens have gone farther off and are become astronomical," suggests a problem that still puzzles sorely many an honest pulpiteer. A well-known popular preacher, in a sermon on heaven, laid it down as a leading proposition that heaven was a place above us, and cited passages of Scripture to prove that the departure of the glorified was always an ascent. In this argument it seemed to have been forgotten that an "ascent" from London and an "ascent" from Melbourne would take the "ascenders" in exactly opposite directions. "Above" and "beneath," so far as space and locality are concerned, have been emptied of their meaning by astronomy, and it is time that religious teachers of all persuasions took account of so elementary a fact. What is the exact significance for the inner life of this feature of the astronomical revelation we may inquire presently.

Meanwhile it is worth observing that the mental confusion, and one may say distress, which the breaking down of the older concep-

tions has caused, is by no means confined to the ecclesiastical world or to mediocre minds. It has been felt in an acute degree by thinkers of the first order. The cry of Pascal, "The eternal silence of the infinite spaces terrifies me," is echoed by our own Watson:

> But oftentimes he feels
> The intolerable vastness bow him down,
> The awful homeless spaces scare his soul.

Carlyle, too, was dominated by this feeling when a friend whom he had accompanied to the door of his house at Chelsea, and who had pointed to the brilliant starlit heavens as "a glorious sight," got from him the reply, "Man, it's just dreadful!" It is evident that even the highest human thinking has not yet become fully acclimatised to immensity.

And yet the signs are multiplying that we are at the dawn of a new and better conception. Man is already feeling his way about in this larger habitation, and we may predict that by-and-by his inner life will be not only entirely at home in it, but gloriously free and exultant. As a proof of this let us note here one or two of the elements which the new conditions are causing to emerge in our spiritual consciousness.

It is infinitely reassuring, to begin with, to

realise that to the uttermost verge of these vast spaces we find not only everywhere the presence of Mind, but of the *same* Mind. The laws of light and heat and gravitation which obtain in London obtain in the Pleiades. The same King's writ evidently runs throughout the whole Empire. The old Roman's pride and sense of being at home when, in farthest Britain or by the remote Euxine, he saw the flash of Rome's eagles and heard the tramp of her legions, is, in a finer way, reproduced in loyal souls, who to-day find the Power they adore exercising a sway which, at no furthest remove in this stupendous whole, is contravened. If the universe, through all its suns and systems, knows but one Master of the House, who is already known to us, there is enough here surely to thaw out all the chill of strangeness and to make the cosmic spaces to their uttermost reach friendly and homelike.

But this is only the beginning. There is immense spiritual inspiration in this other message of the telescope, that life altogether is larger than our fathers imagined. For the idea grows upon us that if the material realm of which we form a part is so much vaster than

we deemed, so in like manner must be that spiritual realm to which we also belong. That our poets and philosophers should sing and write as though creation's greatness spells man's littleness is, when one thinks of it, the oddest perversion. It supposes that we are dwarfed by the immensity of the whole, whereas it is this very vastness, properly considered, that enhances the worth of our own life. For we are not only in the universe, but the universe is in us. It plays through us, finding in the soul the organ of its consciousness. The greater the whole, the mightier the throb of its pulsation through us who are its parts.

More than that. The greater the universe, the greater its Maker. The dimension of the one helps us to conceive the proportions of the other. But in a great nature it is ever the moral quality that counts most. If God in these later ages has astonished us by the revelations of His material side, what surprises may He not have in store on the side that is spiritual? If His power is expressed in the worlds that populate the Milky Way, what is the love that is proportioned to such a Power, and what may we not expect from it?

But the most important message of the stars is yet to be stated, and must be put into a line. It is that of the absolute spirituality of true religion. The widening of the outer heavens is the cosmic emphasis upon the word of Jesus: "Neither shall ye say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you." Astronomy puts the veto on external pilgrimings, as aids to religion. We might journey from here to Arcturus and be no whit nearer God. The movement needed is of another kind, in another sphere. Religion's "above" and "beneath" have nothing to do with location. They are states of the heart. To get on here we need not to change our place but our ways. We reach heaven not through the clouds but through our own souls. It comes into us, and we come into it, in proportion to the stages we make in faith, in love, in humility of spirit. As we move along this line of things what we are chiefly conscious of is not so much the roomier realm of the stars, majestic though that be, as the roomier realm of the soul. How the two are exactly related does not yet appear. Enough if we realise that the inconceivable vastness of the one stands over against the inconceivable vastness of the other.

Citizens of a boundless physical universe, let us rejoice most in our fellowship in that spiritual kingdom whose treasures an inspired voice has thus described: "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

II.

The Divine Indifference.

THERE are times in history when a mortal chill seems to fall upon the human soul. A deadly suspicion spreads abroad that man is, after all, in a universe that is deaf and dumb to his prayer. The impression gains that morality and spirituality; faith, hope, love—all the things that make life precious and holy—are phenomena simply of our own consciousness, and that there is no evidence of there being anything corresponding to them outside. Men argue that our moral code is provincial, that its writ does not run beyond given boundaries. It is valid for certain spheres of human conduct. It is, for instance, correct to say that industry produces prosperity, that sobriety and frugality promote health, while dissipation induces disease; that love and self-sacrifice have what seems an ennobling effect upon our sensibilities. But how far does this carry as related to the immeasurable realm outside? Nature appears

to know nothing of our morality. She slays wholesale, and in her slaying takes no heed of ethical distinction. When the ship goes down, or the earthquake engulfs the city, the pious and prayerful are swept away just as remorselessly as the murderer and the thief. People living sheltered lives may dream of love as at the heart of things; but the man on a raft in the pitiless Atlantic, or staggering, lost and hopeless, to his death in the Australian bush, finds no suggestion of this friendliness.

There are times, we say, when such considerations come upon men with crushing force. The earthquake at Lisbon, it is said, made multitudes of people atheists. It is strange, by the way, to remember that the call to faith in view of that catastrophe was given in Europe by no other than Voltaire, who wrote a poem counselling silent and trustful resignation in face of an inscrutable Providence. In events of this kind Nature seems to outrage our best instincts. We should not wonder if the survivors of the tidal wave at Galveston found their faith as well as their property submerged. At such times men echo Carlyle's outburst, "God sits in heaven and does nothing!" And history often staggers us as much as

Nature. We picture to ourselves what happens in a single twenty-four hours on this planet—hideous massacres in China, the kidnapping of slaves in Central Africa, the brutal orgies repeated every night in the great cities, with their engulfments of virtue, their defiance of God; these things happen, and there seems no outside response, no faintest sign that any moral sensitiveness beyond our own has thereby been touched.

Brooding of this kind is very rife to-day, and it has produced the singular result of a religious scepticism that has morality for its chief support. Man has become conscientious, but cannot find a conscience in the universe. He thinks himself better than his world, and is ready to propose an evangelistic mission amongst the unseen powers. The modern mind shows us in every direction the bewilderment into which it has fallen. It serves us up afresh the denials of Lucretius, and the despair of Omar Khayyám. It repeats Heine's scoff at the world as "an age-long riddle which only fools expect to solve." It lowers its conception of God to the "Fortuna omnipotens et ineluctabile fatum" of Virgil, or declares with the messenger in the Antigone that "it is

but chance that raiseth up, and chance that bringeth low, . . . and none foretells a man's appointed lot." The heavens offer to it the grim spectacle of

> Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
> Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
> His nothingness into man.

A Nietsche treats man as a mere passing phase of existence, a Watson as Nature's chance child:

> Through untold æons vast
> She let him lurk and cower;
> 'Twould seem he climbed at last
> In mere fortuitous hour,
> Child of a thousand chances 'neath the indifferent sky.

And yet in all this the chief puzzle to us lies not in the world-problems that are presented, but in the fact that men in such numbers, and often of such conspicuous ability, should so misconceive the whole question. For, when everything is said, what does this supposed evidence about "the Divine indifference" amount to? Looked at narrowly, it resolves itself into a series of surface appearances of really no weight as against the other side. We will not linger here in the region of

the too obvious, otherwise we might point out that to grumble because the good man as well as the evil perishes in a shipwreck or falls from a precipice is to impeach one of our best friends and safeguards. The unvarying action of the laws of Nature may drown a man here and there, or break him in pieces at the bottom of a cliff, but what kind of a world should we have if this uniformity ceased, and gravitation pulled up or down at any man's whim or need? Our navigation, our building, our engineering, the whole of our mechanical arts, the whole progress of the sciences; more than that, the whole education of the mind, its forethought, its calculation, its coolness, its courage, depend upon the faith we have in Nature's guarantee that she will keep to her course and not deviate at random from her established line of things.

But what of those who get the rough side of this uniformity, whom it buffets or crushes? Why is Nature in places so horribly fierce, so utterly cruel? As a rule the men who know most of that fierceness, the mariners buffeted in Bay of Biscay gales, the explorers of Antarctic wastes, are just the people who do not complain. Roughness is one thing to a

nincompoop, another thing to a man. "What," such men are inclined to say, "would you have us cockered up and kept all our days in cotton-wool? God thinks too well of us to leave us to such a fate." Nature's wild and remorseless energy is the field on which they reach their strength. And when things have come to the worst, and some disaster which no courage or skill can avert crashes down and leaves ruin behind, can we argue as though the world's moral laws have here been defied or annulled? If we will only look below the surface we shall see that it is precisely here, on the contrary, they get their most decisive vindication. There is no such thing as "one event happening to all." Each man's event happens according to what he is and not otherwise. The shipwreck which carries fifty men to the bottom varies in its aspect to every one of them by the whole range of his moral and spiritual constitution. When the three were crucified at Golgotha there was, to the outer eye, no difference in the fortune of the sufferers. The indifferent soldiers performed their functions, and indifferent Nature performed hers. There were equally for all crosses, nails, tortures, thirsts, death. And yet this one event to the three

who suffered it stood separate as to its personal significances by the whole diameter of the universe. Even that old pagan Montaigne had the grace given him to see this, and remarks somewhere that "external occasions take both flavour and colour from the internal constitution." Whatever happens in the region of men's physical and material fates, not a hair's breadth of deviation shows in the operation there of the moral and spiritual laws.

But what to the modern conscience is, perhaps, the greatest stumbling-block of all remains yet to be dealt with. This lies in what seems "the Divine indifference" to man's moral and religious aspirations. Earnest men watch with dismay the immoralities around them, the orgies of lust and crime, the prosperity of villains, the grinding of the poor, and in their struggle against it they seem to get no help. They read of earlier revelations and interpositions, but the events of to-day appear to carry "no revelation except that nobody cares." At times the dumb silence of that outside universe to which we turn our eyes seems almost maddening. But here again we are out of our reckoning simply because our observations are faulty. There is nothing

wrong with the heavens; it is our sextant and compass that need adjustment. For how do we expect God to interfere in the world's moral history? Shall He visit the wicked with fiery cataclysms? That would be history in the sphere of phenomena and sensation, but it would in no sense be moral history. If we will only look deep enough we may see that God, conceived as moral and spiritual, is acting precisely in the way we should expect. So far from being indifferent, He offers an ever-growing revelation of His moral care. His universe is not silent on this point. The mistake men make is in looking for speech in the wrong direction. Schelling long ago indicated the law of the Divine working here in the aphorism, "Only the personal can help the personal, and God must become man in order that man may come again to God." His entire approach to us is by immanence and incarnation. The developing sentiment of the moral community, the sentiment which protests against injustice and works for a better order, is simply His voice in the world. He speaks to man *through* man and no other way. Our very impatience with the oppositions and the slow progress is but the rush of the stream of His life in the

too narrow channels of our limited nature The revolt of our conscience against the low moral order is His battle-cry for a better one.

To sum up. "The Divine Indifference" is apparent, and not real. The universe, despite surface appearances to the contrary, discloses a Divine moral order and a Divine moral passion, the revelation of which is in the human consciousness. God can only make Himself known morally in the sphere of the soul, and there He *does* make Himself known. Any man to-day, if he chooses, can have the consciousness of God in his own spirit. In view of this it is well for us "to bear without resentment the Divine reserve." With a modern French writer we realise that "the sincere acceptance of the inevitable supposes a love for the inevitable, the consciousness that this obscure universe has a mysterious and kindly significance." We go farther. Those who penetrate to its centre find there clear sky and angels' food. To him that overcometh is given to eat of the hidden manna.

III.

Truth's Spiritual Equivalents.

The debt of theology to science is, perhaps, nowhere more strikingly illustrated than in the light which modern discovery in the latter field is shedding upon some of the most difficult problems of religious thought. One of the brightest rays of this new illumination is that which streams from the scientific law of the transmutation and equivalence of energy. The fact, now so familiar to us, that force is constant; that it is capable of infinite transformation while remaining the same in quantity; that so much motion can be turned into so much heat, or light or electricity, and back again through all the series, without the loss of a fraction of it—irresistibly raises the question whether a similar law may not be discerned in other spheres. We propose here to follow out this suggestion in one particular direction, and to ask whether evidence does not exist of a law of equivalency between moral or

spiritual feeling and intellectual truth. Can it be said that a given moral emotion argues always the presence somewhere of a corresponding truth for the intellect? Is what is noblest in the moral life truest as a fact? Can what the soul realises as the highest in its inner feeling be taken as a proof of an objective reality that the reason may recognise? Before we have done we shall hope to show that the topic is a practical one, and that the applications of it are of the first importance.

We need not stop here to investigate the precise philosophical relations between thought and feeling, nor to inquire to what extent, in a given mental state, feeling is amalgamated with thought. It is sufficient for our purpose to go upon the distinction, broadly marked in every man's consciousness, between his reason and his emotions. To indicate precisely what we are inquiring after, let us take a concrete illustration. The first appeal to a man of a volcano in eruption would be to his feeling. After the initial act of perception what he would be immediately conscious of would be sensations of wonder, admiration, awe, perhaps terror. But if he were a scientific man, there would be a supervening play of faculties upon

this spectacle of a totally different order. He would find himself speculating about the causes of the phenomenon. What has happened to his emotions has suggested a problem to his intellect. Now the point we wish here to bring out is that his investigation would proceed upon the supposition that the feeling just raised in him had somewhere a full objective equivalent; that the awe, wonder, terror, in the sphere of his emotions were a correct, though as yet undeciphered, register of outside causes and forces which it was for his intellect to interpret.

We can proceed now immediately to the application of this to the problems of religion, and especially of New Testament religion. The religious appeal, both to the race and to the individual, is first of all to the emotions. The cry of Faust, "*Gefühl ist alles*," is a strained expression of the fundamental truth on which Schleiermacher built, that the heart, the moral consciousness, is the true theologian. We turn the pages of the Gospels and the Epistles to find—what? Not an argument, a definite appeal to the intellect, but an exhibition of emotions and of acts consequent upon emotions. Like our traveller in presence of the volcanic

eruption, the first Christians, we find, are full of an immense complex of feeling to which they are here trying to give expression. The traveller's phenomenon is the volcano; their phenomenon is Christ. The traveller, as a scientific man, is convinced that the immense impression on his senses has an exact equivalent behind it of objective fact. And the question of questions for us to-day is whether we are not entitled to apply this same law to the impression made on the first disciples by the Master of whom they write.

Let it here be observed that the force of this consideration is in no way lessened by the criticism that the language in the New Testament which describes these impressions may possibly be inexact or hyperbolical. We may accept it as perfectly true that the titles given there to Christ, such as the Son of God, the Logos, the Messiah, were not coined by the writers, but were already familiar to the Jewish Messianic theology. When all this is granted we have stlll this position remaining and to be accounted for, that the life, words, and works of Christ had produced in His followers an emotional and moral condition—an awe, a wonder, a love, a sense of holiness, a hatred

of sin, a consciousness in them of spiritually renovating power such as had never before been reached in the human soul. The question is, What were the dimensions of the objective fact capable of producing this inner effect? Science demands that for every result there must be an adequate cause. What was the cause adequate to this effect? In this conjunction it is really ludicrous to observe the attempts of the Comtists to make Paul the effective author of Christianity. To exalt Paul, and in the same breath to nullify his one life testimony is surely a strange procedure. To the really scientific student of Paul's utterances, of those ever-repeated asseverances that Christ is everything and himself nothing; that his whole inner life, so far as it is good, is a derivation from Christ—the one question is, What or who was He who could produce such an impression upon such a mind?

The argument which looms out of all this is immensely strengthened when we remember that these inward impressions are not an affair of testimony merely, but have been a matter of continuous experience in human history ever since. The inward thrill which Paul and John felt at the presence of Christ, and which they

tried to translate into words, has been felt ever since, and is felt to-day. Into the histories of Christ, as we have them, we may have to admit that something legendary has crept. But in the love and joy which He made to spring up in human hearts, the sense of forgiveness, of sonship, of inward sanctifying, there was nothing legendary. There is nothing legendary either about the same experiences which fill the souls of men to-day wherever He is preached and accepted. But what is the intellectual equivalent of such a feeling as this? Theology has through all the ages been trying to find it for us, and has not succeeded any too well. But whatever the formula we accept as to the Person of Christ, this at least the scientific as well as the Christian consciousness demands, that it shall not be lower than the effect. The apostles and first witnesses felt that their soul had been in contact with God, and they said so. The living Church, though it may vary its phraseology, repeats the affirmation. As Hermann puts it: "None of us can come as a witness to the virgin birth; one can only report it. But that the spiritual life of Jesus has not proceeded from the sinful race, but that in Him God Himself has stepped into the history of

the race, of that we can be witnesses, for this knowledge forms a part of that which we ourselves have experienced."

The value of this line of argument to the central positions of Christianity will, perhaps, not be immediately patent to us all. But in the days of theological storm and stress that are coming, when the tempest of New Testament criticism which already in Germany has wrought such havoc upon earlier conceptions has made its force fully felt in England, it will be realised that here is faith's central and impregnable defence.

And the suggestion we have here been following, that the morally highest has its equivalent in the intellectually truest, and *vice versâ*, will be found to apply with excellent results in other of the problems of religion and life. It may, for instance, be safely taken for granted that whatever contradicts the soul's highest moral witness is thereby proved intellectually false. When, for example, the last century listened to the scornful criticisms of Diderot, Condorcet, and the other encyclopædists on Christianity as "most absurd and atrocious in its dogmas, most insipid, most gloomy, most Gothic, most puerile, most un-

sociable in its morals," and so on, the inward sense of untutored Christians knew them wrong, though it took another century for the critically educated intellect to discover precisely where the error lay. And conversely, when from the supposedly orthodox side doctrines are presented to us as Christian which the moral consciousness revolts against, we may rest assured that, however venerable the authority against which it reacts, the verdict of feeling here will turn out to have its full equivalent in the ultimate presentment of the reason. When the Puritan Cartwright, offering what he supposes is Scriptural confirmation of religious persecution, exclaims, "If this be regarded as extreame and bloodie I am glad to be so with the Holy Ghost," we know he is wrong long before we discover the arguments that prove it. But the feeling and the arguments tally in the end. In general it may be stated that whatever in the way of teaching detracts from reverence, from love, from self-sacrifice, on the one side, and on the other limits liberty and deadens the instinct for truth, is thereby, without further evidence, certified by the soul as false. The moral criterion is linked indissolubly with the intellectual one.

From the foregoing exposition a number of results follow which we can here only in the briefest way indicate. One is that the Church which fails to produce the highest inward states is proved thereby defective in its teaching. Conversely, the higher spiritual conditions, wherever we find them, are the surest of all religious evidences. The inward life of a saint points as certainly to an actually existent spiritual world as the colouring of a flower to the existence and potencies of light. When, however, we say that the highest life can only be nourished on the highest truth it is not meant that the form in which the truth is held is always necessarily the best. Some of the noblest lives we have known have been nourished on doctrines many of which, in the form they were held, we should reject. But the very fact that a doctrine has helped to nourish a holy character is, if our analysis is correct, proof that, however defective its form or expression, its substance is true. Whatever has helped to make men better is always intellectually as well as morally verifiable. It was precisely this argument, from the moral to the intellectual, that in the second century turned Justin Martyr from a pagan into a Christian,

and that, in the nineteenth, brought Tolstoi from sceptical pessimism to the optimism of faith. The pagan philosopher tells us how, studying the lives of the early Christians, he realised that such moral effects must have fact and truth for the cause, and the Russian has testified that when "I saw around me people who, having this faith, derived from it an idea of life that gave them strength to live and strength to die in peace and in joy," the moral logic of the spectacle subdued him.

The Church need never worry itself about giving a complete intellectual expression to the life that is in it. For what is the meaning of the breakdowns of its past theologies? Is it not simply that the truth hidden behind its life is something vaster than any of its mental forms can contain?

IV.

The Inwardness of Events.

Ours is the age of scientific analysis, and it might seem at first sight as though the whole of life had come under its sway. While our chemistry resolves every substance into its elements, our psychology proposes to unravel every complex of the consciousness. We put both our outer and our inner world into the crucible, and are ready with an approved book formula for each. There is, however, one life element left out of this calculation. It is that of events and of what they contain. Our science of events is as yet that of the veriest tyro. It is this fact which makes so much of what is called history veritably ludicrous when regarded as a statement of what actually is, or has been. For our historian, in numberless instances, offers us the mere surface and ragged edges of a happening, as though this were the whole of it. A Froissart pictures one battle scene after another, or a Guicciardini describes

the intrigues and wars of the Italian states "without," as Montaigne remarks, "ever referring any action to virtue, religion or conscience," and they imagine that here they have told us all. As a matter of fact, they have told us almost nothing. It is only when we begin to realise that every event, in addition to its outer form, has an inward life of its own, mystical, infinitely complex, whose full development may take centuries and millenniums to unfold, that we are in a position to study it aright.

It is, indeed, when we properly consider events and their inner significance that we are most stirred with a sense of life's wonder and mystery. The event is our predestination. Men propose at times to construct their career from within, as when a Jerome flies to his cell in the desert, or a Descartes, in search of a philosophy, passes three years in his chamber without seeing a single friend, or so much as going out for a walk. But wherever made, the attempt is impossible. The recluse, as well as the man of action, has to reckon with the incalculable that waits for him outside. These innumerable fates that are in the path of every human being, what is their meaning? They

bide their hour till the wayfarer they are in search of appears, and then leap to meet him. They know him by sight when he comes. It is for him they are waiting. From all eternity that event has been travelling to meet *me* at this particular point and to deliver its message. Its shock of contact becomes immediately a part of my deepest life, for it is the something outside myself that produces what it were impossible for the unaided spirit to originate. It and I were assuredly wedded in heaven before the world was.

It is a great step in the interpretation of life when we have discovered that all events are ultimately spiritual. Their outside may seem at the furthest remove from any such character, but we have only to go deep enough to find that this is the simple truth about them. The fall of Jerusalem was to Jeremiah and his contemporaries just a bloody and horrible catastrophe. Within it was contained the movement which led up to the revelation of God as henceforth not the tribal deity of Judah, but the one God and Creator of all nations of the earth. The split in the Papacy, which gave fourteenth century Christendom two rival and mutually anathematising Popes, was, to innumerable devout

Catholics, only a distressing quarrel and a grievous religious scandal. At its centre the spectacle held the germ of that appeal of the Christian consciousness from fallible and rival ecclesiastics to Christ Himself, which issued in the Reformation. When shall we ever reach the central inwardness of the event we call the Crucifixion? In itself, on the outside, it was a sheer, grim fact, a hideous killing. It was not speech, nor music, nor poetry, nor art, nor philosophy, nor saving power. It was the doing to death of a victim in the cruel Roman fashion. And yet, as we press toward the inner recesses of this fact, how much do we meet of art and philosophy and devotion and saving power, and all Divine things that have already come out of it, and how much more, unreached as yet, remains behind?

This conception of events, as all containing a spiritual essence, which they will ultimately yield, should ever be with us in our estimate of the world's religious prospects. It is a ludicrous misconception which regards man's inward progress as dependent exclusively on the avowed and professional religious agencies. Guthenberg wore no cassock when puzzling over his printing-press, and George Stephenson,

in elaborating the idea of the locomotive, was conscious of no specially theological inspiration. Yet for their after influence in the development of religion what purely ecclesiastical procedure could we match against the invention of printing and of the steam-engine? An Egyptian excavator, stumbling some fine morning upon a Greek manuscript, say an *Ur-evangelium* of the first century, might upset for ever thereby the theological doubtings of a thousand years. Plainly the pulpit is not the only religious teacher. The roughest, rudest block of fact that lies across our path, giving no hint at first of aught in itself but what is purely material, may suddenly open, and from its store of hidden contents pour out undreamed-of spiritual treasures. Our study of missions, to be complete, must take a far wider scope than is usual. It must not end with biographies. Events are evangelists of the first order.

There is this advantage about events considered as teachers, that they are so entirely honest and trustworthy. Unlike so many of our religious instructors, they carry no top hamper of tradition, and they never worry us with preconceived theories. They neither lie

nor flatter, but bring us a lesson crammed with reality, and bid us make what we can of it. And yet here is the mystery. Out of what outwardly is the same thing none of us gets the same result. None of us will find this same thing to be the same. And for the reason that what it teaches is precisely according to what we are able to learn. Events yield their essence in proportion to the quality and character of the being in contact with them. They are thus, in a sense, the looking-glass in which we behold ourselves. "If you journey to the end of the world," says a modern mystic, "none but yourself shall you meet on the highway of fate."

When we consider the inconceivable numbers of events that sweep across our life pathway, their bewildering variety, their unexpectedness, their often sinister and even terrible aspect, we might easily be led to think that on their side, at least, we were in a world of chance, where was no complete or benign supervision. Events seem so often to be destroyers rather than teachers. A deeper study of them should reassure us. For it will show that in their seeming wildest aberrations they are subject to a spiritual law, the same which rules in our own breasts. It

is, indeed, by their constant attrition upon our life that the letters of this law are rubbed into distinctness. It is profoundly interesting to observe at how early a period the world gained a perception of this. The ancient doctrine of fate was a much higher one than we are apt to imagine. In the teaching of Heraclitus, and also of Plato, that fate was the general reason which runs through the whole nature of the universe, and in that of Chrysippus, who speaks of fate as a spiritual power which disposed the world in order, we have an idea, however imperfect, of the Divine purpose that is embedded in events. A clearer revelation has assured us that their source and end are the same as the source and end of the highest aspirations of the soul.

To discover and be firmly convinced of this higher law underlying events is, perhaps, the greatest result of the education through which they put us. To be quite assured that the event, however grisly its shape, can never hurt you provided you are faithful to the spiritual law; that, with this condition observed, it will, in fact, infallibly lift you a point higher in the scale of life, is practically the winning of the battle. This is where that stout New England

Puritan stood who, on a certain "Dark Day," when it was supposed that the end of the world had come, and the assembly of which he was a member was about to be adjourned, quietly observed: "If this be the Day of Judgment I prefer to be found at the post of duty; if it be not, there is no reason for an adjournment." And what a testimony on this point is that word of the dying Scaliger, given as the fruit of his life experience, to his disciple Heinsius: "Never do aught against thy inward conviction for the sake of advancement. Whatsoever is in thee is God's alone."

How intimately related the world of events is to the world of spiritual law is, perhaps, even still more vividly exhibited in the happenings to those who neglect or defy that law. It is impossible here to mistake the religious character of events. They become moral avengers. Schiller's dictum that "the world's history is the world's judgment," is a simple statement of the fact. "The deed," says the Indian proverb, "does not perish." Where it is an ill deed it lives to track down the evil-doer. Eugene Aram murders Daniel Clark, and buries the crime under fourteen following years of intellectual activity. He becomes famous as a

philologist, making his name known as the discoverer of a European affinity in Celtic roots. But his deed, deep buried, is not dead. It awakes and delivers its blow, and our philologist gets hanged as a murderer. Innumerable murderers have escaped hanging, but they can no more get away from their deed and its full results than the earth can get away from the sun.

The greatest evidence, perhaps, of the grandeur and infinite reach of the human destinies lies in this conscious exposure of the soul to the momentous events that await it. And especially those darker events which cast so chill a shadow before them. It may be that, as Livy says, "*Segnius homines bona quam mala sentiunt*": men have a keener sense of ill than of good. But what they feel so keenly as ill bears in itself a message that it is not the end. That deep word of Mrs. Browning, "But pain is not the fruit of pain," verifies itself. No, not pain, but something far other shall be the fruit of what we here suffer. Shall we not say, indeed, with a German writer of to-day: "Everything inferior is a higher in the making; everything hateful a coming beautiful, everything evil a coming good"? An inspired

apostle has given us the true inwardness of events, in the declaration that the present pain shall be swallowed up in the coming glory, and that no one of all the conceivable happenings in heaven or on earth can separate the people of God from the love of God.

V.

The Sins of Saints.

There is a saying reported of St. Teresa that "she saw one good thing in the world, namely, that it would not condone the faults of saints, and that the power of its murmurs made them the more perfect." The vivacious Spanish lady was here repeating one of the commonplaces of morals. She recounts the penalty which in every age visits those who profess a higher mode of living than that of their neighbours. Their very virtues are a danger. There is no such advertisement for a black spot as a white background. A reputable man may go on doing a thousand good things without attracting attention. Let him do one bad thing and the world will ring with it. And if the sins are not there they will be invented. If we judged the early Christians by the accounts of their enemies we should think them a set of scoundrels. According to these stories, they were atheists and child murderers; their

religious services were the occasion of nameless debauchery. Justin Martyr, in a striking passage tells how, in his heathen days, he had listened to these slanders against Christians until an investigation of their actual character showed him "it was impossible they could be living in wicked self-indulgence."

But the topic we are discussing is by no means summed up in observations of this kind. The "sins of saints" are not all inventions, nor even exceptions. There are grave faults attaching to some forms of the religious temperament against which all who seek a sane and wholesome way of living need to be on their guard. We have scarcely yet waked to the significance of the fact that Christ's severest criticisms were directed against this very type of character. The Pharisees were the Puritans of their time. Anyone inquiring after the saints then in vogue in Jewish society would have been directed to their ranks. The attitude of Jesus towards them, especially when compared with His attitude to less considered classes outside, is a revelation on our subject of the highest kind. It shows us how far, in the Supreme Teacher's estimate, is any one kind of temperament, even the most religiously attractive, from represent-

ing the wholeness of humanity; how easy it is to give to certain spiritual qualities a wholly false character value. It was a long experience of Richard Baxter, and one, let us remember, obtained amongst the severest types of religion, which led him in his old age to say: "I see that good men are not so good as I once thought they were, and find that few men are as bad as their enemies imagine."

But when we talk of the sins of saints we must first of all define,—What are sins, and what are saints? Both words represent a continuous development of ethical standard. We speak of the Old Testament "saints," and the word is, in respect to them, not at all a misnomer. Nevertheless, the man in the street of to-day, with no pretension to sanctity, would not dare to imitate their conduct. Did he attempt it he would find himself in gaol within a week. David was a true spiritual leader, but his actions, judged by our standard, would fit him for Portland rather than the pulpit of St. Paul's. It is absurd to judge of religious characters apart from the moral level of their own time. Even Christianity, with all its lustre of spiritual revelation, has had to wait for, and to work with, the tardy evolution of conscience age after

age. This slow and universal movement has put the common man of to-day in important respects far above the saints of even Christian centuries. And there is no room for a sneer in this. When we read of Augustine advocating religious persecution, of Calvin advising our protector Somerset "to punish well by the sword Catholics and fanatic gospellers," and especially to avoid moderation, and a saintly Fenelon approving the dragonnades, there is here no argument against sainthood, nor against those men as though they were mere pretenders to it. All that such illustrations show is, that the noblest personalities obey the law of their environments. The light in them, showing clear and full on certain sides, is on others merged in the common consciousness of the time.

It is not along such lines that the subject is really reached. No enlightenment comes, on this or any other theme, from the process of picking holes in the coats of great men of the past, doing their best under barbarous conditions. The really important study here is as to the special dangers of what may be called the spiritual temperament. Religion in its wholeness is, of course, something far other

than a temperament. There are, neverthe-less, departments of its expression for which certain temperaments seem specially fitted, and the possessors of these are almost certain to be chosen as guides and leaders. There are varieties here, widely differing, and an accur-ate analysis would have to take in a large gradation of subtle shadings. Speaking broadly, however, there are two well-marked forms of religious character, each wielding immense power, each capable of noble service, but open both of them to dangerous and even deadly defects. We may call them, respec-tively, the æsthetic and the ascetic.

The former, which in certain varieties might perhaps be even better described as the emotional, is singularly open to impression. Delicately strung, with an artist's soul for beauty, vibrating to life's subtlest overtones, with an intense sense of the awe and mystery of life, it is made for the religion of feeling. Its faith at the fullest is a rapture, an ecstasy. It is an epicureanism of the higher sensations. It beholds visions, it listens inwardly to melodies which no mortal music ever made, and when it comes to expression, there are none can speak so pleadingly, so persuasively. Men

listen as to angel voices. But all this is at a price. Humanity would have got on badly enough for its religion without this temperament, but still worse had it been the only one. As if to teach the lesson of the human solidarity, the lesson that the whole world of us, and no one individual or type, is the true man, we find this character full of weaknesses and leaning always heavily upon others.

There have been, indeed, souls of this order, with a beautiful spiritual expression, and yet so halting on other sides that they could not even preserve a decent morality. No more truly spiritual mind or greater spiritual teacher existed in the England of his time than Samuel Taylor Coleridge, but, on the side of conduct, what, to say the least, a poverty-stricken record! And in the next generation we have poor Hartley Coleridge, with religious instincts, fully as deep and keen, and the speech of an angel, yet mingled with animal outbursts which led him periodically to the sty! The genius for recognising spiritual beauty has, indeed, been too often weighted with an over-mastering passion for the sensuous. Our antinomian has soared so high as to get quite out of sight of the Ten Commandments. Within Chateau-

briand, says a modern critic, was an obscene Chateaubriand, and the same was true of Lamartine. Often enough the prophet of this order, after the moments of his highest exaltation, finds himself at closest grips with the devil.

Apart, however, from such open lapses, there are other weaknesses of the emotional religious temperament in much need of candid treatment, but which we cannot stop even to name. One only may we find room for in passing, and that is its frequent lack of sheer truthfulness. That defect in the religious minds of former ages is giving us no end of trouble to-day. If only the makers of church chronicles had had the grace to observe accurately and record faithfully! If only Pascal's maxim that "the first of Christian truths is that truth should be loved above all" could have been inscribed on the wall of every theologian's study! As it is we have the era of pious frauds, a Saint Bonaventura stuffing his life of another saint with impossible legends, and a Ritualist Oxford don of the nineteenth century emitting the sentiment, "Make yourselves clear that you are justified in deception and then lie like a trooper!" Before we have

got much further in the twentieth century it is to be hoped we shall have made up our minds that religion shall at least speak the truth.

We have space in closing for the barest mention of that other variety of the religious temperament—the ascetic—and of the moral defects which beset it. This character, of which every age produces specimens, with its superb reaction against the slothful indulgence of the masses, develops often into a potent and magnificent spiritual leadership. Founding itself on a heroic mysticism that discerns from the beginning the essential emptiness of material and sensuous pleasures, it presses on behind the veil to find its joy in spiritual reality. It is enamoured of renunciation, and finds a marvellous liberty in following that austere road which St. John of the Cross indicates in his motto: "Whatever you find pleasant to soul or body, abandon; whatsoever is painful, embrace it." Men of this temperament—and Pusey was a conspicuous example—have a sense of sin and shortcoming which causes them at times the keenest anguish. Yet, strangely enough, the defect most conspicuous in them is one of which they never think of accusing themselves. They have

found an inner world which is good and glorious, but they have made the prodigious mistake of declaring the world they have renounced to be intrinsically bad. It is not so, and that they have failed to see its goodness and enjoyableness is, if they only knew it, a fault far greater than those they deplore.

It is time we were done with the pseudo-Christianity whose leading characteristic is the exhalation of gloom. There is no grace in this November fog. Sourness is a crime of *lèse humanité.* To what, O my bilious brother, do you propose to convert the world? To your own grimness? It were hardly an improvement. The world wants saving into soundness and light, and it shows a healthy discrimination in refusing the overtures of morbidity and darkness. When the Church thoroughly understands this it will mend some of its ways. In teaching the higher life of the invisible, it will show always its appreciation of that fair world of the seen which is the other's vestibule. It will teach that man belongs to the two, and may be a proficient in both. It was said of Sir Walter Scott that he enjoyed more in twenty-four hours than other men did in a week. It should be counted to him as a grace.

The man who enjoys helps others to enjoy. He cannot keep his sunshine to himself. It is here that, turning from the imperfections of its followers, we see the Divine wholeness of the Master-life. A Prophet of the invisible, Christ knew and loved the seen. The world of birds and flowers, of happy sunshine and human fellowships, was also His world. A Messenger from the Centre, He dwelt with gladness in the outer court, knowing it also was a part of the Father's house.

VI.

The World's Beauty.

In the glowing summer days we are Nature's willing thralls. She invites us into her world to come and play. With the glee of children, we accept her invitation, and wander entranced in her realm of enchantments. To us all, prince or peasant, she offers royal entertainment. We step out of doors and are at once encircled by a more than regal pomp. She feasts us with beauty. No need to travel a thousand miles for it; it is here at hand. Our own island is packed with loveliness. We wander over four continents to discover we had left the best behind us. And this festival has been repeating itself without fail through thousands of years. We talk of the dark ages, but it is pleasant to remember that through them all Nature was giving our ancestors such good times. Chaucer's springs and summers were just as intoxicating as ours. The birds sang as merrily, the wild flowers were as sweet,

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the leaf of elm and oak was as green and comely, the streams were as clear, the skies as blue as in this year of grace. And it was good to be alive.

Has it ever occurred to us to investigate the meaning of the world's beauty? How comes it that Nature everywhere, whether in the wing of insect, or the clothing of the forest, or the blue concave above, or the clear depths of the river, or the craggy summit of the mountain, shapes herself to this loveliness, this grandeur? Why do we call a thing beautiful? What *is* beauty? Here we are upon questions that go deep. In search of answers we find ourselves thrown straight back upon the soul and its structure. For the beautiful is evidently a spiritual perception. Put a horse in front of our noblest prospect and it sees nothing of what we mean by the word. And the perception is one that unfolds only gradually in man himself. The savage has little sense of it. It has taken ages to develop this special response. And yet it lies in the depth of every soul, and in proportion as that soul moves towards its typal perfection does the sentiment find amplitude and volume of expression.

But what, we may again ask, is this response?

What is contained in our idea of beauty? On this subject philosophers and scientists have discoursed abundantly from varying standpoints. Materialists, who have felt themselves here put on their mettle, have discussed it as an affair of curves, surfaces and sensory impressions. Schopenhauer has treated it with a more than usual exaggeration and incoherence of statement. When all has been said it remains that the recognition of beauty by the mind can be explained satisfactorily in only one way. The term we have just used is in itself the key. Our feeling here is a *re*-cognition, that is a re-knowing, a reminder of what the soul already knows, of what is native to its realm. Schelling is on the track of all this when he treats of the external world as another expression of the same eternal Life that finds itself in our consciousness. The beauty of Nature is the work of a supreme Artist whose fundamental ideas are reproduced, however faintly, in our own. Without such a relationship to begin with there could be no possible recognition of beauty on our part. A painter who exhibited his picture would be astonished to learn that the public were admiring it on the strength of ideas entirely foreign to any he had himself put into

it. The very basis of our comprehension, not to say appreciation, of a picture's merit lies in the fellowship of our feeling with that of the artist. And the law which obtains in the Academy rules, so far as we can see, through all the worlds.

But we have not nearly exhausted the problems opened by this theme. Another, and a by no means simple one, comes up when we touch the relation of beauty to morality. We remember once propounding it to a couple of Anglican clergymen, in whose company we were watching a gorgeous sunset on the Jungfrau. "Is there any link between this splendour and the beauty of holiness? Is there any natural affinity between the grace of sainthood and the grace of external form?" The question seemed new to them, and to be hardly a serious one. There was an excuse for this attitude, for at first sight the subjects seem scarcely compressible into the same category. And further observation appears to add positive reasons against any such alliance. The sense for external loveliness has had apparently no connection with high moral character. The ages in which it has been most conspicuous, as that of the Greeks under Pericles, and of the Renaissance in Italy, were conspicuous, we

are told, for their dissoluteness. The artist world has been generally a Bohemian world.

But statements of this kind need to be taken with a certain reservation. When we hear these sweeping verdicts upon certain classes and periods, we are reminded of Talleyrand's saying: "Il n'y a rien qui s'arrange aussi facilement que les faits." As to the Italian Renaissance, let us remember it produced a remarkable literature devoted to the idealisation of love and the redemption of it from the grosser elements. Nor were all its artists libertines. It produced a Michael Angelo as well as a Benvenuto Cellini. The designer of St. Peter's, the painter of the Sistine Chapel, the writer of the sonnets had artist enough in him for half a dozen ordinary reputations. And yet it is he who could say—we have it in one of his letters to his father—"It is enough to have bread and to live in the faith of Christ, even as I do here, for I live humbly, neither do I care for the life or honours of this world." No man in these later ages has had a mind more teeming with images of immortal beauty than our own Milton, but "his soul was like a star and dwelt apart." Our own times have seen a Wordsworth, a Ruskin, a Tennyson,

natures all of them in which the sense of beauty both in Nature and in art reached its highest expression, and all of whom found in it an immediate ally of spiritual perfection. And when we mention the contrary instances, what do they prove? Not the immorality, assuredly, of these men's sense of form, but the imperfect development of their other senses. Their report of one portion of God's Palace Beautiful is not the less accurate that they saw not the whole of it. That a given musician is a rake is no evidence that the laws of music which he obeys are not Divine. He has eyes only for a piece of Heaven's law, not its wholeness. The whole argument here, in fact, seems summed in the nature of Christ. If the Gospels speak truly there was never a nature that thrilled more exquisitely to the world's beauty. Yet never nature set forth so surely God's holiness.

The more comprehensively the subject is studied the more sure will become our conviction that there is in all beauty an essential unity of idea whose root is in God. The grandeur of great deeds, of great characters, appeals to the same faculty in us, and stirs the same emotions as the grandeur of the mountains or of the sea. If we could realise it as possible

that a pure soul could take form, we feel instinctively that the form would be beautiful. How intimate the alliance is shown by the workings of character upon feature. The nobler spiritual instincts mould the flesh into curves of greatness, suffuse it with a glow of ethereal brightness. As if to put its final seal upon this view of things, the Bible gives us in the Apocalypse a series of magnificent conceptions, in which righteousness is clothed with, and set in the midst of, the utmost perfection of external splendour. Often separated and far removed from each other in the earthly struggle, the two elements are here exhibited in their true and everlasting union.

The topic as it thus opens is far more than a merely speculative one. If we admit what has here been advanced we must admit with it some important practical consequences. For instance, the inculcation of righteousness, the preaching of God's Kingdom, should ever link itself with the soul's innate sense of beauty. The ugly may everywhere be left to the devil as his monopoly. It is curious to note here how the inmost in man has claimed and gained its rights in even the most adverse circumstances. In the barest conventicle and in what has seemed the

most ostentatious absence of form, wherever men have been attracted and impressed, it will be found that they have been reached and held by their sense of the beautiful. It was the music of the pleading voice, or the glowing splendour of the imagery, or the melodious rhythm of the words, or, deeper even than these, the feeling that a pure, beautiful soul was here revealing itself, which drew them. Other attachments may come later, but these first. The Divine words of Scripture double their power upon us when set to great music. "He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd," gets to the very roots as it sings through us in Handel's strains. How perverse, in view of all this, the avoidance of beauty in our worship as though it were a snare! To offer a drab service to Him who, outside our conventicle, is filling heaven and earth with the splendour of His handiwork! It were an appropriate question for Christian conferences how far the cultivated youth of our generation have been alienated by misconceptions of this sort, and what steps can be taken in the opposite direction to recover the lost ground. The business of the Christian persuader is, as a French moralist has said, "to make truth lovely."

But the subject has a wider bearing than its application to Sunday and to Church worship. Our municipal life is as yet only at its beginning. There are a hundred different sides along which it has to develop, but one of the greatest and most fruitful will be in its education and satisfaction of the public sense of the beautiful. The mass of English people are children here where the ancient Greeks were grown men. One wonders what a cultivated Athenian would have thought of our black country! In coming generations our towns will be, not an outrage upon Nature, but a blend with her, a heightening through art of her primitive graces. And the beauty cultivated will be that which appeals not only to the eye, but to the ear also. Why can we not have in England what one has so often met on the Continent, where, wandering through some old-world city, the ear has suddenly been entranced by delicious choral music, rendered by a mass of trained citizen voices, while a crowd of their fellow townsmen, silent, absorbed, drink in the charmed notes? We shall be making an approach to the municipal ideal when the whole civic atmosphere is so penetrated with high and ennobling influences, with such

elements of art and refinement, that the meanest citizen, by the mere fact of mingling with it, will find his own life immeasurably enriched. In these nobler communities of the future there will be no room for the antithesis which Plutarch draws between the different Athenian administrators: "Themistocles, Cimon and Pericles filled the city with magnificent buildings, . . . but virtue was the only object that Aristides had in view." It will be better than this when virtue blossoms into beauty as the flower springs from and beautifies the tree.

To sum up. The belief in beauty is part of our belief in God. The Universe strives after it as the realisation of His idea. Ugliness is to be striven against as a frustration of Heaven's plan. Beauty of character and beauty of form are essentially allied, and should be striven for as elements in the wholeness of life. Our communal life should be an intimate, harmonious blend of the spiritual and the material, each recognised as a portion of God's holiness. Their true union will produce a social structure whose enduring splendour shall be a reflex of the holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem which John saw descending out of heaven from God.

VII.

Of Face Architecture.

THE interest in face architecture is, in certain circles, centred almost exclusively in one department of it, that of decoration. From "smart society" emerge from time to time hints of the ever deepening mysteries of the lady's dressing-table. Fortune awaits the producer of a successful wash or dye or powder. There are face artists who specialise upon the lip, the nose, the eye, the eyebrow. There is, indeed, nothing new in this. The story is as old as the world. Montaigne gives us astonishing stories of the tortures undergone by ladies of his time in the pursuit of beauty. There was one at Paris who, "to get new skin, endured having her face flayed." He adds: "I have seen some swallow gravel, ashes, coals, dust, tallow, candles, only to get a pale, bleak colour." Things were as bad evidently in the classic times. Tibullus has some amusing lines on the expedients of the Roman ladies for getting rid

of grey hairs and for the securing of fresh complexions. And ancient Egypt and antique Babylon were in these respects no whit better.

Outside the circle of beauties, professional and otherwise, there are other forms of face architecture, still of the external and decorative order, that are not without interest. It is a marvellous gift, which only a fool would despise, that enables a Macready or an Irving to reproduce the living aspect of a Richard III., to look on us with the face of Hamlet, to make hate and love, ferocity and magnanimity, humour and grief reveal themselves successively in glance and feature. Great mimicry has its place and function. But it is horrible out of place. Cowper has drawn the picture of the pulpit *poseur* "who mounts the rostrum with a skip," and there scans and arranges hair and feature with a pocket glass. Goethe deals this performer an even heavier blow when, in the conversation between Wagner and Faust, to the former's remark, "A preacher has a good deal to learn from the actor," Faust replies, "Yes, when the preacher is simply an actor himself." There are, however, face arrangements, still only in the region of mere feature drill, which we regard with a kindlier feeling.

What a moving passage that where Cicero describes the "death etiquette" of the gladiator! "What gladiator, however mediocre, ever groans? Who of them ever changes countenance? Which of them, when down, ready to be despatched, as much as draws back his neck from the stroke?" It is the demeanour sought by the modern army officer, who in the service books is directed, when his men are under fire, to keep at the front with an unconcerned air, and if himself struck to fall with as little noise as possible. A pose this, if you will, but one worthy of a man.

But these, after all, are only surface views on the subject of face architecture. It is astonishing, considering the interest people have in such phases of it, that they do not go a little deeper. For we are not yet arrived at the real face artists. To know them and their work is to know the central powers in heaven and earth. The human face, in any approach of it to the ideal, is the greatest creation of time. That such a result should have been brought out of man's prehistoric and animal ancestry overwhelms us with the thought of the measureless duration, the infinite patience, the unswerving continuity of Nature's process. Everything

conceivable of beauty and power is summed up for us in a great face. Plato saw there the consummation of the moral and the physical. "All the greatest painting," says Ruskin, "is of the human face." The true artist always knows this, and makes the rest of his canvas an accessory to those two or three inches at the centre where a living soul looks on us through luminous eyes. In a picture such as that of "Christ leaving the Pretorium" we study in succession the steps, the building, the crowd, the soldiers as all leading us onward to the central interest — that thorn-crowned face, marred and worn, on which we could gaze for ever.

What builds the face? Environment, of course, for one thing. The degree of latitude in which a man finds himself not only paints his complexion, but alters the ground-plan of his features. America and Australia are developing each a distinct expression of their own. Climate, soil, food and occupation among them have wrought the race physiognomy which separates Turanian from Semite and Aryan from Negro. Buckle and his school have sought to make this the whole explanation. Give them these factors and they will

manufacture our whole man for us, face and all. But their easy induction does not satisfy the deeper thought of to-day. Humanity, it is being discovered, cannot be reckoned up in terms of a rule-of-three sum. We have not yet reached our real face-builder.

As we traverse that unrivalled picture-gallery the open street, and study what we find there, we get the certainty that what has made the faces here is not so much the force without as the force within. We are in the presence of spirits who are the true artists of feature. Charles Kingsley has somewhere a quaint sentence in which he speaks of the soul secreting the body as a crustacean secretes its shell. It exaggerates, doubtless, but the truth lies on that line. If we try to be materialists on this point, our very language turns upon us. What do we mean when we speak of "a pure face"? Nothing that can be expressed in terms of flesh and blood. What was it that Charles Lamb saw on the countenances of the Quaker ladies on their way to the Bishopsgate meeting, making them "as troops of shining ones"? Very much, we suppose, like the something that people saw on the face of St. Vincent de Paul, and which transfigured features that were in

themselves homely to ugliness. It was the gleam of the supernatural in man, the shining through mortal flesh of a sun behind the sun.

This is the highest beauty of the world. There are faces that are gospels, and there is only one way of making them. They shine along the course of Christian history as nowhere else. It was such a face as looked upon England at the close of the fourteenth century from over the emaciated form of John Wycliffe. We do not wonder that, as his disciple, John Thorpe, says, "Very many of the chief men of this kingdom frequently held counsel with him, were devotedly attached to him, and guided themselves by his manner of life." There was a sunshine here, they realised, which savoured of another summer than England's June could create. It has been so with all the great souls. To look at these faces people have made pilgrimages and endured all manner of privations. We feel what throbbed in the heart of Peter the Venerable when, writing to Bernard, he declares: "If it were permitted to me, and if God willed it, I should prefer to live with you and be attached to you by an indissoluble tie, than to be first among mortals and to sit

on a throne." We do not know what the features were of Macrina, the sister of Basil, and of Gregory of Nyssa. But we know the kind of light that shone through them when we read what they say of her, how she woke the one "as out of a deep sleep to the true light of the Gospel," and excited in the other an affection so deep that, as he tells us, "when they had buried her body he kissed the earth of her grave."

It is this mystery of the face and what is behind it, that has set Christian minds in every age wondering what were the lines of that Galilean countenance, the radiance from which has made another and a higher daylight for the world. Beneath the dust that covers old-world cities are lying, perhaps, precious memorials that may yet be unearthed. Who knows that we may not yet recover the statue of Christ that Eusebius saw at Cæsarea Philippi, or some of those portraits of the Master which he had also seen? Which tradition of the face was the true one, that followed by Justin Martyr, by Clement of Alexandria and by Tertullian, which spoke of it as "without form or comeliness"; or that of Jerome and Augustine, which declared it divinely beautiful? It may be both

are true. We are sure, at least, of the latter. With a possible homeliness, or even ruggedness, of outline there shone through a transfiguring splendour which awed and fascinated. Christ's "Follow Me" conquered men not so much by the words as by the look that accompanied.

When we now ask again how the great faces arise we seem nearer the answer. They are reflections of faces that belong to another world. Behind the fleshly face is the soul's face. And the soul's face is a great spiritual absorbent. As plants spread their surface to the sun and drink in the rays that beat upon them, transforming all into life and beauty, so in these natures the spiritual upper surface, along its whole length and breadth, is open to the impact of pulsations emanating incessantly from the Centre by which all souls live. And not one of these pulsations is lost. It is woven into the structure of the soul and reflected in its expression. The face becomes thus a register of the life we are living. It is the book in which our history is written, a faithful record, with no item omitted, and which, to eyes deeply enough initiated, can be read clear from end to end.

A topic like this teems with practical lessons. The Church should be a great face builder. It has been in the past, but it needs to study its models afresh. Historical Christianity has developed face types that were never in the world before. The spiritual riches to which it has introduced humanity have translated themselves into new glances of the eye, into fresh, beautiful harmonisations of feature. But its artistry here has not been always of the best. By crude, at times terrible, misrepresentations of Divine things, it has created the morbid face and the fanatic face; it has overspread honest features with the gloom of religious melancholia. Religion must have done with this business. Its work is to weave brightness into human souls. Let us take to heart this saying of Robert Louis Stevenson: "In my view one dark dispirited word is harmful, a crime of *lèse humanité,* a piece of acquired evil; every bright word or picture, like every pleasant air of music, is a piece of pleasure set afloat." Fathers and mothers are perhaps here the most potent workers in humanity's church. It is theirs to mould their children's faces into the comeliness wrought by high thought and noble inspirations. Goodness is the beginning of

beauty. Young spirits growing in an atmosphere of true thinking and true feeling are all unconsciously being penetrated by harmonies which shape their nature into ideal forms.

And with an eye thus upon others we are to look also to ourselves. A hundred artists within and without are at work upon our feature and expression, but it is from us they take their orders. The question as to how joy, grief, gains, losses, the shocks of change and fortune are to use their graving tools, depends on the instructions we give them. For no event is wholly outward or has an existence in itself. Its whole colour and aspect are derived from the soul on which it strikes. To be crucified is one thing to a thief, a wholly other thing to a Christ. If we accept all life as a process for the building of the soul, we shall find in the end that the process has been a double one. For with the building of souls there has been also the building of bodies. Not these of flesh through which the soul faintly shines, but spiritual ones, fit for immortal life. And to these shall be given the vision of that Model after which all their Divine lineaments have been fashioned. "For they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads."

VIII.

Westward of Fifty.

A FAMILIAR line of pulpit exhortation is that which regards our present life as a preparation, good or bad, for a future and invisible one. What we do here and now will enormously affect what we become yonder and then. It would be fully as much to the point, and with some minds even more efficacious, if, in this view of life as a preparation, the preacher at times, for a change, confined himself to our visible career. The region lying westward of fifty is one which we shall all traverse if we live long enough, and it is a doctrine against which no sceptic voice can be raised that our experiences there will be largely a reaping of what, in, the earlier period, we have sown. That a successful sowing is not too easy is evident from the failures that are everywhere apparent. How frequent and disastrous these failures are is perhaps best illustrated by the bad repute which old age has fallen

into, both in literature and in the popular imagination.

There have been philosophers, such as Plato in the remote distance and Fontenelle nearer at hand, who have glorified age as life's happiest time, but the general verdict has seemed otherwise. The early world as a whole regarded the post-youth period almost with a shudder. A line in Mimnermus tells us that "when the appointed time of youth is past it is better to die forthwith than to live." Anacreon the joyous, the poet of love and wine, finds nothing in the last stage but the sense of privation and the prospect of dread Avernus. Horace, his Latin counterpart, sends across his past the futile prayer, "Oh! that Jove would restore to me the years that are gone!" Montaigne, who considered himself old at fifty-four, declared that "old age set more wrinkles on the spirit than on the face." Even Wordsworth, with his immense spiritual insight, seems afraid of life's second half. The poet, he found, did not usually fare well in it.

> We poets begin our life in gladness,
> But thereof comes in the end satiety and madness.

And there is perhaps nowhere in literature a

more vivid picture of desolation than that of his "Small Celandine" as an image of life's helpless last stage, with these mournful lines for an ending:

> Oh, man! that from thy fair and shining youth,
> Age might but take the things youth needed not.

And there is undoubtedly a great deal, and that not merely on the surface, that appears to back up this indictment. Age is in a sense a decline, a failure, a disease, which no medicine can cure. Old Roger Bacon's curious "Libellus de Retardandis Senectutis Accidentibus," in the various means it proposes for resisting the advance of the enemy, holds out no hope of finally driving him off. On one great side of our life, whatever our earlier precautions and preparations, we are, after fifty, certainly on the down-grade. We have ceased to be athletes. We can no longer draw on unlimited physical reserve. The sensualist must, with however bad a grace, give up his *nuits blanches*. He finds himself, in fact, disagreeably occupied with the bill for them, long deferred, and with a prodigious interest charged, which Nature is now presenting him. He would sympathise heartily with the senti-

ment of a law lord of the last century whose riotous youth had brought him gout in the later years, when, apostrophising his afflicted extremities, he cried, "Confound the legs! If I had known they were to carry a Lord Chancellor I would have taken better care of them!"

But that is not all, nor perhaps the worst. It is brought as one of the fatal accusations against the post-fifty period that it lacks interest. A man has by that time, maybe, gained a fortune to discover that the pleasures he hoped to purchase with it have ceased to be pleasures. A deadly monotony has set in. We have got to the bottom of things, have seen the whole show and begin to find it wearisome. This note, supposedly a modern one, is really nothing of the kind. The whole flavour of the sentiment had been tasted nigh two millenniums ago by Marcus Aurelius. "A little while," says he, "is enough to view the world in, for things are repeated and come over again apace. It signifies not a farthing whether a man stands gazing here a hundred, or a hundred thousand years, for all he gets by it is to see the same sights so much the oftener." It is the unhappiness of some men at this period to find in Nature's

freshest products nothing new or inspiring. Goethe, in one of his autobiographical notes, remarks of a contemporary that "he saw with vexation the green of spring and wished that by way of change it might once appear red." The German would have found a sympathiser in our Walter Pater who, it is recorded, regarded it as an annual affliction to have to "look upon the raw greens of spring."

But there is even worse than this. Some physiologists and some psychologists have not hesitated to maintain that there is a decay of moral enthusiasm in life's after period which renders the average man after middle age less ethically valuable. And any one wishing to maintain this thesis need not lack evidence. History is full of stories of a youth of high moral promise dashed by the later years. Had Henry VIII. died young he would have appeared in our annals as a hero instead of a monster. Nero, when the pupil of Seneca, had excellent inspirations. In reading Plutarch's life of Alexander one is struck with his deterioration of character, from the earlier warmth and generosity to that later caprice and cruelty which showed in his alienation from Aristotle, and in the murder of his old friends Clitus and

Parmenio. The "religious rogue" of modern times is commonly a man who unscrupulously exploits the confidence secured to him by a profession which in his earlier days had sincerity behind it. The inner deterioration experienced by some men in their later life was expressed in somewhat startling fashion to the present writer, years ago, by a noted minister of religion of his day. "It is you young men," said he, "who must start the new ventures. It is no use looking to us old fellows, who believe in nothing and nobody!"

All this is evidence of something being seriously wrong somewhere. To declare half of our life to be necessarily a failure is to bring an indictment against life altogether. As it stands, the indictment suggests one of two alternatives. Either the order of the universe which ordains old age is faulty, or the failure lies in our interpretation of, and obedience to, that order. The matter is not cleared, but still further complicated by a Church teaching, for centuries in vogue, which has depreciated the present earthly life, with its old age included, in favour of a future life elsewhere. It is astonishing that Christian teachers have not more generally seen the

falseness of this view. To put the "now" and "here" of earth in such complete opposition to the "then" and "there" of heaven is to endeavour to extract from time and place what they were never intended to yield. If the life in God, the satisfying life as revealed in and by Christ, cannot be lived here and now, it can be lived nowhere and nowhen.

We come back, then, to our opening suggestion, in which the view of life as a probation is taken in the sense that the after part reaps what the earlier part has sown. The failure, where failure there is, lies not in the game, but in our way of playing it. Properly understood and followed, the human career, if we interpret it rightly, should to its very end be full of freshness and benediction. The whole business resolves itself into the question whether life's after part is to be considered by us as a decline or as part of a growth. To point to physical and even to some aspects of mental deterioration as evidence that it is a decay is, be it here observed, quite beside the mark. Decay is always going on somewhere, in every part of the career. The foetus life in some of its aspects perishes when the child is born. Infancy and adolescence have severally their growth, cul-

mination and ending as the boy pushes on towards the man. The whole point lies in what we are thinking of when we talk about life's decline. If it be physical powers and enjoyments, or even some forms of mentality, there is no possible controversy, for no one disputes the facts. Unquestionably if this is all man is or has, the pessimists are right, and his later life is a pitiable business, about which the less said the better.

But may we not see in Nature's blunt exhibition of the failure of this side of old age—in this thrusting of it in all its nakedness before our eyes—her effort to awaken us to a deeper conception? It is, indeed, only in the light of that conception that it becomes to us at all intelligible. But in that light everything assumes a new aspect. Man appears to us at this period as a being full of desires and thirsts which the world he has passed through no longer attempts to satisfy, to which the organs of sense fail to respond, for which nothing that is of the seen or of the flesh is an answer. This unquenched desire, if it be not a mockery, is surely for him the greatest of prophecies. Naked indeed is he, if there be not an invisible with which he is being clothed upon! Dying

also, but if he be awake to the proper significance of himself, he will realise now that what in him is dying is no more his truest and deepest than was the passing away in him of the child when he became a man.

It is well to persuade ourselves, and the sooner in life the better, that there is no possible way of making our "after middle age" a success except this one of accepting ourselves as in this world mainly and ultimately for spiritual growth. It is this only which will save that after period from monotony. And it does save it most effectually. Aurelius is wrong here. We do not see the same show over again. As our inner nature opens our world becomes ever more beautiful, more mystically inspired. If each new spring does not bring us a deeper message it is because we have been neglecting our inner life. To the growing soul the world is ever miraculously renewing itself. Our fellow-men grow always dearer to us, always more interesting. And how much more interesting does God become!

It is this principle alone, too, which preserves from age's otherwise inevitable moral wastage. If we do not take faith's leap and "catch on" to life's higher order we shall certainly develop

the "moral wrinkles" of which Montaigne speaks. But let no one believe in any psychological necessity here. Paul and Augustine, John Wesley and Catherine Booth did not grow worse as they grew older; they grew better; they ripened. And when with some of these, a period has been reached in which the desire to remain longer in the world has visibly lessened, this means, not a diminishing of interest in life, but a preparedness for the next evolution of it.

> As years assist
> Which wear the thickness thin, and let man see,

such spirits gain so ravishing a sense of that "life beyond the bridge" that they long to join themselves unto it.

IX.

The Art of Happiness.

It is something, as a start in the world, to be convinced on good grounds that the Ordainer of our life on this planet intended joy as one of its chief products. That it means other things —service, sacrifice, education, development, probation, as well as a thousand aims beyond our ken—we may well believe. But one of its governing designs is the joy of living. If there is proof of anything there is proof of that. It peeps out of every detail of the scheme. The material for enjoyment is so inwrought into the world's constitution that we cannot put a spade into the ground anywhere without turning it up. Men reach joy by the most diverse roads. By travel, by staying at home; by working, by resting; by strain of the muscle or strain of the mind; by speech, by silence; by solitude, by society; by helping, by being helped; by receiving, by giving. One could go, indeed, through almost every process of life and find a

pleasure as its result. We enjoy as we eat and drink, as we open our eyes upon the world, as we swing our limbs in the walk down the road. If we ask why it is that a rose should ravish us with its perfume and feed our artistic sense with its beauty of form; that the fresh breeze should be a delight and not a pain to breathe; that the vision of a countryside makes the heart leap within us—there seems only one answer. The outer has been fitted to our inner with a direct view to these results. Human delight, and not human only but that of all living creatures, is one at least of the world's ultimate ends.

The happiness idea, while so deeply interfused into the constitution of nature, is seated even more deeply in the heart of man. It is touching, and at the same time most suggestive, to see how youth always and everywhere believes in it. An Amiel, when he is forty, may talk of hopes disappointed and of the future as a dreary prospect, but not even an Amiel can do that at twenty. That primal instinct for happiness, reborn in each generation, means much. It is not only a thirst but a promise. What is in humanity first as a desire comes out eventually as a result. Man believes in joy

even when he is sorrowing. "Est quædam flere voluptas" (There is a certain pleasure even in weeping), said a master of the science of human nature. Even when nursing their spleen people are, in a way, enjoying themselves. When Burton sings,

> All my joys to this are folly,
> Nought so sweet as melancholy,

he is simply indicating one of those strange involutions of the human spirit by which it tastes a happiness in what seems its opposite.

But the happiness material, as we have said, requires extracting, and for this there are some rules. One might call them simple were it not that such multitudes of clever people fail in applying them. It is indeed the cleverness, apart from wisdom, that has so often sophisticated man out of his joy. In nine cases out of ten where he is miserable it is because he has allowed his imagination to play tricks with him. It has, for one thing, darkened his world with false religions and malignant demons. Strange, that in a universe which smiled so kindly on him he could have imagined an Enthroned Cruelty as its author. The perversity seems the greater when we find ethnology digging up

from all parts of the globe evidence of a primitive tradition which, amidst the most savage tribes, recognised the Creator as righteous and beneficent. Stranger still that this perverse rendering should have been permitted to distort even the Christian Gospel, and to make, even in our day, its life-scheme so forbidding that a divine of the last generation could suggest it as an improvement that the whole human race should die off at the age of four years! When Athenagoras, the Greek Father, argued that the heathens' practice of self-torture to propitiate their divinities was evidence of the false origin of their religion, he could hardly have anticipated that Christianity itself was to produce a similar teaching, and on the largest scale. Yet so it is, and as a result men have to be retaught their inheritance; to learn over again their right to the natural human joys; to cease to tremble as they sit at life's feast. They have not even yet full confidence that to really enjoy it is to please God and not to anger Him.

It is not enough, however, for happiness to have got rid of these spectres of the dark. The soul must in some positive directions be trained to enjoy. It must, for one thing, learn to be simple. The art of being happy is the art of

discovering the depths that lie in the daily common things. Delight in the simple is the finest result of culture. The animal exhilaration which the child has in exercise and the fresh air and the sense of life becomes in the trained soul a so much deeper, subtler thing. It ravishes with a sense of something behind. One is intoxicated with the feeling which a modern mystic has expressed when he says, "I see, smell, taste, hear, feel that Everlasting Something to which we are allied, at once our Maker, our abode, our destiny, our very selves." This training is, we say, a training in simplicity. It indisposes us to rush after the extraordinary, the so-called magnificences of life. It leads us more and more in the way of the common, and to the deeper appreciation of what is there. It sets us longing not so much for the sensation of the millionaire as he shows his new palace, as for that of a Wordsworth, or a Ruskin, as, on a spring morning, they contemplate a greening tree. This delight has its guaranteed security in the fact that the materials for it—the common things that, looked into, transform themselves into heavenly wonders and mysteries—are here all around us, filling every inch of space and every moment of time. The man of

simple mind, of purged eye and pure heart, walks daily wrapt in the consciousness of being in the midst of a universe divinely beautiful, and which is all his.

It is another facet of the same idea to say that the secret of the joy of living is the proper appreciation of what we actually possess. That kingdom of the unpossessed for which we so foolishly thirst is not half so good as this of what we have. A child sobs with grief over the toy that is broken, and is not comforted by the thought of all its glorious assets of youth, and health and coming years. It has not got the thought. We who are older are often hardly wiser. Coningsby, in Disraeli's novel, when bemoaning the loss of a fortune, is asked by his friend to remember that he has still left him the use of his limbs. It is an excellent suggestion, and to be taken in all seriousness. In our moments of spleen there is no better exercise than to reckon up as against our losses the things that remain. When we have fairly understood the worth of our personal gifts; what it means to be able to swing along in careless freedom of limb, to open clear eyes upon the world's beauty, to eat with appetite, to reason, to remember, to imagine, instead of

being reduced to the privation of these things, we find we are rich where we thought ourselves poor. The worst is where we lightly value our wealth in love. Multitudes of us are fuming in a false sense of poverty when close at home are faithful hearts that, if taken from us, as they might be next week, would leave a void that not the wealth of Indies would fill. We are only poor by thinking ourselves so. It is, in fact, our perverse thinking that every day makes fools of us.

As our life studies proceed we discover the infinite complexities, the depths beneath deeps, that enter into the happiness of a growing soul. With increasing capacity it strikes ever grander chords, until its experiences are, as to the surface pleasures, what a Beethoven sonata is to a ditty of the music-hall. The Gospel account of Jesus stands out here as the typical, highest example. In the beginning was the exquisite joy of a pure heart in the presence of nature, when the flowers and the birds proclaimed the goodness of the Father. At the end this soul, ever learning and growing, had reached a capacity such that the Cross, striking full upon it, evoked only a deeper harmony. The joy which, at the Supper, Jesus offered His

disciples, was richer than that of the Sermon on the Mount. And this marvel has continued. Men have learned from Christ how to find joy in pain; how to be happy when suffering and dying. It was not vain boasting nor an unreal idealisation, but the statement of plain facts when Minutius Felix, speaking of the martyrs of his time, could say, "God's soldier is neither forsaken in suffering nor brought to an end by death. Boys and young women among us treat with contempt crosses and tortures, wild beasts and all the bugbears of punishment, with the inspired patience of suffering." In our own day we read of Bushnell that "even his dying was play to him." Such histories are the supreme proof that, to the soul that learns, life at what seems its darkest and its worst, is realised as infinitely worth living. Courage, then, in the gloomy day. "If winter comes can spring be far behind?"

> Be our joy three parts pain,
> Strive and hold cheap the strain,
> Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

X.

The Mission of Illusion.

Amongst the subjects which no Christian teacher of to-day can afford to ignore is that of illusion and the part it plays in life and religion. It is a matter that will not be burked, and all who in any way stand for the interests of faith have to make up their minds upon it. To the present generation it is becoming increasingly clear that many things which it had been accustomed to regard as religious fact are really not so, and the revelation is one full of danger to the inner life unless its actual significance is fully explained. The Church has been, in a sense, brought up on illusions, and the plain man who is just becoming conscious of this, is shocked at the discovery. His first impulse is to cry "Treachery!" Religion has betrayed him; the teacher has proved false, and is therefore no longer to be regarded. What he here evidently needs is a doctrine of illusion which shall remove his misapprehen-

sions and put him at his ease in the new situation. He has to learn that, as the French Joubert tersely puts it, "Illusions come from heaven, errors come from ourselves." In other words, the existence of illusion in life and religion, is no betrayal, but one of the Divine ordinances for the education of humanity. It works by ascertainable laws, and its operations, when understood, are seen to be wholly beneficent.

The law of illusion is written broadly on every department of life. Children live in a world of make-believe, and Nature's method with the young people here has been her way with man as a whole. Truth is one of her goals for him, but she is in no hurry to get him there. She is content, in the earlier stages of his development, to fit him out with rudimentary and provisional ideas, adequate to his growth and requirements at any given stage, but to be replaced by broader ones when the time for them comes. He lives at first in a fancy world where his senses trick him at every turn. They give him what seem facts as to the relation of the earth to the heavens, as to the sun's motion, the blue of the sky, the nature and number of the elements, all of which

turn out afterwards to be illusions. And are we sure even that a large part of the so-called scientific perception of the universe of the present day will not, in its turn, prove to be illusion? At best our theories are a series of working hypotheses which may turn out to be quite incorrectly based. We are, for instance, resting everything on an atomic theory, without knowing anything as to the interior nature of the atom, or how it came to be there at all. And when our knowledge has reached its utmost bound it will, after all, be an affair only of our particular perceptive faculties. We shall, as Fichte says, go on always making our own world. We can say nothing as to ultimate existence except that, as Spinoza has put it, "things must exist, not only in the manner in which they are manifested to us, but in every manner which infinite understanding can conceive."

With illusion playing this part in the broadest realms of life it would be surprising if its law should be abrogated in any one sphere of it, such as that of religion. As a matter of fact, we find it in full play there, and it is high time that we gave to its operations the recognition they demand. The successive

cults of fetichism, of star worship and of polytheism, by which man arrived ultimately at monotheism, have been the differing vessels which in turn have held the treasure of his growing spiritual life. When these preparatory ideas had served their turn, the force which developed them provided for their decay. The soul, like the body, has an apparatus of decay which works as surely as its apparatus of growth. By a process which nothing can stop it separates, excretes and rids itself of, every element that has ceased to be of use. The efforts of a Julian to resuscitate the Roman paganism were powerless, though he had the force of an Empire at his back. Paganism passed because its hour had come.

Theology has been excessively reluctant to admit the working of this law in the Church, but the fact of it can no longer be denied. What we now discover is that the Christian consciousness that forms the Church's life has had successive coatings of ideas which it perpetually outgrows and casts aside. The reservoir of living water has had the roughest material for its embankment. The early Church was cradled in illusions. Whether it looked before or behind it met the mirage. It

looked behind to a view of the Old Testament which we now smile at. Many of the Fathers readily accept the view that Ezra miraculously restored the books of the Hebrew Scriptures that had been lost during the exile, as well as the story of the miracle by which, in the translation of the Septuagint, the seventy elders, shut up in separate cells, wrote each one of them exactly the same words. In its forward look the first Christian community had a similar experience. It is pathetic for us, as we gaze back from our far-off standpoint, to observe the absolute confidence of those early forecasts and the way in which events have contradicted them; to see how, in succession, now a Justin Martyr, now an Irenæus, now a Tertullian and a Cyprian, and anon a Jerome and an Augustine, find in the state of the world around them the sure signs of the Advent and the world's end. In all this they were wrong; but what then? Was their religion one whit less centrally true or Divine because contained in this framework of primitive ideas? Their religion was not in that framework, but in the fact that the love of Christ constrained them; that their hearts had been filled by Him with the passion for

holiness; that His infinite pity for all who suffered and were needy wrought in them. Here was the evidence both of its truth and of its divinity. The evolution of its ideas could in the meantime take care of itself.

To-day we have to recognise that a certain portion of the Church creeds were wrought in an atmosphere of illusion. They were constructed to the scale of a pettier universe than that to which we now know ourselves to belong. The creeds are, for one thing, geocentric. They conceive the earth as central, with heaven and hell as adjunct and completion. They are unreal to a view which regards our planet as a dust speck in the infinity of the worlds.

At contra nusquam apparent Acherusia templa.

Jacob's ladder no longer reaches to the sky. The heavens have removed far off and become astronomical. In short, the concepts which presided over the Church creeds represent, in the language of a recent writer, "undeveloped science, imperfect philosophy and perverted notions of history." They will have to be revised. Their view of Christianity is steadily giving way in the minds of men to one more in

accord with the laws that govern the outside universe and the evolution of the human soul.

What then? Will this march away from the earlier illusions lead Christian people to a barer pasturage for the spirit? Will their religion be poorer for the change in some of its surrounding ideas? The previous history of the human movement should be enough to reassure us on this point. What man has found hitherto is that the new reality which he reaches is always greater and more satisfying than the old illusion which it displaces. The tiny Cosmos of the ancients was not to be compared in grandeur with that which modern astronomy and geology have disclosed. And if this be so with the external world the whole analogy of things suggests that in like manner will it be with the inner and spiritual world. We shall not go forward in every other department to go backward here. The new concepts which, in our escape from earlier illusions, we are gaining as to the origin and nature of Christianity will be more sublime and more religiously effective than those earlier ones, as they will offer an exacter and more satisfying relation to life's infinite whole. We shall advance, as Goethe says,

"from a Christianity of words to a Christianity of feeling and action." And as the investigations of science disclose to us an external nature which becomes more and more immeasurable to the view, so the sense of religion as it develops will reveal ever wider spheres in which love and faith and holiness may grow and expatiate.

There is another side of the mission of illusion which we can none of us afford to ignore. It is that of its relation to our personal life. Illusion is the charm and poetry of the soul, as well as one of its most effective inspirations. Children live in its enchanted realm, and if we are wise, we who are older will often take up our abode there, too. It is a trick of the present writer, of which he is willing to make a present to his readers, when at a concert where the highest music is provided, to enhance the enjoyment by the simple process of shutting his eyes and imagining himself in his own room, and this glorious feast to be an impromptu serenade under his windows. By getting rid, in this way, of the claims of expectation, and allowing everything to come as a surprise, one has doubled the delight. It is

by illusion also that Nature gets her biggest things out of us. Young men set off on hardy adventures of campaign or of travel with an idea of accompanying pleasure or profit which in nine cases out of ten will not be realised. But they will have done something for their own and the world's furtherance, which otherwise would not have been done. A lad's notion of his own powers, and of his future, is half illusion. But what power he does exercise, and what future he will secure, are owing largely to that illusion. Under this rainbow arch men and women walk together to marriage and the founding of homes. Nature smiles at their ideas while securing, at their expense, the harvest of her own.

Yet is her smile, while carrying in it a trace of irony, ever benevolent. From passion's illusion, by which hearts seem often so cruelly beguiled, come results better than the dream, though so different from it. The family life, consisting often of hard enough realities, will leave higher effects upon character than the sentimental raptures which preceded it. And its disappointments and sorrows show illusion as one of the great training forces of the

human spirit. It is by the contrast here forced on us between earth's promises and their fulfilment that it urges on the soul, as by an inner necessity, to seek finally its peace in those imperishables which do not betray.

XI.

The Soul's Voice.

ONE of the greatest events in the history of this planet was the beginning upon it of articulate speech. Evolution has, as yet, attained no greater triumph than in this discovery of soul to soul by the fitting of thought to sound. How it came about we know not, though science is ever groping towards some answer to the problem. Animals, we know, have their signal codes. In Africa lions hunt in concert and send message notes to each other as they tighten their cordon round the game. The chatter of apes is being spoken of as a rudimentary language, and attempts even are being made to translate it. Human speech began probably in similar humble fashion, but its destinies were magnificent. In the process of its development we cannot say what was the order of co-operation, how far the struggling soul shaped its organ of expression, or how the perfecting of the organ gave new capacity to

the soul. May be that our poet Spenser is mainly right in his Platonic affirmation,

> Of soule the bodie forme doth take,
> For soule is form and doth the bodie make.

But how the mere effort of the inner life wrought to the shaping and refining of the vocal machinery up to the present range and delicacy is as great a mystery as is that of its present use. Have we ever properly considered this latter mystery; of how at any moment our intellect, our emotions, our will establish themselves at our vocal chords and, without the slightest hesitation, strike the exact combination of them they want, and set them vibrating to precisely the needed pitch; and how thus the complex of our inmost soul, made into a sound, discharges in this fashion its full content into another soul?

Questions of this sort meet us at the threshold of our topic, but it is not on their account that we have introduced it. There are matters connected with the soul's voice that touch us more nearly than do the purely scientific problems connected with it. How closely the voice and that realm of harmony to which it is related lie to the innermost of man's moral and spiritual

life was a point very early discerned. Plato exhibits its full significance when in the "Republic" he speaks of rhythm and harmony as entering into the deepest parts of the soul, and declares that "by the educated sense of harmony we learn to discern between the good and the base, the ugly and the beautiful in all things." Ruskin endorses the doctrine when he reminds us that "all the greatest music is by the human voice," and that "with the Greeks the God of music was also the God of righteousness."

It is worth trying to discover what precisely these ideas amount to. That which Plato, in his doctrine of music, seems mainly to convey was that rhythm and harmony of sound, however produced, have a marvellous parallel with man's inner states; that music, like the soul, can be gay, frivolous, wrathful; or solemn, serene, ecstatic; that man's heights and depths, his greatness and his littleness, can be interpreted for him and realised in him through sound. But there is more than that. The relation of sound to our deepest life is not fairly got at till we study a certain phenomenon in speech, not too often met with, but which, where it is, leaves ever its own unmistakable

impression. When we have discussed the quality of a voice as tested by the usual standards; when its powers have been registered by the singer, the elocutionist, or the actor, has all been said? The range they cover is immense, but there is an element of voice possibility which they have not touched and never can. It is the element, unique and indefinable, that is furnished by the size and the stirring of the soul behind.

It is not in life's ordinary intercourse that we catch this note. The voice is employed for the most part in doing the mind's hack work. It retails the news, discusses questions of fact or of logic, expresses in its different registers the usual day-by-day emotions, and all this without any unlocking of its secret doors. But those doors sometimes do open, and a breath from within, of something mysterious, unearthly, passes into the tone. The speaker whose utterance is of life's weightier matters knows perfectly the experience. At times his voice has handed out what he had to say mechanically, by a hard, pumping process, each sentence, as it were, with a separate stroke of the handle—so much fact, so much argument, and there an end. At another time his vocal organs, utter-

ing, it may be, almost the same words, are thrilling with vibrations from an unseen source; each note has its myriad overtones, spirit echoes, as it were, of what is said. The man's voice is the instrument of a new music; his *soul* is speaking, stirred in its turn by an Oversoul mightier than itself. Socrates was describing this note when he spoke of being, in his words, "moved by a Divine and spiritual influence." It thrilled at times in the utterance of Newman. It was this which was felt in the words of Keble when, as Thomas Mozley says of them, "they seemed to come from a different and holier sphere." When the Jewish people said of the words of Jesus, "Never man spake like this man," the reference, we may be sure, was not merely to the meaning conveyed. There was the impression also of the unfathomable soul that uttered them, and that lived in the tone, saturating it with its mystic essence. Between words spoken by one man and the same words uttered by another, what a gulf! It is the difference in size of the one soul behind as compared with that of the other. All which may be summed up in a word, to wit, that no one has discovered the capabilities of his voice till he has discovered the capabilities of his soul.

It is worth while reading history just for the purpose of discovering this magnificent spiritual note as it from time to time breaks in upon the human concert. There are periods when everything appears drowned in dissipation and folly, when human speech is a mere chatter, and the deeper man seems dead. Suddenly there breaks upon the air the indescribable vibrant tone. A voice sounds through the night, as the Latin poet says, "declaring immortal things in human speech," and the soul of every man within him trembles in response. *Terrena cœlestibus cedunt.* It is felt that a prophetic word has been spoken, that the deepest essence of the age, its whole inner burden of feeling, aspiration and desire has uttered itself in this cry and has delivered therein its spiritual testimony. It was precisely in this that Luther, as Harnack in his fine study of him has shown, was the prophet of the Western world in the sixteenth century. What filled his voice with a power beyond words was the soul behind, fired with a new consciousness of God. No man need pose as a prophet unless that tone is singing in him. When it is there he is not to be stopped though, as the aforesaid Dr. Martin once himself declared, it "should rain devils for seven days."

Wonderful and awe-inspiring as are the effects when the soul comes thus into human speech, uttering itself to the world, not less so are they when the music is wholly interior, meant for one ear alone. The intruding note coming out of the depths of the spirit has been enough many a time to rend a man in twain. Most instructive here is that story, one of a thousand similar that might be told, of Lacordaire, the great French preacher. As a young advocate at the Bar, after a brilliant university career, irresistible in eloquence and ability, his career assured, the world at his feet, he is found one day by a friend alone in his room, sobbing and heartbroken. What is the matter with Lacordaire? This: that in the midst of his successes the inner deeps have suddenly broken up and overwhelmed his pleasure-world. A voice has spoken within, proclaiming that world a mockery, and himself a failure. "A delusion," says some one, "a moment of pique." But the preacher's whole career dated from that moment. Paul had such a time, and Augustine, and many another who has carried, as it seemed, a world's spiritual interests in his hands. As to whether the voices they heard were trustworthy, they were perhaps as good judges as their critics.

Domestic life is full of histories, pathetic, often tragic, of the soul's strange, long silences, broken at last, and many a time too late, by a cry from its depths. How often happens it that the genuine affection of worthy hearts, covered up and concealed under a vexed surface of irritations and misunderstandings, lies almost unnoted by its possessors until the swift warning of a near parting wakes the soul to a sense of what it is losing, and draws from it the awful cry of its anguished love! What a lesson writ in fire is that word of Carlyle on the death of his wife: "Oh, if only I could have five minutes with her to assure her that I loved her through all that!" How well were it here for some of us to follow the example of the worthy Siebenkas in Jean Paul Richter's story when, concerning Lenette, "Every morning, every evening he said to himself, 'How much ought I not to forgive; for we shall remain so short a time together!'"

It were indeed vastly better for us all if, in our intercourse with one another, we oftener permitted the soul to speak. The surface chatter of the present day is in its emptiness and unreality almost worse than that of the France of the seventeenth century which

tempted Pascal to exclaim, "*Diseur de bons mots, mauvais caractère !*" If people knew it they could rule by the voice; not by its vehemence and clamour, but by the soul they put into it. Spirit, which can saturate feature, can also saturate sound with its mystic essence. A domestic circle may be made a paradise by the music of one low, sweet voice. There are tones of spiritual natures that seem to visualise holiness, under whose pleading an erring man has been as the fallen archangel at the reproof of Zephon:

> And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
> Virtue in her shape how lovely; saw and pined
> His loss.

The note we have been seeking to fix and to describe is indeed a voice from heaven, and to hear it, as at times we do, is to receive anew the assurance that man is not forsaken of God. It is a note worth striving for in human speech. The elocutionist cannot teach it, nor is it found in the whole scale commanded by the operatic star. To cultivate it we must go deeper than the vocal organs. Its seat is in the soul.

XII.

Of Sex in Religion.

In a study of sex in religion it would be open to us to follow one of two different directions. We might, regarding humanity as the subject of religion, as operated upon mysteriously by its unseen spiritual force, try to analyse the separate effect of this force as working upon the masculine or the feminine nature. Or, contrariwise, taking religion in its aspect as a human product, we might seek to trace in its institutions, its theologies and its varied activities the separate share which each of the sexes has contributed Along either of these ways some noteworthy results would be obtained if they were carefully followed. The differences between man and woman stand out in a quite new aspect when seen under this special light. Each half of the race gives out its own peculiar note when that element of it is touched. It is certain that we shall not properly understand either religion or human

nature until some such inquiry has been made. Many of the greatest mistakes of the past have been due to the neglect of it. In the religious reconstruction of the future the reparation of that neglect will, if we mistake not, form one of the leading features.

Looking at religion, for a moment, as a product, one might suppose at first sight that it was almost entirely a masculine affair. It is man everywhere who explores its metaphysics, who erects its theologies, who founds and governs its institutions. Man is its pope, priest, and prophet; its legislator, preacher, and pastor. Its divines have all been men. The great world religions, originating in the East, have taken an entirely Eastern view of the man's and the woman's part in this supreme interest. In the Judæan decalogue woman is subordinate and ancillary. Thy "neighbour's wife," in the command against covetousness, is included in the list of his possessions. The Mohammedan was indisposed to concede woman a soul at all. In early and mediæval Catholicism she is treated with a courtesy almost as scant. In monkish literature she figures as the temptress to be fled from, the one malign influence against which, above all others, the saint must

steel his soul. The feeling has its appropriate expression in that brutal outburst of Tertullian, "Woman, thou art the gate of hell." In a later and more enlightened time we find Erasmus demeaning himself by describing woman as "an absurd and ridiculous animal, though entertaining and pleasant"; while his contemporary Rabelais has no epithet too coarse with which to pelt her. In a later century the polished La Bruyère thinks he has said the final word upon woman in declaring that "the greater part of them have hardly principles, but are guided by the heart, and depend for their morals on those they love." From the beginning woman has occupied no position of authority in the Church. Her voice has never been heard at a council, nor has her pen ever formulated a decree. The England of to-day gives a curious illustration of the ecclesiastical ban under which she has been placed, in the status it accords to the wives of Church dignitaries. An archbishop may have social precedence over a duke, while his wife shall be plain Mrs. Smith. It was left for a woman to put the finishing touch on this order of things in the remark of Queen Elizabeth to the wife of Archbishop Parker, on being entertained at

Lambeth, "Madam I may not call you, and mistress I am loth to call you. I know not what to call you, but yet I thank you for your good cheer."

If woman were of a revengeful disposition she might easily console herself by reflecting on the price that man has had to pay for his exclusiveness. He has, she might reflect, assumed the right to legislate for the Church, to define its doctrine, to build up its whole system of thought, and a pretty mess he has made of it. His ecclesiastical polity has split the Church into a thousand pieces, while his theology has made religion hateful to multitudes of ingenuous minds. It is safe to say that the mother side of humanity would never have constructed the hell of mediævalism, nor have made it possible to exhibit as orthodoxy the notion of Aquinas that heaven's pleasure would be augmented by the view of the tortures of the lost, or that of Calvin of the preordained damnation of the non-elect. The male ecclesiastic, imagining religion to be an affair of dry intellect, a formula to be ground out of his logic mill, succeeded in making it anti-human. He achieved the surprising feat of so dressing up the primal facts concerning God and the

soul as to make theology a nightmare, and of turning a region of thought, which ought to have been man's highest inspiration, into a jumble of inconsistencies, at once a barrier to faith and a stumbling block to the moral sense. Nothing has been made clearer than that the attempt to build religion out of elements purely masculine is a blunder for which the outraged nature of things will always take a full revenge.

But we are anticipating, and, moreover, this is not a quite complete statement of the case. We must remind ourselves of what was suggested at the beginning, that it is only, after all, a surface view which fails to recognise woman in the history of religious production. Man has tried hard to shut her out from this sphere, but, happily, he has not fully succeeded. One feels a sort of poetical justice in the fact that, as Professor Brinton points out, in certain primitive tribes it was the woman only and not the man who was regarded as possessing an immortal soul. Polytheism, in all its forms, has vaguely felt after the truth of the feminine element in religion in distributing the celestial government amongst gods and goddesses. In Catholicism the deification of the Virgin Mary

may be said to have found its basis in this sense of the feminine element as necessary to the idea of Deity. Renan puts it in his own daring fashion in the assertion that in the Catholic system Mary has entered of full right into the Trinity, having displaced there the thin and incomprehensible idea of the Holy Spirit. However we may regard that curious statement, this at least may be said, that the only way of accounting for the success of a cult so badly based both in reason and in history is in regarding it as the clumsy expression of the human yearning after a Divine Motherhood, as combining with the strength of the eternal Fatherhood, at the heart of the universe.

When we look a little more deeply into religious history we shall be less surprised at finding how, despite all effort to the contrary, ideas traceable to woman's religious intuition have to so considerable a degree found their way into the Church's thought. For behind most of the great teachers has stood a woman. Augustine owed himself to his mother Monica. At the back of Basil and of Gregory of Nyssa we discern the figure of their sister Macrina, "who led them both to the faith, and stirred them to their best work," about whom Gregory

confesses that he wrote his treatise on "The Soul and the Resurrection" from her inspiration. We remember what Jacqueline was to Pascal and what Henrietta was to Renan. Let us not forget either the direct influence which, even in the period when masculine autocracy in religion was at its height, woman from time to time contrived to exert. Each century of the dark ages is illuminated by some woman teacher. Jerome celebrates for us Paula, the distinguished Roman matron, the great Hebrew scholar to whom the Latin father was glad to refer difficult points in his commentary on Ezekiel. The eighth century shows us those Benedictine nuns who did so much to evangelise Europe, the workers under Boniface, such as Lioba, Walburga, and Berthgytha, who missionised Germany, and are reported as being versed in all the science of the time. What a figure, too, is that of Hildegarde, in the eleventh century, whom Rohrbacher calls the "instructor of the people, the councillor of bishops and monarchs, the restorer of piety and manners, and oracle of the Church; who was among women what St. Bernard was among men." What might one not say also of a Catherine of

Siena, in the fourteenth century, the beloved of the poor, and at the same time the feared and obeyed of popes; or of the Spanish Teresa, of the sixteenth, who founded orders, advised kings, and whose "Treatise of Prayer" is one of the most wonderful of devotional works!

As we trace the feminine influence in religion through the past and observe its fuller expansion in our own times, we realise more clearly the dimensions of the blunder which for long ages sought so persistently to repress it. For, as we now begin to perceive, it is the woman nature that, more intimately than the man's, expresses the innermost soul of religion. It is dawning upon us that those spheres of reason and of logic where man is strongest, and where he loved of old to elaborate his theologic systems, are not, after all, the place where we shall find the thing we are seeking. Faith's true seat is elsewhere in the soul. The statement of a modern investigator that "science arises from man's conscious, and religion from his subconscious states," may perhaps be too sweeping a generalisation, but it points undoubtedly in the right direction. We are understanding better now Pascal's profound remark, in its

application to religion, that "what is founded only in reason is very badly founded." It is in the region beyond reason, in the sphere of intuition, of feeling, of aspiration, of that Formless which Goethe declared to be the highest thing in man, that religion finds at once its perennial spring and its impregnable refuge. And it is precisely because in these regions woman's nature is at its richest that we are beginning to discover how primary and how essential is the contribution which she makes to it. It is because along that side of its nature humanity most quickly and most surely feels the quiver of the Infinite that woman must inevitably in the future be recognised as arch-priestess of religion.

In proportion as this element of the supra-rational—existing both in man and woman, but in man so frequently deficient—assumes without cavil its true place in religion, we shall see going on in it a steady readjustment of values. The bastard religion of dogma, forged in a place which has no proper apparatus for producing it, will yield precedence to the true religion of faith, hope and love. The Church will cease to frame definitions of everything in the universe, with anathemas attached against all

who fail to accept them, and will instead give itself to its proper work of loving, praying and serving. It will labour with all its might to understand, but it will not again commit the offence of offering the world a syllogistic salvation. It will know God as every mother's soul has always known Him, and as logic has never known Him. It will bear sinners on its heart as mothers do their prodigal sons. And by this means will it arrive at and abide in the true orthodoxy, the proper knowledge of God. For it is because God's heart has in its centre this mother love that He is our God. It is because Christ's life was the expression of that heart that He is the Saviour of the world.

XIII.

Of False Conscience.

The view advocated by Socrates, and by Plato after him, which practically identified virtue with knowledge, has been sharply criticised and can easily be shown to be defective. But the controversy has at least helped us to realise how essential a factor is knowledge to all moral progress, and how fatal an impediment to that progress is ignorance. The saying of Dean Church, that "it is not enough to be religious, but we need to know the kind of religion we are of," is entirely applicable here. It is not sufficient to call ourselves conscientious. The point is to discover the kind of conscience we are using. The habit in many religious teachers of describing conscience as a kind of divinity within us whose judgments represent infallible moral truth, is an evidence of the looseness of thinking which prevails in some pulpits. That there is a Divine working in the human conscience is credible enough, but the

search for it reveals to us at once two elements which have to be decisively separated. One is the central light which from the beginning has been streaming upon humanity; the other is the human organ or medium upon which that light has played, and which in different ages and races shows itself as a development in all stages of imperfection. The ray which falls on the lens is entirely pure. But the rough and often quite rudimentary character of this instrument, its imperfect polishing, and the foreign matter which inheres in its substance, cause often the most grotesque and distorted images to be thrown.

It is when we have grasped this fact that those earlier histories of conscientiousness, which form often such unpleasant and puzzling reading, become at least intelligible to us. What we find there is really a blend between the religious impulse and grotesquely false ideas of the universe. When the Lacedæmonians whipped boys to death as an offering to Diana; when the mother of Xerxes, as he departed on one of his expeditions, buried alive a number of youths to propitiate the subterranean powers; when the Carthaginians placed their little children on the red-hot lap of Moloch, they

were acting in the fear of God; but their God was a bad God. Conscientiousness for many ages and amongst many peoples might be translated as bad-Godism. The cult is in full vogue to-day. The present writer had recently in his hand a photograph of an Indian fakir with a long, emaciated arm stretched at right angles from the shoulder. He had conscientiously held it in that position for some thirty years! In Paris the other day died an old woman whose body was covered with scars and burns. She had starved and tortured herself to death in the name of religion. The fakir and the Paris Catholic belong outwardly to different faiths. They might be bracketed together as devotees of a divinity who, if he were real, would have to be described as cruel and barbarous; whose moral character, in fact, would not bear inquiry.

Most of us will claim to be quite remote from mental conditions of this order. We have outgrown those conceptions in which religion, to use the terrible words of Lucretius, "displayed her head from the heavens, threatening mortals with her hideous aspect." We have purified our thoughts of God, and concurrently have raised the standards by which we judge of

character and conduct. Very likely our self-satisfaction in these respects may be fairly well grounded. In the ordinary and well-worn tracks, both of religious thinking and practical living, our conscience can be trusted to yield results that in comparison with those cited may be regarded as respectable, and even superior. And yet it requires no very close observation, even in the circles nearest to us, to discover on every hand badly trained, badly nourished consciences, which, from not having enough intellect in their virtue, are playing false in a dozen directions to life's higher interests.

There is an aberration of conscience which rules specially in religious natures, the subtle working of which has, so far as we know, never yet been fairly analysed. The disturbing cause here might be summed up in a phrase as the short-sighted selfishness of religious enjoyment. The inner history of the conscience which offers this phenomenon may be traced somewhat as follows: Upon a highly sensitive nature there comes, whether by sudden emotional inflow or by quieter inner movements, a condition of spiritual feeling which is recognised as the highest and purest enjoyment that life has yet afforded. Call it what we will—"conversion,"

"reconciliation," "the sense of God," "the higher life"—it is there, a rapturous experience known to multitudes and recognised by them as an incomparable treasure and luxury of the soul.

The natural and immediate sequence of the experience is the desire and resolve to retain this joy at all costs. Whatever seems to diminish its intensity or to fail to contribute to its increase is regarded as an enemy to be avoided. And everything, on the other hand, that appears to aid it, or to open up sources for its supply, is welcomed and cherished. But the age-long experience of the human spirit has at last begun to discover that even this loftiest phase of the heart's life has its own dangers; that its impulses are not all to be trusted, that its verdicts must be tested by another court if they are not to lead us astray.

The manner in which this feeling, left to itself, has repeatedly and disastrously missed its way is writ large in human history. One can trace three separate wrong directions along which the instinct has operated. In the first place, in the search for what seemed its most appropriate food, it has, especially in earlier days, given a false currency to the miraculous

and the supernatural. Craving ever for its sense of God, it went on the supposition that He was most distinctly to be realised in what transcended the order of Nature. Here is the origin of those "wonder stories" which flowed from the imagination of the pious minds of former times, written and read with the single idea of promoting that religious rapture of which the supernatural alone seemed to be the source. Whether they are Jewish haggadah in which prophets are transported across continents by the hair of their head, or "Gospels of the Infancy," which represent the Saviour as addressing profound sayings to Mary from the cradle, or mediæval lives of the saints, such as Bonaventura's of Francis of Assisi, stuffed with marvels, they bear the same stamp and are from the same mint. Protestants as well as Catholics have yielded to this impulse. We read in Mary's reign of a voice, thought by the people to be that of an angel, speaking against the Mass from a wall in Aldgate, when the angel turned out to be a girl concealed behind the plaster. This aberration of the old-time conscience in the interest of the religious feeling is pressing specially hard upon us to-day. It is burdening the Church with one of its most

difficult and painful tasks in the unravelling of truth from error.

The desire of the soul to preserve its God-consciousness unimpaired has led religion along a second fatal track, that of the banning of inquiry and of contrary opinion. Received doctrine being, as was maintained, the vessel that held the treasure, to touch the one was to imperil the other. Hence that "castration of the intellect," to use Nietzsche's terrible phrase which for centuries characterised ecclesiastical procedure; the feeling that led Augustine to assert that schismatics would suffer eternal punishments, "although for the name of Christ they had been burned alive"; which found voice in Cardinal Pole's dictum that murder and adultery were not to be compared in heinousness with heresy; which in our own day made Newman declare that "a publisher of heresy should be treated as if he were embodied evil," and the gentle Keble to regard scholars who applied modern scientific criticism to the Bible as "Men too wicked to be reasoned with." A milder form of the same feeling is that which burks inquiry from fear that the results will damage one's religious joy. It is this which in the sixteenth century gave occasion to the gibe

of Erasmus that "our theologians call it a sign of holiness to be unable to read." What, if it had not been said in our own hearing, would have been less credible was a recent declaration of thankfulness by a Nonconformist minister that he had never learned German! "German religious thought was so unsettling!" That a man whose business it was to know and to teach should in these days express gratitude for ignorance would be inconceivable in any other sphere. But in theology all things are possible. Only very slowly is the religious conscience beginning to understand what Pascal tried to teach it more than two centuries ago, that "the first of all Christian truths is that truth should be loved above all"; only now is it beginning to realise that the God-consciousness, to preserve which it has often so ignorantly striven, reaches only its loftiest form when the intellect is permitted its fullest and freest play.

The third of the ways in which the uneducated instinct for religious joy has tended to mislead the conscience has been by practising what seemed the cheap and easy process of exclusion. Secular pursuits, interests and enthusiasms drew the mind off God and were therefore as far as possible to be barred.

Hence science, the arts, the drama, physical exercises and pastimes were banned as hostile to the Divine life. To-day in many circles that ban is not yet raised. There is a story of a modern evangelist shutting his eyes when sailing up the Rhine lest the beauty of the scenery should prove a temptation. Even learning has with some modern religionists been avoided as distracting from true piety. It is distinctly a credit to the Jesuits, with all their faults, that their leader, Ignatius Loyola, saw the fallacy of all this and taught that the religious emotions, fascinating as was their indulgence, must not be allowed to hinder the acquirement of scholarship and the arts. One must in this sense "go away from God for God; *ad majorem gloriam Dei.*" That is one of the great lessons of the inner life as we understand it to-day. We are, as a French writer has powerfully said, to "beware of a religion which *substitutes* itself for everything; that makes monks. Seek a religion which *penetrates* everything; that makes Christians." We are discovering now that God is not only the source and object of the religious feelings, but that He is also a musician, an artist, a mathematician, the Creator and Giver of all beauty, and that in

seeking perfection in these directions we are seeking Him. It is a false conscience which would shut up our religious interests to the narrow ground of a few elementary ideas. That is to put it in charge of a kitchen garden when its true *rôle* is to govern a universe.

XIV.

Religion and Medicine.

In modern civilisation the clergyman and the doctor stand at such a distance apart that it is almost difficult for us to realise that originally they were one and the same person. Yet there was a time when medicine—the whole business of healing—was a purely ecclesiastical function. In savage tribes to-day the "medicine man" is also priest. And the reason is evident. The primitive belief everywhere connected disease with spiritual causes, and for a cure looked to the supernatural. Throughout rural India, as Mr. Crooke in his "Folk-Lore" informs us, sickness is attributed to spirits or to the anger of offended ancestors, and the priest or "holy man" is in such cases at once called in to propitiate or exorcise the evil influence. We need not, indeed, go so far afield for similar ideas. There are parts of rural England where cramp, ague, the falling sickness and other ailments are held to be due to demonic agency, against

which the remedy is in charms and mystic incantations. It has been by a very long process, in accordance with that law of specialisation of function the working of which Mr. Herbert Spencer has so laboriously delineated, that the medicinal art has, amongst civilised peoples, gained the distinctive place of which we find it in possession to-day.

Medicine, on its way to becoming a science and an art, has had some rude experiences. Its earlier stages were hardly an improvement on the old supernaturalism. For a charm or an exorcism, if they did no good, at least they hardly did harm. Often, indeed, they wrought their miracles, for they left nature to do her work, assisted by that mighty reinforcement, faith. It was another matter when actual experiment began to be made with drug and with operating knife upon the human subject. This ticklish business of putting, as Voltaire so cruelly insinuated, "drugs of which you know little into a body of which you know nothing," brought the healing tribe for a long period into grievous disrepute. They have been the subject of some of the world's oldest witticisms. There is that of the Lacedemonian, who, on being asked why he lived so long, replied that

it was because of his ignorance of physic; and the *mot* of Diogenes to an inferior wrestler who had turned physician: "Courage, friend, now thou shalt put them into the ground that beforetime put thee on it." Montaigne makes us shudder with his picture of the medical practices of his time. Fancy a prescription which included "the left foot of a tortoise, the excrement of an elephant, the liver of a mole, the blood from under the left wing of a white pigeon, and rats pounded to a small powder"! It was a hardy race, surely, that stood all this and yet survived to tell the tale.

It is worth while recalling these earlier phases of the healing art and of the standing of its professors, in order the better to realise the immense change that we witness to-day. Resting on a broad basis of accurate knowledge, master of a thousand secrets, its history crowded with glorious victories in the campaign against disease and pain, and with foremost names, with intellect and worth everywhere devoted to its interests, the medical profession has reached a kind of apotheosis in modern life. Art has expressed the present estimate of it in Mr. Filde's beautiful picture "The

Doctor," while Ian Maclaren in his exquisite and moving portraiture of the Drumtochty practitioner has written the same sentiment into literature. The feeling has grown upon men that this calling, demanding as it does the constant exercise at once of knowledge and of sympathy, which has the most fascinating problems for the intellect and the most imperious claims upon the heart, whose aim is the furtherance of life and the defeat of death, is emphatically a calling for noble souls, and noble souls in abundance have flocked into it. To-day the *personnel*, the standing and the achievements of the medical profession represent one of the most valuable assets of civilisation.

It is precisely on this account that the question becomes so interesting as to the precise present-day relations between medicine and religion. One of our reasons for writing on the subject is the feeling that, in more than one direction, they might be improved. There is, for one thing, an impression abroad that the bent of the physiological mind is toward materialism. The old saying, "*tres medici duo athei*," is still quoted. Miss Power Cobbe, in a magazine article some time ago, lamented that

the medical faculty was setting up a new priesthood which was to replace the care of the soul by the care of the body. There is certainly no group of educated men so exposed to that appeal to the senses on which materialism relies as are our doctors and surgeons. More closely to them than to the rest of us comes home the argument of Lucretius :

> Præterea gigni pariter cum corpore et una
> Crescere sentimus, pariterque senescere mentem.

"Besides, we see the mind to be born with the body, to grow with it, and with it to decay." They are continually in contact with death, as the apparent conqueror and extinguisher of mind. And so it has happened that some of the strongest attacks against religious orthodoxy have come from the medical and physiological side. Rabelais, the arch-scoffer of the sixteenth century, was a physician as well as a monk. Darwin and Huxley, who gave the religious sentiment of the last generation so rude a shake, were bred in this school. It is also, in this connection, a curious coincidence that the starter of the modern denial of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch should have been a physician—the Frenchman, Jean Astruc.

It is one of the greatest misfortunes of the modern specialisation of studies that it should make the ablest and most earnest men almost inevitably one-sided. And nowhere is this result more to be lamented than in the sphere of medicine. For here the sheer necessity of overtaking and keeping abreast of the enormous accumulation of technical knowledge in their own department has kept numbers of medical men comparatively uneducated on a side of their nature, which, for the purposes of their work, requires the most thorough training. The question here is not that of their personal attitude towards this or that theological dogma; it is whether the comparatively small attention paid by some members of the faculty to the spiritual side of human life does not, in some most important particulars, hinder and mar their professional work? On abstract grounds it would, we believe, be not difficult to show that the modern spiritual philosophy, as expounded by a Caird, a Green and a Martineau, has effectively met the arguments of the later Materialism. But it is much more to the point to show how medicine can neither do justice to itself nor to the humanity to which it ministers unless it both recognise the

spiritual, and, what is more, receive a definite training in its laws.

The neglect of this plainly-marked department of its work has, for one thing, kept the ground open for a swarm of non-experts and adventurers. Heterodoxy has in every age had the function of showing to orthodoxy the new roads ahead, and this has been emphatically true of the schools of medicine. It has been reserved for the outsiders, who have in successive generations stirred the wrath of orthodox medicine, to suggest to it what turn out in the end to be indubitable truths. What, for instance, is the doctrine of faith-healing, for which a "Dr." Dowie is assaulted by a crowd of boisterous medicos, more than the assertion, in an extravagant form, of a truth now on its way to universal acknowledgment, that the body has to be approached first and foremost through the soul? The world is full of unformulated facts on this question. The healings wrought by Christ and the apostles, the cures to which Irenæus bears testimony in the second century, the marvellous physical results of the preaching of Bernard, the raising of Melancthon from what seemed immediate death at the prayer of Luther, are parts of an immense tradition

which points all in one direction. It testifies to the existence of secret spiritual energies, potent against disease and for the furtherance of life, which under certain conditions are at the disposition of humanity, and which it behoves the men responsible in these departments most carefully to study.

But the relations of medicine with the spiritual by no means end here. The best men of the profession recognise growingly, we believe, the immense moral responsibilities attaching to it, and the grave questions which hang thereon. Their position brings them continually into contact with life's ultimate problems. They stand between the young man and his vices. They see humanity in its defeats, its exhaustions, its despairs. They are called in to the spectacle of life-bankruptcies when all the physical forces have been rioted away, and there is a famine of power and of joy. Every day they see men face, with what philosophy they can muster, the last enemy. And their *entrée* is to every class. They are called in where the clergy are excluded. In their parish there are practically no dissenters.

To a man of the nobler instincts the appeal of this helplessness and despair should be irresistible. But what has he to meet it with? In

nine cases out of ten physical alleviation is the smallest part of what a sufferer needs. The thing he wants above all is hope and courage. But where is our practitioner to find this ; where is he to gain power to stiffen the moral backbone of tempted youth ; or to cheer the lonely invalid to whom the days are a weariness and the nights a horror; to help men gain the supreme moral victory over suffering and over death ? One must put it bluntly : he cannot be a good doctor who is not fundamentally a good man. Emphatically is it true for his work that "one man with a belief is worth ten men with only interests." What we are here saying has nothing to do with sectarianism ; still less with that professional religionism which is the most detestable of all poses. It is simply the assertion of certain fundamental truths that have been lacking in some medical curriculums, and of which, in conclusion, we may give this as the sum : Medical science is ultimately a branch of spiritual science ; bodily healing requires a knowledge of psychic as well as of physical conditions ; and finally, the medical ministry to a diseased and broken humanity can never be adequate unless carried on as a mediation of the Eternal Goodness and Love.

XV.

Spiritual Undercurrents.

If a man who has purchased an acre of land could only comprehend and utilise the values that he has here obtained he would be overwhelmed with the sense of his riches. He is going to make what he can of the surface, but knows practically nothing of what he owns underneath. Hints of what lies there occasionally make themselves heard, and the favoured ones in whose ears they are whispered win fortunes in coal, in oil, in gold. But these, after all, are only scratchings of the outer crust, leaving immeasurable depths unsearched. Little by little we are learning what a realm of forces we are at the top of. We discover that bodies related to each other by their separate chemical qualities and affinities are under the common sway of mysterious earth-currents, magnetisms and what not, that sweep the central deeps and are felt from pole to pole. The world, as a purely physical system, is

governed far more by what is hidden than by what we see.

When we turn our attention from the round globe itself to the being who lives on it, we seem to find all this repeated in another sphere. A man must be reckoned not so much by what he is, as by the sum of the forces that are acting on him. In the purely physical life who is to say when the outside air which he draws into his lungs, or the food of which he partakes, is, and is not he? When we have taken stock of a man's visible outfit, reckoned up his bit of brain, his level of culture, his apparent reach of faculty, have we here the sum of his life possibilities? Far from it. To get that we have to take into account the spiritual system to which he belongs, and to estimate what he may do or become under the impact of its mysterious powers. Here, too, we are becoming sensible of mighty under-currents. They sweep along the whole unseen force-region that lies underneath humanity, and to comprehend them is, we are beginning to realise, a fundamental element in the business of life. There are side branches of this theme along which, at this point, one is much tempted to diverge. One might, for instance,

discuss here those strange psychical phenomena about which Kant was constrained to say: "For my part, ignorant as I am of the way in which the human spirit enters the world, and the ways in which it goes out of it, I dare not deny the truth of many of such narratives." But these phases of the topic, absorbing as they are to many modern minds, are not the main point. And we want here to keep to that.

Of the spiritual system to which we have just referred as offering the real measure of our separate possibility, the New Testament is the manual in chief, and yet there is no book that on this point has been more misunderstood. The Christianity it depicts offers us, for one thing, a marvellous object-lesson on human nature and its unseen environment. It shows us what can be made of the average man when a new force plays on him. Its language, and the facts it recites as to the "endowment with power" and the "gift of the Holy Spirit," are a piece of spiritual geography exhibiting, with a clearness and certainty new to the world, the features of the great power-realm which environs humanity. But the interpretation of the manual has been hitherto a crude

and unscientific business, and we are only just emerging upon a view of the facts that is solid and satisfying. To listen to some talk still current, one might suppose that the "gift" or "outpouring" of the Spirit were a kind of parochial phenomenon, showing at hazard amongst this or that group of enthusiasts, and whose chief characteristic was the element of caprice and of the incalculable. Men quote the text, "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and forthwith conclude they have to deal with something that quite transcends any question of law or of uniformity. As though the wind were outside the sweep of law! We do not indulge in talk of this kind in the other departments in which man is to-day enriching his life. Electricity is an outside power by whose reinforcement we have quadrupled our energies, but we know better than to treat its coming or going as belonging to the uncertain or the inexplicable. The analogy here suggested is worth pausing upon. When we call ours the age of electricity, what do we mean? Certainly not that electricity has been bestowed on the world in our time. It was there all the time. The difference is that ours is the age in which its existence has been

recognised, its laws ascertained, and the applications of its force, in part at least, understood. It may yet be that the twentieth century will be known, in comparison with former times, as the age of the Spirit, and for a similar reason. No new forces will have been created, but the old ones, the spiritual undercurrents that have been running from the beginning, will have been uncovered and tapped, and the human soul bathed in their constant supply.

What has so much confused our thinking in this matter has been the question of personality, and especially our thinking about the supreme personality of Christ. We speak of the Spirit as His gift, and that on excellent authority, for so is it stated in the New Testament. On the same high authority we speak of the Spirit as a Person, as part of the personality of God. And here also we do well. Not so well, though, in the inferences we are apt to draw. How did Jesus give us the Spirit? How did Faraday give us electricity? Not by creating, but by revealing. The gift in each case was there, old as eternity, but with a veil on its face. In each case the moment in human evolution came, the ripened time for the unveiling. Jesus, in His historical manifestation, was what He was

through the new relation of His personality to the spiritual forces, just as, in an immeasurably lower sphere, Faraday was what he was through a new relation to the electric forces. The New Testament is abundantly clear on this point. The Christ had his power through being "filled with the Spirit." According to his own testimony He could "do nothing of Himself." His place in history was and is unique, because of His unique receptivity for the fulness of Divine Life.

The gist of this is that the spiritual undercurrents on which the higher life depends are not variants, but constants. It is a question not of the flow and ebb of their tide, for their tide knows no ebb, but of the extent and delicacy of the surface we can open to their impact. There is no break here between the analogies of the natural and the spiritual world. The uniformity of the laws on which we depend in nature is not more exact than the uniformity we find in the kingdom of grace. In both we have to do with the same ineffable Personality. In gravitation, as in inspiration, we are in contact with the one eternal Spirit of God.

The significance of the history of Jesus for us is, then, partly, at least, the revelation it

offers of the possibilities of humanity when in fullest union with its spiritual environment. Verily, here is He the first born of a new creation, the forerunner in a new and higher stage of development. That perfect life, with its Divine self-consciousness, its utter purity, its love, its Calvary-consummated sacrifice, opened, as it were, the sluices through which the pent-up spiritual currents, hitherto hidden, could roll in upon a thirsty humanity, bringing Paradise in their flow. Precious beyond words is that draught of the undercurrent, and beyond words precious is He to whom we owe it. Mankind, said Goethe, is continually progressing, but the individual man is ever the same. The same, that is, in his central need, a need which no progress in civilisation can ever supply, but which is met and satisfied through Christ. As men understand these things more, the more will they enter into that sheer, adoring love of Christ which perfumes the New Testament. The language of Christina Rossetti becomes our own: "How beautiful are the arms which have embraced Christ, the hands which have touched Christ, the eyes which have gazed upon Christ, the lips which have spoken with Christ, the feet which have

followed Christ; how beautiful are the hands which have worked the works of Christ, the feet which, treading in His footsteps, have gone about doing good, the lips that have spread abroad His name, the lives which have been counted loss for Him!"

The relation of Christ's personality to the spiritual undercurrents is, in a lower degree, that of all His followers. It is, in a way, like what we have in magnetism, where, in addition to the great, central, perennial earth currents, there is the separate and varying magnetic susceptibility of each different object and element. The spiritual currents concentrate in us, form in us reservoirs of power, use us as media of their mighty movement. It is precisely to the extent in which we are in touch with them that, as Churches or as individuals, we are of any religious use to the world. What a spectacle that of a Church with all its organism complete for work, but with the stream that should furnish its driving-power cutting for itself a channel in a new direction, and leaving all this ecclesiastical plant high and dry on the deserted shore! This is what Carlyle had in view when, in a passage written sixty years ago, but which has not yet lost its signi-

ficance, he speaks of "these distracted times when the religious principle, driven out of most churches, either lives unseen in the hearts of good men, looking and longing and silently working towards some new revelation, or else wanders homeless over the world like a disembodied soul seeking its terrestrial organism!"

It is for the Church of to-day to render such a consummation impossible, and now is its supreme opportunity. With all history behind it, with a clearer apprehension than has ever before been known of its mission and its powers, with the humanity it deals with visibly opening to new and deeper apprehensions of the truth and life it brings, the Church has now in its reach the clear possibility of revolutionising the world and of establishing it upon the immutable basis of God's spiritual law. Its new *régime* will be, in the best sense, a scientific one. Just as, in the electrical sphere, no teacher of the science is possible who is ignorant of, or careless about, the laws which operate in it, so in this spiritual sphere no Church authority will be recognised which is not founded on knowledge of, and obedience to, the inner laws. The idea of a Church subsisting on, or working by, any other power than that which rises in

the spiritual world, will be felt to be as absurd as Laputa's project for extracting sunbeams from cucumbers. The Church's speech, its prayers, even its silences, will be channels of the Spirit's mighty undercurrent. No preacher will venture the impertinence of utterance which, either in substance or in delivery, is divorced from the operation of the kingdom's law.

As a crater, in an eruption, is only the organ and mouthpiece, as it were, of forces infinitely beyond its own range, working far beneath, so the worker in this kingdom, be he never so eminent or never so humble, will recognise that so is it with him. If his work is worth anything at all he will know that its worth consists precisely in this, that it originates in a sphere beyond himself.

XVI.

On Being Inferior.

One of the greatest disciplines of the inner life lies in the choice that is offered us as to the treatment of our own inferiority. It is a discipline which none of us is allowed to escape. Some of us are very low down. There are ranges and ranges of visible human life that are far above us. But the sense of inferiority is by no means confined to the poor or the meagrely gifted. The highest amongst men are really in the same position, and are often made to feel it the most acutely. Illustrations of this will come presently, but meanwhile the point is as to how we regard the fact in itself. That its true lesson is difficult to learn is evident from the stumbles over it that are everywhere made. There are, for instance, the meaner souls who seek to balance matters by an inane and spiteful process of levelling down; whose

> . . . low desire
> Not to feel lowest makes them level all.

A variety of the same species is the man whose morbid self-conceit leads him to fix on some chance feature of his individuality in which he surpasses his neighbours as a reason for ignoring the thousand points in which he is beneath them. Often enough the feature itself is of ludicrously small importance. Our great man is some "Thrasybulus of the ward of Stira, who had the strongest voice of any man among the Athenians." On the other hand, there are men who allow their sense of defect to crush out all manly self-confidence. It was the reverse of the true way of taking his own inferiority which led poor Benedict XII., on hearing of his election as Pope, to say to the conclave, "Brethren, you have chosen an ass." Yet, again, there are in our day not a small number who gird at their limitation of position and gifts as part of that great system of inequality which, in their eyes, is the most flagrant instance of the injustice of life, and consequently of the immorality of the universe.

It is surely not for such results that life brings us under the discipline of being inferior. In searching for the true ends of it let us try first to get at the facts of the case. What meets us at the outset is the circumstance that

our inferiority one to another is mixed up in a most complicated way. There is no absolute superiority. We are all at once superior and inferior. The mixing process commences with an initial difference of rank. Mr. Gladstone was fond of saying that English society was immutably based on its finely-graded and clearly-recognised system of classes, of which the throne was the apex. The New World is spoken of sometimes as having abolished this system and founded another on the basis of human equality. It is hardly so. Names have been changed, but not things. There is no more equality in America than there is in England; nor can be, for the thing is not in human nature. And it is amusing to think that the stoutest Republican recognises to the full the doctrine of inequality, of absolute monarchy even, in his religion, where he worships one supreme Ruler, and speaks of a hierarchy of saints and angels. No true man, in fact, girds at rank. He knows that it represents something worthy, if not in its actual possessor, yet assuredly in the force that created it. It is there, the evidence of a primal life-power that once lifted itself amongst men and made itself respected.

But the man high in social position is full, in his turn, of inferiorities. When Charles V. picked up Titian's fallen brush and handed it to the painter with the remark that he was proud to wait on so supreme a genius, the master of half the world spoke here with a full sense of an inferior towards a superior. In the artist's great realm of life he knew himself to occupy the lower place. In the yet higher sphere of the moral and spiritual this interplay of values is even more striking. The Stoic Epictetus, who had emperors afterwards for disciples, was a Greek slave. The Galilean peasant whom Pilate condemned did not dispute for a moment the higher social rank of the judge. But to-day the judges and great ones of the earth name the Galilean's name with religious devotion, and have no words which adequately express their sense of His rank in the world. Throughout history, in fact, the moral and spiritual superiorities seem by a kind of law to have been wedded with lowliness of outward position. Libanius made fun of the early Christians as a set of tinkers and cobblers who had left their mallets and awls to preach the kingdom of heaven. Spinoza ground lenses for a livelihood. George

Fox and Jacob Böhme got theirs by cutting leather. Literature tells the same story. From Homer downwards the kings of ideas have been, as often as not, bankrupt of pocket. Yet always the wealthy and the great have felt their own smallness beside these beggars. *Pauperemque dives me petit.* "The rich man seeks me, the poor man," has been the poet's boast in every age.

But this, it may be said, is only a partial and specious view. To pit intellectual and moral values against material and social ones is, we shall be told, only to trifle with the subject. For when the superiorities both of money and rank and of brain and heart have been accounted for, the real question remains. These rich dowers, inward and outward, belong after all to the exceptional. What of the vast average of men, the dim multitudes, who have no special gift, either of property, rank or mind? There surely is a "being inferior" with no romance in it; in which one fails utterly to find the ideal! No one with open eyes will think so. The higher up a man is the more profound will be his respect for the average humanity, the more humble will he be in its presence. For it is here in the midst of

the common and the normal, in life's mid-stream rather than amongst the exceptions, that he will recognise with awe the existence of a Power in humanity mightier than its own, a Power that is working out ideas infinitely greater than those of the ablest individual man.

This study of the superiority that lurks in and beneath the life of the common man is, in fact, the one thing needful and grievously lacking among the present-day accredited purveyors of our moral ideas. It would do some of our armchair theologians, who judge mankind by their prim lists of ecclesiastical "virtues and their contrary vices," a world of good if they could spend some months amongst, say, the common sailors on board an ocean tramp. On Sundays, while the tramp's owners and the pious British public generally are at church, they would find these men at some foreign port loading grain or coal. Their language will not be ecclesiastical, and when they get a day ashore their procedures are not such as are provided for in the Assembly's Catechism. This, without doubt, is very shocking. But by-and-by it will dawn upon our theologian, if he have grace, that the moral and spiritual lack of these men is the sacrifice

they are offering to the interests of the religious British public; that their Sunday and week-day labour, their exposure to the tempests of ocean, and to the thieves and harlots of the foreign port, are the price at which this stay-at-home public gets its corn and wine, its comforts and luxuries, three-parts, in fact, of all it eats, drinks and wears. It dawns upon him that if vicarious sacrifice is the highest height and deepest heart of morals, then these men, who have sacrificed the interests of their bodies and their souls for the rest of us, are in their unchurched paganism actually a great deal higher up than we. When besides he has touched hands with these men, and known their childlike simplicity, their quick response to what is higher when it is offered, their splendid courage, their noble devotion, he will be more than ever inclined when he comes back to revise his theology. He will search for some new definitions as to who is high and who is low in the kingdom of heaven.

The superior and the inferior are then, we find, lying everywhere side by side, and we are now, perhaps, furnished with an answer to the question we asked at the beginning, as to what this feature in our life is meant to accomplish

in us. The true man is simply amazed at the notion that there can be any injustice in inferiority. The sense of it, rightly taken, is, he realises, one of our greatest inward helps. It is a miserable business to be perpetually looking down. What we want is something to look up to. It is the altitudes that make us climbers. An awakened nature is positively greedy after occasions for respect and veneration. And he finds them everywhere, and most of all amongst the commonest people. His attitude to a nature manifestly better than his own is that of a man who has come on a new treasure. A great soul is a banquet to which we are all invited. Shall we be envious that this feast of which we are partaking is so rich? "Against the superiority of another," said Goethe, "there is no remedy but love." A deep saying, but expressing only half the truth; for where love is the light of our seeing there will be no question of "remedies" against superiority. The question will be how most fully to open ourselves to its strength, and how to be lifted highest on the wings of its inspiration.

XVII.

Our Contribution to Life.

There is food for abundant thinking in that apocalyptic conception of a great human judgment in which books are to be opened. The suggestion here of a kind of celestial book-keeping, in which a debtor and creditor account is kept between us and the universe, sounds startling enough, and yet, the more we ponder it, the closer does it seem to the facts. Life, as we have known it, suggests irresistibly the idea of an unseen capitalist who has invested largely in us, and who is looking for a return. At the beginning the account is all on one side. Our existence is a passivity, a vast continuous reception. Our entrance into the world, as a tiny bundle of fates and destinies, a thin segment of the infinite, a link between nothing and everything, is in itself a momentous contribution to life, but it is not our own. The very "I" that we now cling to as most centrally ours was none of our choosing. That

the new consciousness which in us came to the surface should emerge on this tiny planet instead of on a satellite of Sirius, that it should appear in the nineteenth century instead of the sixth or sixtieth, that it should be of this particular physical and mental capacity, of this precise shade of temperament,—these and a thousand other decisions out of ten million "might be's," are all an affair of the Investor, who is not ourselves. One grows dizzy in thinking of the length of the chain of which we form the latest link. That palæolithic ancestor of ours, whom we discern, rude, unkempt, groping his way in the savage conditions of the measureless past—have we any affection, any filial regard for him? Yet it is on him we hang. Had he not succeeded in his struggle, kept the torch of life burning, spite of every adverse gust, and handed it, still glowing, to the one who came next, we had not been.

After our arrival we are, for the first part entirely, and for the after part still very largely, recipients and absorbents. Life's hoarded capital is at every turn being lavished upon us. The universe flows in through myriad open gateways of the soul, leaving

deposits of all kinds from its infinite storehouses. We gulp the present and the past. All the histories, all the literatures work at us. We may not have read them, but they create the atmosphere we breathe. The agonies of martyrs, the struggles of patriots, the visions of seers, the achievements of science, the products of adventure, help to swell the revenues we draw. In fact, there is no arithmetic can calculate the cost in thought, in effort, in suffering, in all that constitutes the ultimate values, that has gone to the equipment of the humblest of us alive to-day.

That is one side of this marvellous bookkeeping. Not less remarkable is the other. We discover, as we study it, that the capitalist we have to deal with, lavish though he be, is no aimless spendthrift. He looks for a return, and insists upon getting it. Nothing is more wonderful than the way in which this demand utters itself, the way in which we are singled out and sent off to our particular spell of work. It is as though the heavens were opened and our names called. Out of our desires and our willpower, out of our circumstances, out of the impinging upon us of the unexpected, out of our successes, blunders and calamities, there

emerges, as the years go on, a something, formless, mysterious, unreckonable, which, nevertheless, awed and wondering, we begin to understand as our Contribution to Life.

Formless and unreckonable we say, for we are at the furthest remove from any clear comprehension of what our output amounts to in the sum of things. We have no proper gauge of the importance of this or that. Do we imagine that St. Paul ever dreamed that his stray correspondence, written at the white-heat of the moment, addressed to the passing circumstances of a given time and place, forgotten, may be, by himself, as our own often is, when the pen is laid down, was destined to be the leading part of a sacred book, to be regarded as the storehouse of doctrine, the centre and foundation of a world's faith! Often it is what the man himself has thought least of that represents his largest payment. Goethe prided himself more on his theory of colours, which was a false one, than on his Faust. How little did Ken's "Evening hymn" and Newman's "Abide with me" bulk to the writers as compared with the sum of their activities and their interests! And yet, as the years roll on, it seems more and more as though it

were to write these hymns that these men lived.

But surprises of this kind are only a small part of the matter. The marvellous fortune of a Paul's letters, hidden from himself, is visible to us. But the greater part of our contribution to life, whether it be that of an apostle or a drayman, is hidden, not only from us and our contemporaries, but from all posterity, so long as it keeps on this side the veil. In trying to unravel the riddle of men's destiny we are apt to catch at the illumined and splendid points, as though we have here the explanation of the parts of it that are dark and troubled. It is nothing of the kind. Do we find, for instance—to take a stray historical example—that the great after career of a John Knox, as evangelist and reformer, is any sort of explanation of his sombre years as a Dominican monk, or of the horrible experience when he toiled as a slave at the galleys? The prosperity of one period of life or of one part of the world is no answer concerning the suffering of another part. That so large a portion of our contribution to life takes the form of sheer endurance, the doing of things that are irksome and that supply no visible

reward, demands a deeper solution. And there is surely one to hand. The pessimistic interpretation of life commits the mistake of supposing that our seemingly unprofitable and disastrous experiences have been transacted once for all; that this is their final form, about which nothing more is to be done but the lamenting. Whereas all the probabilities are that such experiences have only begun their history; that these seeming unprofitables and wearinesses are the rough outlines, the first stages in a series of immense transformations and results that are yet to be revealed.

It is only along that line, the ancient line of faith, that we are able to make any satisfactory terms with our past. Viewed in this light our very blunders and failures receive a consecration which makes us at peace with them. The joy we missed and the pain that came instead are seen to form the cross, the manful bearing of which may turn out to be our chief, preordained, contribution to life. In the centre of the trial stand we, glad in the midst of it to know that our Commander has assigned us so difficult a post, and determined that the trust reposed in us shall not be betrayed.

When I was young I deemed that sweets are sweet;
But now I deem some searching bitters are
Sweeter than sweets, and more refreshing far
And to be relished more, and more desired,
And more to be pursued on eager feet,
On feet untired, and still on feet tho' tired.

But our contribution to life is still in progress; with some of us it is as yet only a beginning. What form the unfulfilled part of it is to take is a secret; so many factors that enter into it are hidden from us. Yet of one factor we can make sure, and that is our own will. No combination of all the natural forces in the planet can vie for one moment with the potentialities of the human volition. In its secret chamber we can forge destinies. The combination of freedom and necessity that goes on there is a mystery we shall probably never explain. The nearest approach to it, perhaps, is in the formula of Hegel: "It is only as we are in ourselves that we can develop ourselves, yet is it we ourselves that develop ourselves." Despite the dense sophistical webs that have been woven round this subject man has always believed in his freedom. Plutarch well represents this age-long faith when, speaking of Homer, he says, "The poet never introduces the Deity as depriving man of the freedom of

the will, but as moving the will. He does not represent the heavenly power as producing the resolution, but the ideas that lead to the resolution."

But this life-determining power to be of any service to us has to be trained, and to be reinforced. The supreme human achievement is to make resolutions and to keep them. If a man cannot resolve for a lifetime, let him resolve for one day. His will-power for the morrow will be perceptibly stronger for the effort. The world's emancipation, its advent to an earthly paradise, depends not on the accumulation of capital, but on the rescue of its will-power and the concentration of it on noble living. Imagine the lift toward human felicity if this magnificent sentence in Tertullian were made into a fixed resolve: "To wish ill, to do ill, to speak ill or to think ill of any one we are equally forbidden without exception."

Here is a contribution to life, the noblest conceivable, which we can every one make. It may not be ours to add to the world's wealth by great inventions or works of genius. We may be prevented from doing the thing we had most set our hearts on. But in one direction lies a sphere of glorious freedom. It is that of help-

ing the world to its new, its Christian temper. When as a daily discipline we resolutely crush within us the first beginnings of unloving thought towards our fellow, when we help him by bathing the facts of each day's life in the radiant atmosphere of our own faith, when by God's grace and our inner struggle we have produced that noblest and most delightful of products, a richly developed inner life, we shall have taken the best possible means of paying back our debt. The world's greatest asset is the souls it is producing. Let us see to it that our own becomes a worthy addition.

XVIII.

The Gospel of Law.

There are few subjects about which people have indulged more in the luxury of confused thinking than that of law in relation to religion. St. Paul has something to do with this, though the blame does not lie at his door. Men have imagined they were following him in opposing law to grace, in making law the antithesis of gospel. That is their mistake and not his. Paul never attempts to get outside law. His gospel is full of it. With him it is a question, not of law or no law, but of higher *versus* lower law. He rises above the Sinai and Leviticus sphere in the same way that the organic rises above the sphere of the inorganic. The higher life is still one of law. It takes, in fact, the laws of the region from which it has emerged into a higher synthesis, where it exhibits them in new forms, with higher potencies. The apostle sums all this in his one pregnant statement: "For the law of the Spirit

of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

The idea of law as being the antithesis of Gospel has, however, in recent thinking, revived under some new forms. It has been declared on high authority, and in more than one quarter, that the great system of law which we designate as Nature contains no gospel for man, and no prophecy of one. Professor Huxley meant this when he affirmed, in his Romanes lecture, that Nature was non-moral, and that human ethics were, in fact, a battle against her methods. Modern poetry, too, has painted her as ruthless, "red in tooth and claw," while there have not been wanting religious teachers who proclam that, apart from the direct revelation in Christ, man finds in the universe no suggestion of grace or love, no hint of a Heavenly Father.

It is worth while examining whether these things are so. Some of us read Nature very differently. That Christ's revelation is the master-key to her problem we entirely believe. But a key, to be of any use, supposes a lock which fits it. If Nature herself is not full of grace, what is certain is that Christ misread her. He found the world writ all over with the

sign-manual of His Father, and taught us that. We are at a far remove from the standpoint of the Deistical Tindal, but his "Christianity as Old as the Creation" contains after all a true idea. Christianity is largely a rendering of what was in Nature, but which man had previously failed to discern there. We designate Nature as feminine, and truly. For she is full of the mother element. On the whole subject Hooker had a wider outlook than some of the moderns, when, at the end of the first book of his "Polity," he gives of law, as discerned in the general system of things, this magnificent description: "Of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is in the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power."

Law, we say, is full of grace. In its operations, its conditions, its promises, its performances, it suggests everywhere what we understand by Gospel. A man proposes to learn swimming or cycling. He finds himself immediately in contact with certain laws. They say to him, "Believe, obey, and accord-

ing to your faith it shall be unto you." The neophyte, if he be nervous, imagines that while other men in this matter may be under grace, he is certainly singled out for reprobation. The laws by which a man may keep at the top of the water or in easy equilibrium on the saddle of a bicycle, have assuredly, his fears suggest, a statute of limitations which keeps him out. Let him trust and see. He learns finally that in place of reprobation, of favouritism, of limitation, the law says "whosoever will." To all and sundry, to rich and poor, to gentle and simple, to wise and foolish, to good and bad, it offers without restriction all its largess of service, provided only it is believed in and obeyed.

Granted, we are told; but then there is the other side. What of the man who disobeys, or who fails to learn? What Gospel is there in Nature's ruthlessness, in her law of gravitation, when it smashes a man at the foot of a precipice, in her blind rage of tempest when the howling sea swallows a shipload of shrieking creatures within sight of land? What forgiveness is there in Nature, what escape from the chain of her iron necessity? Our human societies, faiths and hopes, are they not

a protest against her, rather than an inspiration from her?

Softly, and one thing at a time. Nature, it is true, has her stern, hard side, but is it after all as stern as it is often painted? *Expertis crede.* Some of us have actually been as near death by foundering, or by precipice smash as could well be, without the actual experience—near enough to know what the immediately previous sensation would be like, and have found it not nearly so bad as the outsider might picture. A famous Alpine climber has described his feeling when, having missed his footing, he found himself dropping from one rock to another down a precipitous descent. He felt certain of being killed, but his one mental occupation during the operation was the calculation as to how many bumps it would take to finish him. Such experiences, be it also remembered, are the great exceptions of life, and they are soon over. "The black minute's at end" before there is time to worry much over it. With animals, where Nature's slaughter is on the greatest scale, both pain and worry are at a minimum. Besides, suffering and death are a part of the scheme of revelation, as well as of Nature pure and simple. If

any odium attaches to them it must be shared by one as well as the other.

But Nature, it is said, differs from Gospel in her doctrine of non-forgiveness. We are at a loss to know how this notion arises. Rather should we affirm that Nature forgives royally, unto seventy times seven. Nothing, on the whole, is more astonishing than the way she bears with wrongdoers. Generations of men will go on violating her laws and yet survive. She mothers them and keeps them going somehow, spite of their frightful heresies in food, and air and exercise, and a thousand things. They break each other's bones or spill each other's blood. Straightway the great Nurse is busy with them, working with her *vis medicatrix* at their wounds, weaving new tissues, deftly joining what has been sundered, and giving up never while a chance remains.

Men talk of the dire inevitableness of heredity. Nature herself makes not nearly so much fuss about it as some modern professors. Gutter children, heirs of generations of vice, who, according to the prevailing doctrine, should be irrevocably damned, body and soul, are daily taken out of the streets of London and put into new conditions, by which their entail of ruin is

cut off. Transplanted to Canada or some other region of open air and hard work, they slough off their legacy of heredity and develop into wholesome farmers and citizens. Man's recoverableness from seemingly desperate conditions is, in fact, the wonder and the lesson of history. When we read of the early triumphs of Christianity; how, out of the inconceivable vileness of the society of the time, there arose, in Rome, in Ephesus, in Corinth, the Divine character described in the letters of Paul or in the Epistle to Diognetus, we think of all this, and rightly, as a marvel of grace. But not less is it a marvel of Nature. Leaven, however good, could not make bread out of a stone. The new force could only operate through the power of response in the raw material. Men became Christlike because they were antecedently capable of becoming so. The greatest spiritual victories the world has known are equally victories of natural law.

Any other theory is, in short, logically unthinkable. The universe has no antinomies of nature and grace. The one works through the other. The humanity which has evolved ethics —more, which has evolved, because of having first received, Divinity—has done and won all

this through Nature, and no otherwise. Out of the one force, which fashioned and keeps the visible world, which gives us the blasts of winter and the infinite grace of spring, which evolved from lower types the human form, and lifted us from brute to man, from this has come also the capacity for the spiritual and then the spiritual itself. Revelation in its forms of intuition, of Prophet, of Christ, of Spirit, is the working of the One Divinity immanent in every part and portion of the visible as of the invisible universe. The laws of that universe are everywhere permanent, and trustworthy, and good simply because they are God's habits, the expression of His character.

XIX.

Life's Healing Forces.

IN that creed of experience which people, by the time of middle age, have generally built up for themselves, a central article will, with most of them, we fancy, be a conviction of the immense healing power hidden away in every department of the world's life and available for every circumstance of it. For some of us who have reached the "grand climacteric," or are beyond it, the reflection that we are alive at all is a source of constant astonishment, while the consciousness that we are happy is yet more wonderful. It is the men and women who have been well knocked about who are most sensible of nature's marvellous doctoring. When we have had the body laid low by all manner of ailments and yet have survived; when fate's ploughshare has gone clean through one after another of our most cherished projects, to leave us, as we discover afterwards, not one penny the worse; when, after our in-

most affections have been smitten by shattering bereavements, we rise from the blow not only still loving, but still enjoying, we become conscious, as no tyro or mere surface skimmer can, of a *vis medicatrix naturæ*, of a vast system and force of healing, spread through the whole constitution of things, which becomes henceforth one of our most delightful and most instructive studies.

Apart from its great speculative outlooks, to which we shall come presently, the subject is, we say, for itself most pleasant to linger over. Is there anything in the world so tender, so entirely motherly, as that caress with which Nature, when we are sick or overwrought, woos us back to strength? Robust health is very well in its way, but there is a subtle happiness it does not know. It is that tasted by the man of nervous organisation when, strained to exhaustion point, he flies for recovery to his healer; when, away on the sea, or meeting the keen breeze of the moorland, he knows that every breath he draws, every glint of the open heaven, every bit of scenery his eye rests on, every moment of the delicious resting-time, is forming part of one great system of beneficence that is working to make

him well. One might expatiate, too, on Nature's surgery; how, when the bodily economy is broken in upon by sword-cut or bullet-wound, she immediately summons her forces to the point attacked; how there she commences a process of stanching, of spinning and weaving of tissues, of expulsion of dangerous matter, and building up of new and healthy substance, all in a way so wonderful and masterly. Not less beautiful is her manner of handling wounds of the mind and heart. When in our grief we refuse to be comforted, and put joy from us as something forbidden, she waits, and gently insists until we smile again. Tourgenieff's statement of the difference between youth and age—that "youth will eat gilt gingerbread and fancy it is daily bread, too; but a time comes when you're in want of dry bread even," is one of those exaggerations which are the bane of antithesis. Nature is kinder than this. The after-life affords us dry bread and something more. The middle-aged world has had wounds enough of body and mind to kill it a dozen times over; but it is alive and cheerful; it has found healing for its hurts.

But we may launch out now a little and

touch, cautiously, one or two of those speculative points to which this topic directly invites. The first of these is the question, "How far do these remedial agencies go? Is there, in the realm either of the material or of the spiritual, anything that is irremediable?" One of the most impressive features, it will be remembered, of "Butler's Analogy" is his conception of Nature's teaching of the irremediable. Courses of conduct relating both to body and mind that contravene her laws may, up to a certain point, be condoned, and their evil results averted; carried beyond that point, their penalty is utter ruin. This, he says, is true of the physical body, where the sentence is death, and of communities and nations, where the judgment is final destruction. And the analogies here from the present life, he argues, may be taken to hold of the life to come.

We doubt whether, if Butler had lived in our day, he would have been so ready with this particular argument. For he would have had to take into consideration the fact, of which modern science and the modern philosophy of history are continually reminding us—that the final judgments on which he lays so much stress are, after all, not finalities; that the

destructions, when looked into, are not so much destructions as healings. Of the national "days of judgment" few have been more impressive in their apparent hopelessness than the fall of the Jewish State under Nebuchadnezzar, and its after and completer destruction by the Romans under Titus. But we now realise that to the former the Jews owed their highest conception of God, their greatest literature, in short, their spiritual selves; while to the latter, with its consequent dispersion of the race over the face of the earth, we trace the immense world-wide Judaic influence of to-day. The "destruction" was, in fact, a remedy. When Augustine penned his "*De Civitate Dei*," the shadow of the impending Vandal invasion was already over his beloved North Africa, and the Roman State was everywhere crashing into hideous ruin. It was natural that he, with the other Christian thinkers of the time, should see here the final doom of the world-powers; the coming catastrophe in which everything outside the Catholic Church was to perish. We, who are on the farther side of these events, judge them differently. The old Rome fell, it is true, but it died only to rise again—to rise in a dozen new

and vigorous communities, who in their laws, their institutions and their spirit, inherited what of it was fitted to live. Rome's day of judgment was neither a ruin nor a finality. It was, again, a remedy.

May we not say the same of death itself? On the physical side it is Nature's way out of an impossible situation. It is her heroic surgery. When the forces of disease have prevailed against her ordinary methods of healing, she dissolves in this way a combination that has become simply painful. Nothing has been destroyed. What has happened is that the arrangement of particles round a hopelessly weakened centre has come to an end, leaving these particles free for a new and sounder grouping. And even in this, the harshest of her processes, it is wonderful to observe Nature's tenderness. In a recently-published German work, which has gone through eight editions, "Vom Zustande des Menschen kurz vor dem Tode," the author, Professor Hornemann, gives a scientific analysis of the experiences of the dying. He declares that the "death agony" is painful to the spectator rather than to the patient; that the sense of dread of death which haunts

so many during life almost invariably disappears at its actual approach; that, in fact, as is shown by the testimonies of people brought back from the verge of the grave, a special consciousness of remarkable calm and peace is a normal experience of the closing hour. From beginning to end, and even through what we call the "end," Nature appears ever as the healer.

But having come so far we must go farther. We are confronted now with the question, "What bearing has all this upon spiritual disease, and specially upon the Christian doctrines of sin, redemption, and the future?" We must remind ourselves, to begin with, that Christianity contemplates man's spiritual history as, throughout, a pathology. It considers him as morally infect. It starts with the doctrine of a Fall. The science of the sixties, we remember, hotly joined issue at this point with religion, declaring that Evolution knew nothing of a fall, but only of a perpetual rise. It forgot, what it has since thought of, that there might be such a thing as a fall upwards, a fall as part of the process of rising. Indeed, when, according to Pascal's famous analogy, we consider the whole race as a single human

being perpetually growing and perpetually learning, we realise that some such event is exactly what we should expect. In the history of every child a moral tumble is part of its process of inner growth. Beginning on the purely animal plane, with physical instincts in place of moral perceptions, it gradually evolves the moral sense and with it the capacity of sinning. Its first spiritual failure is thus at once a rise and a fall.

The line of thought here opened points to more than a reconciliation between physical science and Christian theology, though that is something. In the minds which it fairly enters it will react with immense effect on the shaping of the theology itself. It will, for instance, influence our whole conception of evil, both as to its nature and its final results. While not dogmatising about evil, or pretending fully to understand it; while avoiding, on the one hand, the Neoplatonic optimism which regarded it as merely a not-being, the necessary foil of the good, the shadow of the light, "the transitoriness cleaving to the many in opposition to the one"; and on the other the pessimism, orthodox and unorthodox, which has made evil a hopeless

blackness that must for ever cloud the universe, we do at least along this line of investigation come across some rays of light. When we see in the physical world a system of diseases kept in check by a ubiquitous counter system of remedial powers, and this carefully limited action positively used as one of the great moral educators of the race, we may well ask whether a similar thing may not be predicated of man's spiritual condition. Without going the length of the daring "*peccando promeremur*" of some early Christian thinkers, we may, at least, with St. Paul, believe in the abounding of "grace over sin"; believe even that the action and reaction, in this sphere of evil and its remedy, will produce some high result impossible without it, but as yet not ascertainable by us.

We have touched here the merest fringe of an immense subject. We have said nothing of the factors in this system of spiritual healing; of the Cross which is its centre; of the vicarious suffering which is its principle; of the myriad human ministries by which that principle is applied. It is enough to have emphasized the fact that the human sickness of body and soul is no ground for despair, but rather for hope.

It is something if we can believe that the world's evil is not irremediable; that for its diseases there are remedies; that in these very diseases themselves may be discerned an ulterior purpose of good.

> But hush! For you can be no despair:
> There's amends! 'Tis a secret; hope and pray.

XX.

Of Fear in Religion.

The point is often discussed whether the comparative absence from the modern pulpit of those appeals to fear characteristic of the earlier evangelism has not militated against its power. The question here opened is one that has to be faced afresh by this generation. Under the reaction caused by the crudities and falsities connected with earlier presentations of judgment and punishment there has been a disposition to give the whole subject a wide berth. But this can never be a permanent attitude. The Church, as trustee of the human spiritual interests, cannot afford to be in two minds on the question, still less to have no mind at all. And there is no reason for such a position. The Christian consciousness, in its fuller development, has attained to a view of God, the soul and the world sufficiently precise to enable it to pronounce here with perfect clearness

The preacher of to-day, awake to the spiritual revelation that is going on around him, should have no difficulty and no hesitancy about the place he assigns to fear as one of the religious working forces.

In endeavouring to ascertain what that place is, it may be well to begin with a glance backward. Man's earliest impressions of religion carried with them undoubtedly a large element of terror. *Timor fecit Deos*, "fear made the Gods," says Statius, and the statement has its truth. The sense that he was in the hands of vast unknown powers, which might at any time become fatally hostile to him, was the impression on the savage which first drove him to prayer and sacrifice. The gleam of the lightning, the roar of the thunder, were to him certain indications of supernal wrath. In religion terror came first and love last. Everywhere in the early world, as in the primitive races which represent it to-day, the feeling seems to have been that man's fate was in the hands of hostile rather than benevolent powers, and that his pressing business was to placate them, or protect himself from them. The Dyaks of to-day, after an illness, change their names so that the demon who sent it may not

recognise them and continue his persecutions. Modern anthropology is full of similar illustrations. The latter Pagan philosophy both of Greece and Rome reached what it conceived to be its highest achievement in ridding the mind of these fears. Lucian turns them into a jest; while perhaps the best quoted line in all Roman literature describes "the happy man" as "he who could put all fears and inexorable fate under his feet."

But the element of fear which classic philosophy sought to eliminate came back into the world through Christianity. The New Testament does not hesitate to strike this note. What it had in view in so doing we will discuss later. Nowhere, however, did the primitive Church conception suffer more from that "secondary Christianity," to use Harnack's expressive phrase, which eventually flooded Christendom with the old Paganism under a new name, than in the later ecclesiastical use of terror. For long centuries the prevailing conception of the spiritual powers was demonic. God was demonic as well as Satan. He was taught as capable of inflicting endless physical tortures on little children, on beings powerless to resist, and of using the Devil and

his angels as willing henchmen in the business. It is a symptom of the essential healthiness of the normal mind that at heart the people never believed in these horrors. Anyone who reads the old mystery-plays of the Middle Ages, in which the traditional hell, with its devils, was made the subject of the coarsest burlesque, must feel that there was no sense of reality here either to terrify or restrain. And this revolt steadily grew. Rabelais, who represented one large note of the Renaissance, treats hell quite in the manner of Lucian. The lesson of history here should surely suffice. It shows that appeals to fear of this type, whether under a pagan or a Christian name, lead only to cynicism and unbelief.

Apart from history the Christian consciousness, where it is allowed full play, makes it for ever impossible to use the mediæval conception of hell as an appeal to fear. What forbids it is the New Testament conception of God. The supreme Gospel offered there to man is that God is Love. But if God is Love anywhere He is Love everywhere, as much in the place called hell as in the place called heaven; as much the moment after a man's death as the moment before it. To imagine it possible that because

the breath is out of a man's body the Providence which hitherto has cherished him should suddenly become his torturer, with mocking fiends for executioners, is as reasonable as to suppose that a mother, because her child has fallen asleep, should straightway cease to be a mother and change into a murderess. The heart, which Schleiermacher says is the true theologian, will not permit such conclusions as these.

But what of the New Testament appeal to fear? Is not the book full of warnings; is not hell in its list of contents; and have not those preachers and those Churches been most successful who have most insisted on this side of its teaching? If we answer these questions in the affirmative, as we find ourselves compelled to do, where is the reconciliation between such a position and those others we have just been urging? It is well that such demands are made on us, for they render it impossible that we should remain indifferent or negative. They compel us to a solution.

And the solution is not, after all, far to seek. The Christian appeal to fear finds its explanation, not in the vindictive character of God, but in the stupendous possibilities, up or down,

of the human soul. What science is at length tardily recognising has lain revealed, all these centuries, upon the pages of the New Testament—that man essentially is spirit; that he belongs to an unseen order, and that he plays a part there in which infinite issues are involved. The insistant warning note of the Gospel is that man is making or marring himself; that it is an immense and wondrous self he is making or marring; and that the process is going on now. Heaven and hell are truly in this business, for, as said the old Persian poet:

> Behold, myself am heaven and hell.

The one is the zenith of our possible spiritual fortunes, as the other is the nadir. To-day we are weaving the structure we are henceforth to inhabit. The profound speculations of Ulrici in his *Leib und Seele,* where he conceives the thoughts, volitions and actions proceeding from our daily inner life as constructing the spiritual body of the future, are entirely in a line with the genius both of modern Science and of primitive Christianity. Surely there is ground here for the most urgent and compelling appeal that one man can make to another; ground for utmost awe and fear lest our folly should

baulk these possibilities; lest our course should be towards blindness instead of to the heavenly vision; down deathwards instead of up to the ever fuller life!

Mingled with this element of the Christian fear is the dread of offending God. We have, it is hoped, outgrown that precious piece of theological casuistry which argued that man's sin, because against an infinite Being, was therefore infinite, and demanded an infinite punishment. It was forgotten, surely, in this syllogism that an infinite God would have an infinite capacity of forgiveness. The theologians here had got hold of infinity by the wrong end. What holds the enlightened conscience of to-day is not a consideration of that kind, but the thought of the Love which it sins against, and the intimacy with the Holiest against which sin is the bar. We cannot bear the thought of that Heart being smitten with our ingratitude, of that Face turned away in grief from our shortcoming. Jean Ingelow has put with unsurpassable force this side of the Christian fear:

> Come, lest this heart should, cold and cast away,
> Die ere the Guest adored she entertain;
> Lest eyes that never saw Thine earthly day
> Should miss Thy heavenly reign.

Such fear will also react on our whole conduct towards others. Everywhere around us we see spiritual destinies in the making, souls on the upward or the downward way. It will be impossible, holding such convictions, for us to be indifferent towards them. Rather will the Christian fear in us work as a Divine solicitude for their inner welfare, impelling us to such courses of life as shall be for their help and not their hindrance. And thus fear, which, as we have seen, entered as first and lowest element into the religious concept, comes out, transmuted by love, as its last and highest.

XXI.

Our Moral Variability.

One of the supreme questions concerning a man's character is that of the range of its variation. We want to know about him not simply what he is to-day, but what he may be to-morrow. He is never in one stay, but is perpetually passing from one moral grade to another. This movement will be within certain limits. A correct estimate of him will require that we know these limits, and that we are able to strike the middle point between his best and his worst. But a closer observation will reveal a movement not only of the man within the limits, but also of the limits themselves. And here a curious thing is to be noted. In the order of human development extremes meet. For the two points of least variation are at the bottom and the top. The rudest savage and the most perfect character agree in presenting the minimum of moral variability. It is on the way from the one to the other that

we find the maximum of oscillation. The brute and the saint can each be reckoned on for what they will do under certain conditions. The man and the woman between these points, that is, shall we say, our noble selves, are the puzzling, if not the unknown, quantity.

It is difficult to say anything about a character, even our own, until it has been put through certain tests. Our progress through life is a progress from one astonishment to another at the vagaries of our own particular ego under the continually varying conditions which time and the world bring. The craft which behaved so beautifully when sailing down stream reveals quite new features when the swell of ocean smites it and a sou'-wester is on the beam. To take, for instance, what is now almost a universal experience, the test of travel. The old reproach that the Anglo-Indian dropped his Christianity at the Cape on the voyage out, and picked it up again there on his return home, is to some extent rolled away; but are we quite sure how our staid village churchwarden is going to behave during his fortnight in Paris? The Parisian himself will tell you that the reproach of debauchery brought against his city arises from the con-

duct, not of its regular inhabitants, but of the strangers who rush through its dissipations and then go home to gravely denounce Continental immorality. Certain it is that a change of sky and the absence of home cynosure and restraint is a test that will surely find a man's rotten spot, if there is one.

But enormous moral variations may come without our stirring a step. There is that arising from the mere movement of time. In the course of a couple of years a growing lad or girl will often slough off their earlier likeness and take on something quite new. Robert Louis Stevenson tells how, by a process he could not explain, he found himself at that period changed from an inveterate shirker of hard work into a patient toiler, wrestling with all his force to get the best out of himself. He came about like a good ship. There must have been, he concludes, a Pilot at the helm. Everyone agrees, also, that advancing age is a great modifier of the *morale*, though in what way and to what degree are matters on which observers are widely at issue. A medical author declared some time ago that the moral sentiments distinctly declined with the advance of years. Montaigne, too, avers that "old age sets more

wrinkles on the spirit than on the face," and that there belongs to it "a ridiculous care for riches after the use of them is forfeited, besides more envy, injustice and malignity." Fontenelle, on the other hand, finds there the period in which "our passions are calmed, our duties fulfilled and our ambition satisfied." As a matter of fact, old age is the day of judgment on youth and manhood. It is the hell or the heaven which these have made it.

Perhaps the most momentous possibilities of moral variation, both for good or ill, lie along the line of our human fellowships. The impact on us of another soul is potent, not only in revealing ourselves, but in creating, as it were, a new self. There seems to be a kind of spiritual chemistry here, which from two combining elements produces a fresh something, a moral condition which was not there before. This power of the character to blend and almost to lose itself in that of another is wonderfully illustrated in what Montaigne, to quote him again, says of his friendship with La Boëtie, a friendship which, he avers, "having seized all my will, induced the same to plunge and lose itself in his; which likewise having seized all his will, induced it to plunge and lose itself in

mine, with a mutual greed and with a like concurrence." The sublimest examples are those where neglected and demoralised natures are brought into contact with a high spiritual character, and, yielding to its mysterious force, begin straightway to form after that likeness. This, with what is implied in it, and with what lies back of it, is our divinest guarantee of human improvability.

But the variation through companionship has also its sinister side. The meeting of the strong with the weak is too often the wreck of the latter's moral equilibrium. Arthur Clough has given us on this point one of his subtlest studies where, in that fine poem, "The Bothie," he delineates the special danger of a girl of the humbler class when solicited by "a gentleman." The peril is that the sense of class helps to confuse the moral standard.

> To the prestige of the richer the lowly are prone to be yielding;
> Think that in dealing with them they are raised to a different region,
> Where old laws and morals are modified, lost, exist not;
> Ignorant they as they are, they have but to conform and be yielding.

Certain temperaments have more to struggle

against than others in the matter of moral oscillation ; and of these most of all, it would seem, the artistic and the poetic. We are not in a position to properly adjudicate upon the aberrations of genius. We cannot compare the immense swing backwards at times of a Burns or a Heine with the moral equanimity of the placid burgher who stumps with undeviating pace along his turnpike. It is the climbers who are in danger of the abyss. Must we not, for instance, forgive something, perhaps a good deal, on this account, to that most dazzling of artists and of rascals, Benvenuto Cellini? It was surely not hypocrisy, but partly the madness of his time and partly the madness of his artist blood, which made him capable now of quoting St. Paul and discoursing eloquently of heaven, and anon of plunging his dagger into a rival and boasting of the deed! The extraordinary thing, indeed, about those times, and of some later ones, is that men were capable of what seem to us the most monstrous inconsistencies without apparently themselves discerning in them any moral incongruity. What a picture is this, for instance, which Horace Walpole gives us of what he saw in the Chapel Royal at Versailles:

" There was Mme. du Barry, the King's reigning mistress, close to the altar ; her husband's sister was with her. In the tribune above, surrounded by prelates, was the amorous and still handsome King." The piety, the pomp, and the carnality seemed to everybody apparently to go perfectly well together. We are by no means all we should be to-day, but we have, at any rate, progressed to the point of being able to see some difference between these things.

But with the best of us, with those who have been diligently using every means, human and superhuman, for inward advance, there remains a disheartening consciousness of moral variability. A sleepless night, an excess of mental exertion, will make us uncertain in temper. The strangest reactions come. We have heard a preacher say that he felt himself a mere Pagan on Monday morning. Amiel notes, as Browning has done, the advent of spring as waking up every kind of desire. "*Il fait tressaillir le moine dans l'ombre de son couvent, la vierge derrière les rideaux de sa chambrette.*" Worthy people on whose general charity and probity we can always count, seem as to their tempers to be

possessed at times by two totally different spirits, whose successive entrance or exit changes the whole set and shape of the features, the light in the eye, the quality of the voice.

It will be the mark of a growing inward life that with an ever-widening range of knowledge, feeling, and capacity, our area of moral variation steadily diminishes. More and more the central governing force of our life will hold us to itself. Outward circumstance of every kind will lose power to confuse and to upset. People will know with an increasing certainty where to look for us in the spiritual realm. The only movement they will learn to anticipate will be a movement upwards. What is possible in this sphere is expressed for us in a way that can hardly be surpassed in the eulogium which the sceptic Gibbon passed on the mystic William Law, who spent some years as tutor in his father's house at Putney: "In our family William Law left the reputation of a man who believed all that he professed, and practised all that he enjoined."

XXII.

The Escape from Commonplace.

THERE is the story of a man of leisure who found his future—an endless vista, as it seemed, of days in which he would go through exactly the same round of getting up, dressing, feeding, and going to bed again—too appalling in its monotony, and so escaped from it by suicide. In such a position we could sympathise with his feeling if we did not proceed to his extremity. One of the greatest of human burdens is the sense of being imprisoned by the commonplace. A man spends his working day in making the eighth part of a pin, or in totting up columns of figures, or in selling calico. His wife, meanwhile, is occupied with an incessant cooking, cleaning and arranging, which has all to be begun over again to-morrow. "If only there were a respite, and a chance of travel and change!" They take it for granted, and are here voicing the almost universal feeling, that the escape from com-

monplace is simply an affair of change of circumstances.

How great an illusion this is will be patent to any one who has the opportunity of studying his fellows under widely varying conditions. Riches in themselves furnish no escape from the commonplace. They can purchase innumerable things, but not this. There is a mob of rich people to-day, and they are on the whole less interesting than the poor. Their money can, if they choose, buy them laziness, which they share with the tramp, and to about as good purpose. It can secure the indulgence of animal sensations with all manner of luxurious accessories. But some fatal laws block the way to felicity along this line; the law of familiarity which robs the sensation of its first flavour, and the laws relating to excess which exact the grisliest of after penalties. Leading performers in this line, a Tiberius and a Sardanapalus, offer great rewards for a new pleasure. The new pleasures, alas! turn out to be neither new nor pleasant. Consumed with the thirst for enjoyment, and with a whole world waiting to minister to it, they are at last unable, from the whole complicated apparatus, to extract one satisfying drop.

People who have to stay at home imagine, we have just said, that a sure escape from the commonplace is by travel and change of scene. It is enough to rub shoulders with the average globe-trotter to be disillusioned on that head. He carries, alas! the commonplace everywhere about with him. We call to mind how, at a Swiss hotel, when an expedition was being planned, a British tourist who was listening exclaimed, wearily, "I suppose it is just the same there as here, a lot of mountains and that kind of thing!" The Alps awakened in him absolutely no response. He wanted Paris. It was a brother soul who, on the Ægean, with Salamis and the mountains that look on Marathon in full view, grumbled in our ear, "I can't for the life of me see what people find to rave about in these places; a lot of barren rocks and tumble-down ruins!" One meets Americans, spending half their holiday in railway carriages, rushing Europe and Asia, the driving power behind them the fear that their neighbours in Philadelphia or Indianapolis will want to know if they inspected this mosque or saw that picture, and will triumph over them to their life's end if they did not. To be carted round the planet by contract is, after all, a thin, surface

business that will never turn a fool into a wise man, nor put insight into a blockhead.

So far, then, as at present appears, the business of escaping the commonplace is a difficult one, out of the reach apparently of any but the rarer natures. But that would be a hasty conclusion. The most important factors in the problem have not yet been touched. To begin with, Nature does not seem to have organised man's life here with a view to its being a purely humdrum affair. That she placed him in such an astonishing universe, and with a relation to it so marvellous, is in itself the answer to such a supposition. When, a million years ago, she turned this new-comer off the track of his fellow mammalian primates and began to add to his brain-power while these others were merely developing limb-power; when, bit by bit, she brought him along this fresh line until, with a body in the same zoological kingdom as the chimpanzee, he attained to a mind that demanded infinity for workroom and playplace, she gave notice that here was a being whose experience and destiny were to be certainly not common. Nor will she allow any one of us to forget this. The knowledge of good and evil that she rubs into us; our encounters with pain

and trouble, the fact that we can never get through a day without some rebuff, some tangle of circumstance; and, most striking of all, that in full view there is placed before every mother's son of us, for wind up of our present career, the tremendous adventure of death, are all Nature's stern refusal to man to permit himself to be trivial.

And with this plain hint from headquarters to start us, we may now profitably turn our attention to the ways in which, imprisoned as we most are in our narrowing labours and positions, we may yet individually escape the commonplace. There is but one way and it is an inward way. The only change as to our circumstances that is really effective is the change of our mental and moral attitude towards them. It was to this that Madame Swetchine arrived as the result of her wide experience, "At bottom there is in life only what one puts into it"; and which Montaigne, from an experience still wider, has expressed in the aphorism, "External occasions take both flavour and colour from the inward constitution." Precisely in proportion as we become in ourselves deeper, purer, more refined, more open-eyed, does our environment become more wonderful,

more wholly removed from tedium or vulgarity. There is no need to travel a thousand miles in search of the sublime. A starry night is vastly more sublime than Niagara. Samuel Drew, the Cornish shoemaker, without going from his last, sounded the deeps within him to such purpose as to produce an astonishing work on the soul. Let any one to whom the hedgerow by his door has become common take with him on his next visit there some handbook of botany, say that treasure of delights, Anne Pratt's "Flowering Plants of Great Britain," and he will find his hedge bottom grown miraculous to him. The moment we take ourselves in hand this way and realise that the whole question of change, whether it be of scenery or circumstance, is from beginning to end a question of our own interior, and of what goes on there, our deliverance has begun. Maeterlinck, in his "Wisdom and Destiny," strikingly illustrates this in what he says of Emily Brontë. Here, says he, is a young woman, daughter of a country clergyman, without means or the excitements of travel or of society, who never had lover or husband or family of her own. And yet, as her one wonderful book shows, she lived out all

these experiences in her own soul and in their highest forms. The world for us, let us repeat, is our own interior.

We are not all, it may be said, constructive geniuses like Emily Brontë. But if we cannot speak we can at least listen, and in the great literatures which come now to our doors almost gratis, we may at any hour escape from mean surroundings into the rarest society. If Homer and Socrates and St. Paul and Shakespeare are of our circle, we can dispense quite easily with an invitation to the next Lord Mayor's dinner. We have touched literature here, however, not to dwell upon it, but for something to which it leads us. The power of a great book, we soon discover, is the power of the personality which it enshrines. What moves us is that we are there in contact with a soul, and the more soul there is in the book the more we are moved by it. A treatise of mechanics is not literature simply because this personal element is lacking. It is here that literature helps us to understand religion. The life of literature, its whole emancipating power, lies in this contact with personality. It unites us with the world's great spirits. And it is because of its revelation of the Greatest of all Personalities that religion

is for us the everlasting deliverer from the commonplace. The humblest peasant who has felt God steps at once into the world's selecter circle. He can never be henceforth, either to others or, what is more important, to himself, common or unclean.

It is to us one of the mysteries that so high and serious a nature as that of Comte should have been able to live and die in the belief of a world that had no Supreme Personality behind it. The deadly chill upon the spirit which such a system casts—a system in which we find ourselves in a universe only of *things*—a dead universe with, as Richter puts it, a ghastly eye socket glaring down upon us where an eye should have been—makes us shiver even now as we remember the experience. It took a Frenchman to prick this French system with one touch of the pen. "The All," said Victor Hugo, "would not be the All unless it contained a Personality, and that Personality is God."

Religion, we say, in the sense of an abiding consciousness of God, is the supreme deliverer from the commonplace. It is, as Joubert has put it, "the poetry of the heart"; it is for every man the open door into the infinite.

There seems a corollary to this, a special instruction to the religious teacher of whatsoever name. What his fellow-man requires of him, what, indeed, constitutes his chief *raison d'être* in the world, is that for himself and for his fellows he escape the commonplace. And he is to do it, not so much by genius or by learning as by enlargement and cleansing of his interior life, by the infiltration into it of the life of God. There is something pathetic beyond words in men's yearning for the Divine, in the eagerness with which they recognise any trace of it in their teacher's speech and life. By a sure instinct they know the reality and its counterfeit. "Art thou Brother Francis of Assisi?" said a peasant once to the saint. "Yes." "Try, then, to be as good as all think thee to be, because many have great faith in thee, and therefore I admonish thee to be nothing less than people hope of thee." Yes, truly! Here spoke the deepest heart of humanity, and so speaks it to-day. Our chief debt to our fellows is the obligation to be good, to live the highest life we know. A child-like, God-loving soul, that begins its life afresh every morning, whose history is that of a perpetual soaring, is the most refreshing, heart-healing thing

that exists. Beneath the world's cynicism lives the consciousness that its chief treasure, its rarest product, its pearl of price is the saint's supernatural life. When humanity sees this plant growing in the wilderness it takes heart in its journeying, knowing it is not forsaken of God.

XXIII.

Of Spiritual Detachment.

In the coming reconstruction of theology the builders will seek both their ground-plan and their materials in the region of the spiritual laws. These laws, which operate throughout the universe, focus and realise themselves in man. All the revelations, all the external facts that make up human religious history, have their origin and their interpretation here. Some of the laws lie very deep down, and yield themselves only to a very careful investigation. Of this number is the principle of spiritual detachment, with which we propose now to deal. How difficult its trail is to discern is evident by the numbers who have lost their way in trying to follow it. The Indian devotees who give themselves up to voluntary tortures, or who leave their families for a solitary, homeless life in the forest, are types of these bewildered explorers. But their very aberrations point to a something beneath,

which is distinctive not only of the devotee but of every man of us, and which must be taken into account if we would reach any proper comprehension either of history or of ourselves.

The law of detachment lies close by the side of the law of association in religion. The two co-operate in defining the soul's movement somewhat as the centripetal and centrifugal forces co-operate in defining the orbit of the earth. The operation of detachment is by a constant breaking away of the mind from the objects of its earlier attraction in search of what is wider and higher. The spiritual movement here has a close parallel in the mental progress of a country-bred man who has afterwards seen the world. In his earlier years his view has been confined to the parish he was born in. He knows no other scenery and no other opinions. He applies to everything the parochial standard of measurement. He

> Thinks the rustic cackle of his bourg
> The murmur of the world.

But the later years of travel and observation snap the cables which tie him to this small world. He finds himself part of a larger

system. He has a new measuring line, a fresh standard for judging what is big and little. Many things which loomed on the rural horizon as of portentous moment are now reckoned as of small account. All round the man there has, we perceive, gone on a great process of detachment.

But this, while it represents relatively an immense development, is, after all, only a beginning. Before a deeper insight such a world-culture stands, in its turn, as something only parochial. For a true cosmopolitanism there must be excursions in a yet wider realm. An imperious necessity drives man beyond the region of flesh and sense. When these have yielded him their utmost he still finds himself

> Galled with his confines, and troubled yet more with his vastness;
> Born too great for his ends, never at peace with his goal.

Everything in the sense world bears, we discover, the stamp of the evanescent. The saying of Heraclitus that we never cross the same river twice, because the water we first passed over has fled to the ocean, is a parable of all our relations to the visible. While we look at our possessions they melt before our

eyes. And could we hold them, they are not good enough. We drink of this water and thirst again. That immense *Weltschmerz* of which we read in the life of Lacordaire, when, as a brilliant young advocate, with the world at his feet, he suddenly saw all its hideous emptiness, and fled from it to the life of the cloister, is known to us all. If we listen to the deep within us we hear a cry there as of a live thing in prison, sighing for its true home. Like some sea-bird in the centre of a continent that seeks a way to the ocean that is its habitat, the truest within us calls to the illimitable, the unseen, and the imperishable as its only proper abiding-place.

It is not till we have reached this stage of thought and feeling that we are in a position to estimate the real significance of the message of Christ. Its central teaching is that worldliness is a stupid provincialism. It is not so much that it is wicked as that it is so absurdly limited. Christ brings us tidings from a larger world on which He proposes straightway to launch us. His proposition is that we should

> Here on this bank in some way live the life
> Beyond the bridge.

The parochial view finds its end in the gaining of sensual pleasures, of wealth and worldly honours. Christ proclaims this to be the pastime of babes, and suggests that we take up pursuits worthy of manhood. He speaks as the citizen and emissary of a larger universe, to whose vaster and more splendid careers He invites us. And the magnificent detachment manifest in His teaching shines even more resplendently in His life. In a fine passage in one of his essays Holt Hutton has pointed out how this appears specially in Christ's attitude to His own sufferings. It does not occur to Him that there is any hardship to Himself in being scourged and crucified. Nothing is further from His mind than any consternation at the shame and disaster of His own earthly destiny. He is occupied here entirely with the wider purpose of the Divine Mind. He takes suffering and want, and all the affronts the world can offer, as moments simply in a constant spiritual progress, as factors and instruments for making visible on earth the invisible things of the Kingdom of God.

It appears after all then that, despite the scoffs with which the phrase has been greeted, the only successful worldliness is an other-

worldliness. To master this world we must be free of another. Any lesser conception reduces our life movement to something like the navigation of the pre-compass period; a petty steering by capes and headlands instead of bold ventures across the ocean, guided by the stars. Let us see, however, in more detail, how this law of detachment works.

It disconnects for one thing the centre of gravity of our life, the sum of its purpose, inclination and desire, and lifts it to a plane from which everything takes on a new aspect. At this height we find men taking their sorrows as personal possessions and enrichments. They may not with a Goethe turn them into song; but they will certainly translate them into character, which is even better. A Boethius under sentence of death calmly occupies the interval in writing the "Consolations of Philosophy"; a St. Teresa when persecuted "finds her soul in its true kingdom with everything under its feet." What a splendid height of detachment is that described for us by the Roman annalist, of Canius Julius condemned to death by Caligula! At the last stroke of the executioner he is asked by a philosopher friend standing by, "Canius, in

what state is your soul now?" The answer is, "I thought to keep steady with all my force to see whether in this instant of death I might perceive some dislodging of the soul, and whether it would show some feeling of its sudden departure." In this supreme moment, that is, he is occupied simply in the calm scientific analysis of his own sensations! Small ground, surely, for the howl of the pessimist when life at its worst can hurt no more than this!

An example of this kind shows us the extent to which the pagan world, at its best, had learned the secret of spiritual detachment. Its achievement, however, was largely a negative one. There is not much good in a detachment from the lower if one has not, to meet it, a satisfying attachment to the higher. Stoicism had a grey sky over it, and a north wind blowing. It was bracing, but the scene lacked sunshine. It is here that the Christian sanctity so far surpasses the Stoic sanctity. It gives a positive for the pagan negative. It offers a home in the invisible such as we search for in vain in Epictetus or Seneca or Aurelius. They have hardened themselves into a noble scorn of pain and loss, but they have not that

fine sense of harbourage far up in the will of God which enabled our Baxter, shut up in prison, to sing:

> No walls or bars can keep Thee out,
> None can confine a holy soul;
> The streets of heaven it walks about,
> None can its liberty control.

A detachment of this kind, which makes the soul, in old Tauler's words, "so grounded in God that it is dissolved in the inmost of the Divine nature," is far more than a defiance of the world's disabilities. Its note is not defiance, but delight. The spirit revels in the thought of having attained at last to life's inmost secret, of being launched at last on a career which answers its deepest aspiration and calls forth all its powers.

It is not less interesting to trace the working of spiritual detachment in the sphere of human relationships. It is, for one thing, the secret of loving. There is no enduring attachment apart from a high detachment. Where two souls hold together it will be by a mutual breaking off from the lower and the unworthy in each other, and the cleaving to and working upon what is really lovable. When our friend insists in seeing

only the best in us, trusting it, taking it always for granted, and ignoring the lower, he is going the surest way to kill this lower. Our evil is here in a vacuum where it cannot breathe. It is by a similar detachment that creed wars and theological hatreds will finally die out. All great souls, says Schiller, are akin. And as souls become greater everywhere, they will refuse to deny their kinship. They will detach themselves more and more from the divisive element in their separate formularies, to unite on the deeper life beneath.

To sum up. We have in the law of detachment a principle of separation in view of a higher union. Its presence in man proclaims him born for citizenship in two worlds. As the earth's motion is explicable only by its relation to a larger cosmos, so is the movement of humanity explicable only by reference to an unseen cosmos. Christ's life and message are the completest example and demonstration of this greater cosmopolitanism. The spiritual detachment which He teaches secures the highest forms of union, and by linking the seen to the unseen shows us how to possess and enjoy them both.

XXIV.

Life's Present Tense.

Grammar, in our school days, was the desert of Sahara. In its dreary sand realm of rule and form grew no single flower of human interest. How differently it opens to us in these later years! Grammar, we find, is a page out of the soul. Its every line is burdened with the mystery, lit with the romance of the human spirit. Take a list of pronouns. In its "I," "Thou," "He" we have man's dawning sense of himself and his neighbour. A verb's moods open all the unfathomables of volition and responsibility; its tenses confront us with the stupendous problem of Time. What is the real meaning of "Now"; and how is it related to a "then" and a "to be"? Our grammar study may concentrate itself on this point. There is enough in it to keep us busy.

We are approaching these themes to-day from some startlingly fresh standpoints. For ages men have, for instance, mused upon the transi-

tory, upon the impossibility of holding the present moment, of calling "halt" to the eternal flux. Physical research has now its own say on the matter. It shows us how the sense of change is necessarily intertwined with our consciousness, for there could be no consciousness without it. Every state of feeling is the result of an impact of object on subject, a play of oppositions. Our knowledge of ourselves and the world results from an incessant movement in the primordial mind-stuff, in which, during every second of time, thousands of infinitesimally small changes, of readjustments of fleeting groups of pulsations, are taking place. Our sense of a present that never stops with us, that is ever ceasing to be a present, has, then, one of its origins in the physical conditions of thinking. Our "now" cannot abide with us because the very thought of it is itself a movement. From another side, then, than that along which Tennyson approaches the theme, we reach his conclusion:

> Thus
> Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time.

But our Time relation has of late set men thinking in other and perhaps less profitable

directions. We have revivals of the old metaphysical objections to the Christian outlook derived from the ideas of existence and succession. When, for instance, we speak of personal survival in a future life, we are asked, "Survival of what? Survival of our childhood, of our youth, of our manhood or of our old age? Why this talk of an after life, when by the mere process of living, if we are old enough, three-parts of us are already dead? Where is our childhood? Why do we not clamour for that? What is gone is for ever gone." From another side, Life's Present Tense is used as an argument against the Divine Goodness. "What use," we are asked, "is it to point to some possible state of future felicity as a set-off against the evil and misery of the present? That to-morrow may be good is no answer to the fact that to-day is bad. If God's world is evil now, a coming millennium takes no blackness from the present fact."

Plainly, if we constitute ourselves the vindicators of the universe as against all comers, we have enough on our hands. Our *rôle* is assuredly not that. With a good conscience we can leave the universe to take care of itself. We cannot, however, help thinking that the

objectors here, the new as well as the old, might conceivably have found a healthier occupation. As to the non-survival argument, our own experience supplies, surely, the best answer. Its message is that while, in one sense, our past has gone, in another it most truly lives with us. For our man-consciousness holds in itself our child-consciousness, while old age contains both. The "now" of the actual life is never only the present moment. It is a compound, a distillation. Its essence is an extract of all that has gone before. The argument, then, as regards a future life gains reinforcement rather than opposition from the time sense. Its suggestion is, under new conditions, of a further sublimation, in which the resultants of all the phases of the old life shall combine into a new and higher whole.

And to those who bring life's present tense, with its apparent evil, as a charge against God and His world, and who admit no plea of a coming better in mitigation, the answer is practically the same. Their "now" is a fictitious one. For there is no such thing as a present without a future. As Schiller has it, "all is fruit and all is seed." The "to come" is not only ahead of the existent, but is in it

and a part of it. The one would not be itself without the other. And the soul is deeply conscious of this, and in the highest tumult of the outward is sure of its good. "My body," says a modern thinker, "weeps and sighs, but a something in me, which is above me, rejoices at everything." When Walt Whitman, in his daring fashion, declares, "I say there is in fact no evil, or if there is, I say it is just as important to you or to me as anything else," he means practically this. The totality to which we belong, including all to which it tends, as well as all from which it comes, is a good at which the soul rejoices. The Areopagite, the old Greek Christian thinker, whose thought ruled so many ages, in declaring that evil was a shadow, a non-being, a finite to set off the perfection of the Infinite, sounds the same note. A German poet thus re-echoes it to-day: "Everything inferior is a higher in the making, everything hateful a coming beautiful, everything evil a coming good. And we see it, all incomplete as it is, and laugh and love it."

On ultimate questions we shall perhaps not get much nearer than that. Meanwhile, Life's Present Tense suggests matters more immediate

to ourselves. Our own age is not strong in its appreciation of the present tense. In its desperate chase after what it has not, the question might occur whether, as Goethe so profoundly says, "we are not farthest from the object of our desires when we imagine we possess that which we desire." A man consumes his life in gaining wealth, and finds at the end that he has lost the power of enjoying it. He postpones his happiness till to-morrow; he forms the habit of so doing, until the postponement becomes *sine die*. Meanwhile the world men are rushing through without stopping to observe it belongs really to him who has learned that "Now is the accepted time." The whole art of living, properly considered, is the art of the present moment. "Can this hour be sordid," I ask, "when it is a piece of God's eternity?" If God is not Love at this moment, He never was or will be. If that Love is not filling me at this moment with its own heaven that is my fault. To pure minds there are no sordid moments, and there is no sordid world. What fools we are not to taste our "now," to feel its whole content, to distil from it the wonders, the mysteries, the ecstasies that lie there!

To extract this savour of the moment requires the perpetual discipline and enlargement of the soul. We cannot taste time's full flavour till we have pierced through to something that is beyond time. As a mediæval thinker puts it, "Our passing life that we have here in our sense-soul knoweth not what our Self is." Spinoza, the Jew grinder of lenses, who refused a fortune in order to conserve his inner wealth, had mastered the lesson. To love only the perishable, says he, means strife, envy, hatred and fear, while "to love the eternal and infinite feeds the mind with pure joy, and is wholly free from sorrow." When we have reached this point, of seeing the Divine in the present and the actual, we are free of the universe. We belong no longer to that category of men who, in Emerson's words, "seem as though whipped through the world, the hacks of invisible riders." Rather are we of those who, to quote a modern philosopher, "have a degree of existence at least ten times larger than others—who, in other words, exist ten times as much."

There is one sphere is which life's grammar of the present tense imperiously calls to be mastered, if we would avoid failure's deepest

hell. It is that of the affections and of the family. We burn to reconstruct the characters of our acquaintance and kinsfolk, and forget that, just as they are, they are full of a lovableness which only our prejudices hide, and which we shall see as with a flash when it is gone from us. How many are there in the plight of Marie Bashkirtseff when she says of her mother: "I believe she is really fond of me, and I am really fond of her too, but we cannot be two minutes together without irritating one another to tears." "Nevermore," the saddest word in language, gains tenfold bitterness when uttered of an intercourse snapped by death, where love has failed of its expression.

> For she is in her grave, and oh!
> The difference to me!

is then the cry from a tragedy too great for words.

The full appreciation of the present tense is one of the privileges of the later years. Life, to the youthful palate, is a somewhat raw and acrid product. It is full of froth and ferment, and has not had time to mature. It takes years for the liquor to clarify and gather its

true relish. That is why a career of spiritual growth blossoms into such rare beauty towards the end. We say of such proficients what Morris sings, with a different application:

> In such Saint Luke's short summer lived these men,
> Nearing the goal of three score years and ten.

They can say with a French wit, though with a better application, "*Je prends mon bien où je le trouve.*" They eat and drink, not because "to-morrow we die," but because their day has a taste in it of eternity; their to-morrow suggests not death, but life. Life's present tense is to them not only an existence, but a becoming. Half its joy is an aspiration. It holds a good which has only begun to be fulfilled. An old mystic has struck its note with a sweet exactness in the words: "I saw Him and sought Him; I had Him and I wanted Him."

XXV.

A Doctrine of Echoes.

An echo may, for general purposes, be considered as made up of two main factors, a sound and a reflecting surface. In multitudes of cases it would be difficult to say which of the two has the greater share in the effect. In the world's famous echo spots, such as Killarney, or that at the Castle of Simonetta, in Italy, which repeats a note sixty times, the result is, here as everywhere, in direct proportion to the loudness of the trumpet-blast or pistol-shot. But that is only half the matter. The marvellous repetitions, as well as the quality and volume of sound, depend not so much on the emitted note as on the number and character of the reflecting surfaces. Of all echoes it is true that if we change either of the two factors, the original sound or the substance on which it impinges, we have a corresponding change in the phenomenon. This play of forces in the dead world of rock and

mountain has impressed most of us at one time or another with its strange, startling and often weirdly beautiful results. If we have been in a reflective mood, it has probably set us thinking. As these great sound combinations have rolled round us we have realised the quickness of Nature's response, and also the variety of it. We see how every substance answers the call made on it according, not simply to the intrinsic nature of that call, but according, also, to its *own* intrinsic nature. The moment we strike that truth, we are at the centre of life and of history. An illuminating flash gleams over a hundred mysteries, and, if it does not penetrate their secret sets them at least in a new light. Let us see, in some different directions, what the light seems to reveal.

The true echo realm is, let us premise, not the mountains but the field of human life. Rock and hill give back nothing comparable for variety and mystery with the notes that reverberate through the ages, with human souls for their sounding-boards. Our thought-world is full of deep undertones that roll in upon us from an immemorial past. The commonest words we use are blocks of mind-stuff rolled into their present shape by the attrition

of measureless years. The ideas of the antique world are all alive to-day, only yielding new tones as they strike fresh mental surfaces. Continually in history have we the phenomenon of voices that had slumbered for millenniums, waking up suddenly and beginning again to fill the world. So was it at the Renaissance, when Europe, sunk for centuries in mediæval scholasticism, listened entranced to the mighty musical note from ancient Greece. To-day the hoary East, from an even greater antiquity, is whispering its mystic word into the modern ear. It is wonderful to note the tricks which the echo plays in history; with what strange and sometimes sinister varieties it throws back the original sound. Luther's gospel rolls on him from one point in the shape of a Peasants' War; the liberalism of a Locke and a Bolingbroke, so restrained and ordered as first uttered, striking on the fevered imagination of France, echoes back in wild eighteenth-century revolution; the calm research and cautious affirmations of our English Darwin rebound from answering brains on the Continent as a system of materialism and of no religion.

But our real theme is waiting. What has been said on the natural history of echoes was

with a view to its special application to the question of religion. There are points here, obvious enough when we actually face them, but which have been strangely overlooked in average religious teaching. It was seen a moment ago that our echo varies directly, not only according to the character of the producing sound, but also to that of the material it strikes on. Have we fairly considered what this means in its bearing on our theories of Gospel and Christianity? An evident first result is that Christianity, as a received fact, must vary with every race and every individual that it severally touches. For here, as with the mountain and the bugle note, it is not the sound only but the surface it reaches that produces the result. The whole problem is raised in that parable of the sower, the real significance of which is generally so entirely missed. The seed is from one basket and of a like quality throughout. But it falls upon a variety of soils and the results are entirely in accordance with the difference in *them.* The Gospel as thus conceived is, then, a revelation, not simply of the truth contained in itself, but of the mental and spiritual condition of those it reaches. The proclamation of it is a kind of

judgment-day, in whose light stands revealed the precise height to which its hearer has risen. It seems strange to say that a man's gospel is what his pre-existing disposition makes of it. That, indeed, would not be entirely true, for the message brings something of its own, apart from any qualities of the receiver. But these latter, we repeat, tell, and that decisively, at every point of the result.

But what is the outcome of this? For one thing, that Christianity, as received by nations and individuals, is never an entirely new thing. It can only reach the soul by mingling with what is already there, and taking on its shape and colour. We teach what we call "the same things" to a cultured, subtle Brahmin and to a cannibal of New Guinea. Are they the *same things?* Assuredly not to them. The mental product in these separate minds is different with all the difference of their training and of their past. Evidently we cannot make our Christianity a thing separate and apart from the world's earlier culture. The thing is forbidden by everything in history and by everything in the human soul. There is a Greek Christianity, and a Latin, a Saxon and an Indian—as many Christianities

as there are races and types, as many, indeed, as there are minds. And these forms owe their speciality to the earlier training which they found. The New Testament religion, so far from being isolated and out of relation with other disciplines, could not, the human mind being what it is, do anything at all except in union with them. To what, in the "sower" parable, is owing the thirty or the sixty fold product of some natures? How did the ground in these cases come to be so good? There is only one answer. The Gospel here recognises the goodness of the Gospels that went before it.

We find here, in fact, a recognition of what a study of the nature of things, especially as seen in the laws of the mind, makes inevitable —that Christianity can only be properly understood as forming part of a great redemptive world-process, embracing all nations and all ages, and working as certainly beyond as within the sphere of its own direct influence. This truth was indeed recognised in earlier ages of the Church more clearly than it is in some places to-day. The Alexandrian fathers were emphatic in their acceptance of what Clement calls the "dispensation of paganism"; in their admission that the Greek philosophy was a

Divine teaching, and that the whole earlier world was taught of God. What a fine breadth, at once of faith, of insight and of charity, have we in that utterance on this point of Clement in the "Stromata": "Wherefore His are all men; some actually knowing Him, others not as yet; some as friends, others as faithful labourers, others as bond servants. He it is who gives to the Greeks their philosophy . . . for He is the Saviour, not of these or those, but of all. . . . Dispensing in former times His word to some, to some philosophy, now at length by His own personal coming He has closed the course of unbelief; Greek and barbarian being led forward by a separate process to that perfection which is through faith."

The New Testament religion, then, as offered the world is not, nor was intended to be, in itself an absolute. It is a relative, avowing in its very terms a dependence for its results on the cultures which had preceded it. But to leave the matter here would be to leave it in halves; we should have, in fact, precisely one of those half truths which make a whole falsehood. To get the entire truth we need now to look at the other half of our echo. We have

seen some of the things included in the reflecting surface. What now of the producing voice? There are laws on this side as well as on the other. When, in the same surroundings, coming back from the same mountain side or cliff formation, we have at different times a different echo, we know the difference here must be in the originating sound. Variation of tone, of quality, of intensity, will be according to what is found in that. It is when we apply to the Gospel this other side of an echo-doctrine that we can re-make the Christian affirmations that our earlier study seemed to question. Innumerable other voices have, before and since Christ, thrown themselves against this mountain mass of humanity. The mass was the same, but what of the response?

It is here that the consideration comes in with such effect that Harnack has urged in his latest work, "*Das Wesen des Christentums.*" We cannot, as he says, judge a great personality simply by himself; we cannot measure him merely by his own words, his own deeds. To approximate to his full size we must study the effect he has produced on others. And where we cannot hear the voice itself, we can measure it by its echo. When we carry this method to

our estimate of Christ there is no doubt about the result. The most merciless critic of the New Testament must recognise that it represents what the first generation of believers thought and felt about Jesus. This is the echo of His personality in human hearts. Was there ever such an one, before or since? Imagine Luther's or Wesley's most enthusiastic followers using language about them such as is used of Christ in the gospels and the epistles! And the echo is not in language only, but in lives. Let any one read the account of early Christian living and character in the Apology of Aristides, and ask himself what force must have been operating to produce such effects upon the dissolute and degraded humanity of the Roman Empire? The Divine life in man as here depicted, be sure, had Divinity for its origin.

What is here written is the merest fragment on our doctrine of echoes. All life and history could indeed be presented in terms of it. Our truest art is ever an echo. It is the reproduction of a pattern in the Mount, the reflection of an Eternal Beauty subsisting before the worlds. And music also. Our Beethovens and Mozarts are none of them inventors or creators. The

music was there, with all its laws, its inmost essence and meaning, before they came or humanity was. They are only explorers of what was waiting to be found. Like St. Cecilia, they are listeners to a harmony that floats down from heaven. Our world is indeed full of echoes from that better country. Were our faculties more attuned we should hear them sooner. A saintly life makes a man an auditory nerve of the eternal. That others hear nothing is no disproof of his message. The deniers are simply asserting that they are deaf. The men who have seen do not contradict the blind. They pity them. Says Erasmus of Sir Thomas More: "He discourses with his friends of the life to come in such a way that one cannot fail to recognise how much his mind is in it, how good a hope he has of it." "A reporter of echoes," say you? Yes, but the echoes imply a voice.

XXVI.

Of Divine Leading.

After some thousands of years of conscious life on this planet our race continues to exhibit a strange confusion of opinion concerning the terms on which we inhabit it. Across the gulfs of time one generation calls to another as to what cheer, and gets only dubious replies. Watchers' eyes are turned night and day to the heavens, but the report is often of nothing but the incessant drift of impenetrable cloud. Some of the acutest minds have made of the Universe only a chance medley. The messenger in the Antigone, who declares "it is but chance that raiseth up and chance that bringeth low," represents a mental habit strangely fashionable both in the old and modern world. People in both periods have fallen back upon this theory with positive relief as a refuge from current theologies. Lucretius proclaimed his doctrine of materialistic no-religion as a real gospel. He thought men

would become happy by ridding themselves of the notion of a Providence and a hereafter! Nietzsche, in our day, reappears with the same notion. He apostrophises the idea of God in the language of Charles the Bold when combating Louis XI., "Je combats l'universelle araignée."

But the old atheist had an excuse which we cannot allege for our modern one. The gods the former was asked to worship were, assuredly, not worth the trouble. They have gone since, and are not missed. Think of a "divine guidance" under which an Agamemnon must see his loved Iphigenia, the delight of his eyes, in the bloom of her virgin youth, lifted on the fatal altar, "face downwards," as Æschylus describes, and a knife drawn across her throat! Well might the Latin poet, thinking on these horrors wrought in the name of piety, conceive of religion as a kind of Medusa head displayed from the clouds, "threatening mortals with her terrible aspect."

Spite of these outbursts, however, the main stream of human thinking has set broad and deep in the direction of an overruling Providence as at once the ground and the explanation of life. The "Fate" of Stoic doctrine,

when examined, comes mainly to this. We are in a world that was arranged for us and not by us. The thinking out of the business was done before we arrived. Our own mental exercises are at best a very subordinate affair. They are something like our perambulations on board a vessel. As we move about on the deck our steps may take by turn a northerly or southerly or westerly direction, but they do not alter in the least the course of the ship, nor the ultimate point to which it will bring us. As to whether this providential supervision regarded the world only as a whole or extended to the concerns of individuals the early thinkers seem divided. Homer puts his heroes under the special protection of this or that divinity, but lets the mass take care of themselves. Cicero, with his doctrine of the *vir magnus* inspired *afflatu divino*, seems of the same opinion. Victor Hugo has somewhere expressed himself similarly. Geniuses (like himself) were certainly looked after in this world and the next. As to the rest, it didn't much matter. Epictetus, who in this seems very likely to have been in contact with Jewish, if not even with primitive Christian sources, strikes a far more certain note. He proclaims

a divine leading for us all. "There is no movement of which He is not conscious. To Him all hearts are open. . . . . As we walk, or talk, or eat, He Himself is within us, so that we are His shrines, living temples and incarnations of Him."

Of the Christian doctrine on this subject, as recorded in the original documents, there can be no doubt. The religion of the Sermon on the Mount is above all things a democratic religion. "The hairs of your head are all numbered" applied not only to patrician locks but to the unkempt polls of the cobblers and fishers who heard first the Divine words. It was, indeed, the eager acceptance and handing-on of the doctrine by the "dim common populations" that so excited the wrath of its "superior" opponents. Libanius, like Sydney Smith with the Methodists, could not away with teachers who "had left their tongs, mallets and anvils to preach about the things of heaven." His sneer reminds us of that later one by Cornelius Agrippa: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are illiterate people like the apostles; blessed is the ass."

Yet this doctrine of the highest guidance for every mother's son of us is really the only

one this side atheism. As a modern writer has bluntly put it, "Unless the hairs of our head are all numbered there is no God." The doctrine is so logical. Any one who, under good scientific guidance, has examined the structure of a human hair, has to say whether this marvel is a product of blind chance or of a high intelligence. If it is intelligence which made it and is still looking after it, then, *a fortiori*, intelligence is looking also after its wearer. It is amazing we do not more definitely settle this matter with ourselves. It would resolve so many questions. We should go on working, but leave off worrying. As it is, we imagine the world is on our shoulders. We groan over the condition of the Church, and the back ebb in which religion finds itself. If we believe in the sermon our own hair teaches us as we brush it of mornings we shall stop this lamentation. As if religion began when *we* took up its business and will end when *we* retire! Of the amazing tricks men resort to, in the notion that thereby they are keeping religion going, there will also be a final end. Orthodoxy will cease to be alarmed about Biblical criticism, under the assured persuasion

that God knew its conclusions and results long before Wellhausen.

It is, however, in the bearing of this doctrine on our personal life that it gains its weightiest import. If a man can only get some reasonable assurance that in this welter of a world he is not left to fight his own battle, or to muddle his way through as best he can, unhelped or unguided! What for the twentieth century is the assurance on this point? Apart from the consideration just urged the evidence is of two sorts, an external and an internal. In that first, outward sphere there is to be noted what strikes us as a feature most significant and affecting. It is that the evidence is usually reserved to the period when it is most needed. In early life, when the blood leaps in the veins, when the sensation is of an inward vigour that can crash through everything, when parents and friends are at hand for what aid is needed, the notion of a providential guidance is little thought of. But when that other half of our life opens, that old-age half which Bishop Warburton characterised so truly as "a losing game," the half which will contain our suffering, our decaying, our dying, then is it that for the

loyal and disciplined soul there arises the steadily accumulating demonstration of a wonderful and beneficent leading. And, as Ritschl has here observed, "the belief arises not from the study of the fortunes of others, but in each case from the study of our own fortunes and experience." Nor is it the least tried people who get the deepest assurance. It is Robert Louis Stevenson, in his youth such an *outrecuidant* sceptic, who in his later, broken invalid years writes: "If you are sure that God, in the long run, means kindness to you, you should be happy." He had become sure of that himself.

The evidence we go upon is often such as we cannot talk about, and which would appear by itself quite inadequate in a law court. It was not meant for the law court, but for ourselves. It is its mysterious inner appeal to us that counts. A conjunction of circumstances, which has no special meaning to others, seems to whisper a message in our private ear. It is to us in that moment as though Nature had broken her long habit of silence, and told our heart that we are known, and cared for, and loved. There are innumerable stories abroad of what are called special Providences. Some

of them, doubtless, need to be received with caution. People are apt to put a large quantity of subjectivity into narratives about themselves. The demand for the wonderful creates a supply. We do not forget the speech reported by Henry Wilberforce of a certain Archdeacon: "It is remarkable that all the most spiritually-minded men I have known were in their youth extraordinary liars." The sphere of religion, because it is the sphere of the marvellous, has suffered more than any other from the lack of simple accuracy. Yet when all deduction has been made, the evidence is overwhelming that testifies to the visible footprints of the Guide. It comes from every age and quarter. Paul's story of his experience outside Damascus, and Augustine's of the "tolle, lege," which converted him at Milan, are not more wonderful than histories poured into our own ear by people who are walking about to-day.

But the satisfying evidence for this belief will be, for each of us, an internal one. The conviction of a guidance of our outward life will grow in proportion as we realise a guidance of the inward life. Barclay, in his "Apology," has put the principle of all this

in language that can hardly be bettered: "That Christians are now to be led inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God even in the same manner, though it befall not many to be led in the same measure, as the saints were of old." The higher spiritual life is just as much a reality as the higher intellectual life. Precisely as a man who devotes himself to the culture of his intellect will rise to a plane superior to that of the mass and bring to the decision of questions a faculty of which they are scarcely conscious, so in the most central sphere a similar devotion will yield a like result, only a higher. To those who lodge in the soul's uppermost chambers there opens a prospect unseen by those below, unbelieved in by these latter, may be, but none the less real. "What," says Bagehot somewhere, "will ever be the idea of the cities of the plain concerning those who live among the mountains?"

This inner discipline, wherever it is pursued, brings sure conviction, amidst all vicissitudes, of a Divine and most gracious leading. And thereby does it disestablish personal pessimism. It recognises the present circumstance, however gruesome seeming, as the best for it. It greets each event as a spiritual messenger. It

welcomes the hardship that makes for progress. It recognises to the full that

> Nor for thy neighbours, nor for thee,
> Be sure was life designed to be
> A draught of dull complacency.

And it moves to the final scene with the calm certitude that the Guidance which through the earthly career has become ever more manifest will not, at that hour, quit its gracious function.

XXVII.

Amusement.

RELIGION and amusement; the two things are here together on this God's earth of ours; have been here from the beginning; and we have not found yet the formula which unites them. Piety still looks askance at comedy, and knows not what terms it should make with it. It is singular that in a world which has never been without philosophers there should have been all along, on a theme so vital, a confusion so utter. Cicero introduces the question of the significance of laughter only to dismiss it as insoluble. Christian thinkers handle amusement from all manner of standpoints, but end generally by leaving their theme in the air.

There is, for instance, the solution of what may be called the Christian pessimism, of which Pascal was so great an exponent. To him the world's amusements were the most striking illustration of the essential misery of

most human lives. Men sought amusement in order to escape from themselves. The very name "diversion" let out the fatal secret. To "divert" a man was, what? To turn his thought away from his wretched self. People gathered in crowds, talked, laughed, gazed at spectacles, did anything rather than face the ordeal of their solitary thought. Pascal's is, though with a different application, precisely the picture which Lucretius draws of the *blasé* Roman of his day, who rushed from town-house to country villa, and was happy in neither. "In this way each man flees from himself; but this self, whom he cannot escape from, still clings to him, and he hates it." The description is true enough of those who are in the sorry plight of making amusement their one business. "What is your occupation?" is the question put to a young Parisian in a French romance. "*Je m'amuse*," is the reply. Poor wretch! His occupation will grow harder every day.

But the pessimistic point of view, both Christian and non-Christian, despite the support it receives from the miserable misuse of amusement, does not satisfy us. Nor does another religious view, still in vogue in some

quarters, which regards gaiety and laughter as not countenanced by the example of Christ or by the teaching of the Gospel. The Puritan found the New Testament a tremendously serious book, as undoubtedly it is. But he discovered no laughter there, which is a pity. Had he discerned it he had been a wholesomer man, and perhaps have won England, which is a laughter-loving country, to his side. As it was the Puritan verdict was a partisan verdict, the verdict of a sect, and fatally open to the raillery of the wits:

> These in a zeal to express how much they do
> The organs hate, have silenced bagpipes too;
> And harmless maypoles all are railed upon,
> As if they were the towers of Babylon.

The mediæval Church, with all its faults, understood this side of human nature better. In its miracle plays, out of which, let us remember, the modern theatre arose, the full swing of broadest humour in immediate contact with all that was sacred, while giving rude shocks to our modern susceptibilities, contained, nevertheless, the hint of a truth which the Puritan could not see. It was the truth that gaiety belongs to the cosmical scheme, that laughter lies at the inmost heart of things.

If for a moment we could conceive of life in its wholeness, see it as God sees it, we should perceive a strange thing. We should find that everywhere the world was, at the same time, laughing and weeping. The gay and the solemn blend there at every moment. The marriage feast synchronises with the funeral service. While manhood confronts its sternest problem the child is playing in the street. One such God-view of the world, that took all in at a glance, would be enough to convince us that these things at the root are essentially one; that neither can forswear the other, nor call itself complete without the other. We should be yet more deeply convinced of this did we consider the inter-relations of work and play, of the serious and the jocular. All amusement is, on its other side, serious work. A drawing-room entertainment means hard toil for servants; the world of spectacle is, to a great host of our fellows, the business which earns the daily bread; the man who jests on the stage does so often enough with deepest tragedy at his heart. There could be no such subtle interchange if gay and grave were not woven of the same life-stuff.

Wherever, indeed, we cast our eyes the

same lesson meets us. The universe is serious enough, but its surface everywhere ripples with gaiety. It is ready always for a laugh. Æschylus saw that ages ago, when he wrote of the "*anerithmon gelasma*" of Old Ocean. The depths below might be sombre and fathomless, but at the surface was "unreckonable laughter." Nature's handiwork completes itself always with a smile. Sunshine is not only warmth and light; it is festivity. The young of all animals salute life with gay gambollings. Their glee is Nature's theology, asserting against all comers that the world is a good world and a wholesome.

What is passing strange is, that any one coming from such a view of things to the New Testament should imagine an incongruity. As a matter of fact, Christ in His teaching takes the cosmic laughter always for granted. His world is a festive world. The parables take merry-making as their natural background. The children pipe in the market-place; the prodigal son comes home to music and dancing; the kingdom of heaven is as when a man makes a great feast and invites many. The gladness of Jesus at the Galilee spring-time, His rapture at the song of the birds and the

beauty of the flowers, are to us a religious revelation just as much as are His most solemn words concerning sin, sorrow and death. For they are His reading of life. Clouds are here, for Him and us, but they do not stop the shining of the sun. The laughter of the universe is the reflex of God's joy which He would share with us.

The mistake about amusement is that men invert its position. They go to amusement to get from it a satisfaction in life, whereas it is not till men have obtained life's satisfaction that they are in a condition to be amused. The soul can never be satisfied with anything lower than itself. Until its deepest want has been met its harp is on the willows. It cannot sing in exile. Men called Napoleon "the Unamusable." Talma might play before him, and "a pitful of kings," his vassals, form part of the audience, but the conqueror extracted no gaiety from the performance. That is the Nemesis of self. When, on the contrary, the soul has found its true life, the simplest things will serve. A man then learns "the heart's laugh." He will be another example of what an acute thinker has declared to be a psychological law: "The more a man is capable

of entire seriousness the more heartily can he laugh."

The Christian Church needs in the present day to know its mind on the subject of amusements. It cannot ignore or taboo them, for its own teaching, properly interpreted, shows them to enter deeply into the Divine scheme of life. On the other hand, it must never forget that the prime function of religion is to supply the inner reconciliation without which there is no true amusement possible. The soul cannot laugh its own laugh till God has filled it. The Church has also to teach the world the ethics of amusement. The "gaiety of nations" can only increase as men imbibe Christ's unselfishness. It will come never, let us be sure, out of greed, or pride, or egotism. When, in society, we are passing a pleasant evening, be sure that at the bottom of it lie somebody's loving thought and self-sacrificing labour. And any amusement worthy of the name means, let us remember, culture of some sort. Field sports train the eye, the hand, the foot; are an education of sense, nerve and muscle. The growing passion for them in modern times is wary Nature's set-off to the lowering of vitality which town

life and sedentary toil are bringing upon civilised peoples.

Good amusement is, then, an education; but it is something more. For the masses it is a diversion of the life-force from brute gratification to something healthful and humanising. When a man has choice of half a dozen skilled exercises for his free hours, he is less likely to occupy them in drink or vice. A nation's *morale* in this respect may be said to be largely a question of its progress in amusement. We have advanced from the time, not so far distant, which made possible that terrible story Mozley tells of Magdalen College in Routh's day. 'Says Routh to the chief college officer, one morning, 'Stop, I know what you are going to tell me. One of the Fellows has died drunk in the night.' 'It is indeed so.' The President exclaimed, 'Stay, let me guess.' He guessed right. 'There, you see, I knew very well. He's just the fellow to die drunk.'" In England, within span almost of our own time, to drink oneself to death was the diversion of a gentleman at which no one seemed surprised.

The Church, for ages, with more or less success, has been teaching men to pray. It

has also, it now realises, to teach them to play. It must widen its programme until it takes in the whole man. It must renounce for ever the view which made seriousness take offence at mirth, knowing that each is from the same source, and works to the same end. Its attitude to humanity must be less of a menace and more of an encouragement. For ages has it busied itself with the religious meaning of tears. Let it now investigate a little more the religious meaning of laughter. Men, we learn on the highest authority, are to become children to understand the kingdom of heaven. The children's play is God's pledge. The child-heart delivers to us the open secret. In the midst of this tremendous universe, with all its mystery and all its tragedy, these little ones, nearest to the centre, are light of heart. The Church can build its doctrine on that fact. In it is contained the whole Gospel.

XXVIII.

Dream Mysteries.

The position accorded to dreams as a factor in religion is, we might almost say, one of the curiosities of modern thought. Schools of belief and teaching that are wide as the poles asunder are united in regarding them as, in this respect, of the highest importance. The Agnostic and the Christian believer are here at one. On the one side we have the system of evolutionary philosophy represented by Mr. Herbert Spencer which looks to the phenomena of dreams, as experienced by primitive and savage races, for the explanation of man's belief in the soul, the future state, and the whole circle of ideas generally associated with religion. The savage, say these authorities, identified dreams with realities. When in a dream he saw a person he knew to be dead he concluded he was still alive in the unseen. When he awoke in the morning, after hunting during the night in dreams, and learned from

his companions that his body had lain motionless all the time, it was his "soul" that must have been in action. And the souls outside man eventually developed into gods. If this theory be taken as simply a natural history of ideas it is well enough. When, as is sometimes the case, it is employed to explain away religion, or to belittle its authority, it is apt to recoil heavily upon the hands of those who thus use it. For when all is said this dream theory simply exhibits savage man as in conscious relation with a spiritual world. That he blunders pitifully in his apprehension of that world is what we should expect. But what destructive criticism has to face is the fact here elicited that, from his earliest beginnings, man has been haunted by these apprehensions, pursued by these intimations from an invisible around him, and that, despite science's latest developments, he is so still.

When we have disposed of the savage's dreams we have to deal with our own. It is only their familiarity as experiences which makes us blind to the profound mysteries they open up. As a recent German writer has well said, it is unnecessary for us to look, as we commonly do, to "the other side," "the

beyond," for the unseen and the spiritual. We have it all here with us, woven into our flesh and blood. And when we come to examine, nowhere is it more markedly in evidence than in our dream-life. While science is, as we have seen, endeavouring to explain religion by dreams, religious men from another standpoint offer concurrent evidence. The Bible is a great dream-book and never apologises for the fact. The prophets dealt largely in dreams and, if we are to believe the Acts, it was to a dream dreamed at Troas that Europe owed its Christianity.

There is, of course, a psychology of dreams, but before looking at that, and as a preparation for it, let us put together one or two facts. It is a circumstance significant enough in itself, that, inquire where we will, and amongst the most cultivated of our acquaintance, we find almost invariably that in this department of their life there is some mystery to confess.

> Which of those who say they disbelieve,
> Your clever people, but has dreamed his dream,
> Caught his coincidence, stumbled on his fact
> He can't explain?

Goethe was not exactly a superstitious per-

sonage, but he says that his grandfather had revealed to him in dreams beforehand some of the principal events of his life. Robert Louis Stevenson avers that it was to his dreams he owed his best ideas. In his work, "The Unconscious Mind," Dr. Schofield speaks of a clergyman he knew "whose whole life was changed by hearing a sermon preached to himself in a dream."

Stories of this kind, and they could be multiplied indefinitely, are not to be disposed of by talk of stomachic derangements. But it does not require, in order to be in contact with the deepest dream mysteries, that we rake about in the pages of literature. It will be enough to turn to our common experience and to examine what we find there. The subject is a difficult one, not only from its elusiveness, but from our natural reticence. We touch here too closely "the deep reserves of man." About these entirely subjective passages of our life weak natures are apt to exaggerate, and stronger ones to conceal. "*Dicenda, tacenda locuti;* things that should be said, and things better left unspoken, get uttered." But most of us can admit experiences similar to the following. In our sleep we have had flung upon the canvas

of our consciousness a series of vivid pictures, each perfect in its grouping, colour and perspective. The present writer had thus flashed before him, not long ago, a stage full of people, numbering apparently nigh a hundred figures, of the time of the French Revolution, where each face in the foreground was a vividly outlined portrait, and where the costumes and surroundings were marvellous in their historical accuracy.

Now in a dream perception of this kind—not at all, we imagine, an uncommon one—observe the problems which immediately offer themselves. There is first of all that of personality. It seems that two intelligences, at least, are here palpably revealing themselves. There is first the "I" to whom the picture is presented, and who is vividly conscious of being, not the producer, but the passive spectator of it. If he knew himself as the producer he could not be, as is so frequently the case, filled with astonishment at what he sees. But if this "ego" does not make the picture, who does? Who is the artist who has conceived this scene, grouped it, drawn the portraits, clothed the figures, and all in the twinkling of an eye? You say all the materials were stored in the

memory-chests of the brain. Perhaps, but who determined on making this particular show of them, who arranged them into this perfect conception? The subject of the dream is himself, as a rule, no artist. How comes he, then, into the presence of this magnificent artistry?

Any attempt at explanation here seems to involve us in one of two hypotheses. The first is that worked out with so much ingenuity by the American writer, Mr. T. T. Hudson, of Boston, in his "Law of Psychic Phenomena," the theory, that is, of the possession by each of us of a dual mind. A modification of that view, and perhaps an improvement on it, would be the supposition of powers in the soul lying quite hidden during our waking hours, and requiring, in our present life, the psychic conditions of sleep or trance for their activity. And that this contains, at least, a part of the truth seems borne out by another, and perhaps a rarer, of the dream experiences. The writer speaks again with some hesitancy, not sure whether on this point he is reporting what is to any extent a common experience. But he can testify with certainty as an individual to occasions, coming at widely separated intervals

in the career, when the soul, under the conditions of sleep, has become conscious of itself with a power, a freshness as of immortal youth, a felt relation to the illimitable and the eternal, accompanied by a thrilling rapture, as of heaven's central life, to which no waking state can offer a parallel. In remembering such times one recalls Philo's description of "the spiritual ecstasy," when "the soul having transcended earthly things, is seized with a sober intoxication, like the frenzy of the Corybantes, only with a nobler longing, and so is borne upward to the very verge of spiritual things, into the presence of the great King."

The other supposition, not, be it observed, contradictory to the former, is that the second personality involved apparently in some of our dreams is a reality, an intelligence, that is, outside of our own, and making use of us temporarily as its instrument. That such a use of our bodily and mental organs by another will and intelligence is possible is abundantly clear from the experiments of the Charcot and other schools of hypnotism. But once we have granted this of the relations of visible human beings we have nothing, either in logic or in fact, which permits us to deny the possibility

of a similar "possession" of us, under certain conditions, by intelligences beyond our ken. It is indeed only when we admit some such hypothesis that certain facts otherwise inexplicable in man's spiritual history become intelligible. It is along this line mainly that a doctrine of prophetic and apostolic inspiration credible to the present age seems likely to be built up. The idea of a lower personality entered into, dominated and used for its own purposes by a higher, the possibility and fact of which is rapidly being established as among the truths of science, will become the modern rendering of the New Testament doctrine of inspiration, that "holy men of old spake as they were moved."

However this may be, enough, perhaps, has been said to show that our common experiences as dream-haunted, whatever the special explanations of them to which we incline, are mysteries which enter very closely indeed into the whole subject-matter of religion. We have no quarrel with the Evolutionist for tracing the beginning of the history here. His mistake commonly lies in not pushing the investigation far enough. When he has accepted all the facts on the subject which are to hand, and faced

the deductions which seem fairly drawn from them, he will, if we mistake not, find himself approaching conclusions for which his philosophy has not yet provided. In our poet's word, "we are such stuff as dreams are made of," lies more than appears on the surface. We shall appreciate it better when we more clearly understand what dreams *are* made of. A study, however slight, of the problems they present is enough at least to shatter the materialist theory of life, and to bring home to us with fresh power a sense of that

> Sweet strange mystery
> Of what beyond these things may lie
> And yet remain unseen!

XXIX.

The Spiritual Sense.

The history of religion has been, for one thing, largely a history of false alarms. Again and again has the enemy breached and stormed positions supposed to be vital for her defence, to discover that the captive they hoped to make was not there. The history of that defence is indeed the most grotesque of stories. In some aspects it approaches to comedy. We see men in turn entrenching religion behind an infallible Church; again building around her a rampart of infallible Bibles; anon barring the way of attack by a *chevaux de frise* of metaphysics. History, philosophy, science, criticism, are summoned to her aid, and then, when the fight is hottest and the defences seem giving way at every point, behold! the beleaguered one is walking quietly and unhurt through the very ranks of the foe! At last men are beginning to discover the ludicrous blunder they have been making. On their astonished eyes the

truth is beginning to dawn that while Church, Bible, history and philosophy have all their religious uses, it is not upon any of them that religion ultimately rests. Her stronghold is not in anything that man has done. It is in what he is in himself. Her final evidence is a psychological one. It lies in the existence in humanity of "the spiritual sense."

What is meant by this will perhaps be best indicated if we institute a parallel. We all know what is meant by the musical sense. Now, there is a history of music and a logic of it. Any one who has worked at harmony and counterpoint understands how intimately it is allied to purely intellectual processes. It has, besides, institutions, patrons, endowments. But the prospects of music as a force rest upon none of these things. They rest on its appeal to a distinct, yet fundamental, element in the human soul. When its notes fall on the ear something in us responds. And the response is peculiar. It is not an answer of the intellect, the sensation of a problem solved, or the stir of any of the senses. It is a deep thrill of consciousness, unique, different from aught else, unable to interpret itself in any other way except than that it *is* an answer.

And the answer is to some external reality that fits exactly this special quality of the soul. As the harmonic sense develops, and especially where it blossoms out into the flower of the higher musical genius, it becomes ever more vividly conscious of this external reality that answers to it. The musical creators, so called, create nothing. They only discover what is there already. They find a harmonic universe with its laws framed from eternity, becoming ever more wonderful, more beautiful in proportion as their inner sense develops.

The point here is that this external, harmonic world fits exactly our internal one. There are multitudes of unmusical people. There are races that have the feeblest musical perception. But always in proportion as the gift is developed does there come the sense of the reality of its outer source; the sense that the music is a true witness of it. Our ignorance or indifference makes no difference to the objective fact. Moreover, this ignorance and indifference will in time be certainly and universally conquered. What music has already accomplished in man is evidence, then, for one thing, of its future general predominance, and for another of its perfect corre-

spondence with a harmonic system outside of man, deeper and wider than himself.

But what has this to do with religion and the spiritual sense? Everything. For all that has just been said applies here with an almost absolute exactness. The part played by the musical sense in relation to its world is the precise counterpart of that played by the spiritual sense in relation to religion. Perhaps the loosest and most badly-defined word in our language is the word Faith. In the lips, not only of the people but also of scholars and divines, it has been made to connote all manner of dissimilar and incongruous elements. But in its primitive and Biblical signification it stands for the precise function of the soul with which we are now trying to deal. It means neither more nor less than the spiritual sense, the faculty of response in man to the spiritual world around him. It is the soul's retina, on which alone the light that streams thence can register its pictures. Like the musical faculty, it has been slow in its emergence. For long ages of his history man seems to have felt no stir of it within him. The palæolithic times offer not a trace of a religious sense. Even now it is most irregularly distributed. In

multitudes it seems entirely dormant, if at all existent; in a few it has from time to time exhibited itself in a commanding and overpowering potency. The parallel, so far, seems complete.

Can we go further and say that, as with the musical faculty, the inner affirmations of this sense can be trusted as corresponding always to an outer reality? Here lies the whole religious question, as the best minds of to-day realise. And the answer tends more and more to an affirmative. Calvin was groping towards this position in his statement that Faith is a matter not so much of the intellect as of the heart. Schleiermacher is so sure of this ground that he is ready to stake Christianity upon it. *Pectus est quod theologum facit* is the corner-stone of his system. The one thing for the religious teacher to accomplish, says he, is to reach that stratum of the consciousness where this sacred instinct lies concealed. With Ritschl the idea of the spiritual sense lies at the bottom of his doctrine of "value judgments." It is singular, however, that having gone so far, he does not go further; that while regarding the soul's instinctive feeling in the presence of Christ as the

greatest of the Christian evidences, he should speak as he does of those inner responses to the spiritual universe outside which he disparages as mysticism. What else was Christ's own attitude to the spiritual universe but a mystical one; what revelation had He to offer except the response of His perfect spiritual sense to the infinite spiritual system which corresponded to it? But that is mysticism, which not Ritschl nor any one else will ever eliminate from the essence of religion.

But to come closer. What is the function of this spiritual sense, and how does it affirm its authority? We have only to look carefully at its operation in ourselves to discover at once how absolutely different it is from the processes of mere reasoning. It mingles at every point with reasoning, but is in itself as distinct from it as is the emotion raised by a Beethoven sonata. One might describe it as the soul's thrill at the approach of the Divine. Religious literature is the attempt to put that thrill into words. Religious history is the story of the great creative spirits who have felt it at first hand, and of its communication by them to others. What in varying degrees was realised by these founders, and by Christ in a trans-

cendent degree, was a sense of the universe as spiritual, of holiness as the supreme value, of the external world, with its natural forces, as the veil of a Supreme Thought and Love, of man as in himself a revelation of God, and as in immediate contact with God. The spiritual sense immediately recognises itself in other souls and rejoices in the contact. Religious fellowships arise from the play of its law of affinity. It knows instinctively where its nutriment lies, and has processes of its own for extracting and assimilating it. It finds in itself a supreme mandate to develop at the expense of the lower nature allied with it. It works towards the evolution of a body more expressive of its needs. In the rarer natures the effort leads often to physical disaster. A St. Francis, a Pascal, a Catherine of Siena,

> Die of having lived too much
> In their large hours.

But what they attempted too early and too strenuously the race will arrive at later. We need not be impatient with the rate of movement if God is not. The pace, after all, is not a sluggish one when we consider the obstacles in the way. The spiritual sense is so far only

at the beginning of its work. It is at present not so much a master as a reporter. The flesh is still in possession. When Massillon preached before Louis XIV. on the carnal and the spiritual in man, the monarch exclaimed, "Ah! here are two men I know very well!" Of the two it is to be feared he preferred the acquaintance of the former. He represented here that majority of whom it may still be said—

> With the true best alack! how ill agrees
> The best that thou wouldest choose!

But the history of the spiritual sense, however disappointing to our impatience as the record of a religious triumph, is almost perfect as a piece of religious evidence. We need scarce any other. If, to revert to our earlier analogy, all the musical institutions were destroyed, the world's present harmonic sense and culture would make it impossible for even such a catastrophe to result in any real loss. The same may be said of religion. Could all the external record of its past, its systems, its literatures, be imagined as lost, its power and authority would hardly be affected. The spiritual sense as we now have it contains the essence of these things in itself, and would

reproduce them, with new elements added of the eternal revelation. And that this sense is authoritative, that its report of the spiritual world is authentic and trustworthy, is a conviction as well founded as that of the trustworthiness of the musical faculty, or indeed as that by which we affirm the outside world revealed to us by the senses. All these affirmations rest ultimately on an act of Faith —the belief, namely, that our nature is not being befooled; that its reporters are telling us the truth, and not a lie.

It is the business of the Church, and specially of the religious teacher, to develop the spiritual sense. The real end of worship and of exhortation is not to root men in tradition or to drill them in logic, or to cram them with facts. It is to find the mystic chord which vibrates to the breath of the Unseen. It answers always to the true note. Often the thrill comes apart from any words. Tolstoi was converted from Atheism by studying the faith of simple people. When a man has felt God his neighbour knows it. That is where the true preacher's power lies. Beyond all eloquence, all learning, its secret is in the fulness and fineness of his spiritual sense. And that

grows in him by careful cultivation. He above all others needs to ponder the old Greek saying: "The gods sell us all the goods they give us." We cannot, that is, get the best without paying for it. Inferior substitutes for the true power can be had at specified rates, but for this there is no haggling and no cheapening. Those who, in pulpits or elsewhere, desire to be irrefutable evidences of the heavenly kingdom must offer their whole selves as the price.

XXX.

Our Thought World.

WE are all of us absolute monarchs and govern each an empire compared with which old Rome or the modern Greater Britain are, in their extent, as a country parish. Every man's house, we say, is his castle; but his mind is a world. It is hardly an extravagance of Jean Paul Richter's that "a new universe is created every time a child is born." All our life is a thinking. According to the quality of our thought is the quality of our being. Our humdrum and bourgeois age has dulled its taste for real pleasure. It might take lessons from those old Greek philosophers who, instead of blocking themselves with expensive arrangements, reduced their physical wants to a minimum in order to enjoy, day by day, untrammelled, the luxury of their own thoughts. For, as they had discovered, our thought world is our real world. It should surely be our first consideration to explore this realm,

of which we so strangely find ourselves in possession; to trace its boundaries, to understand its laws, to unearth its hid treasures, to investigate the Beyond of which it gives such wonderful hints.

We have just said that our thought world is our real world, and it may be worth while at the beginning to show that the statement is more than a phrase. Some of us have a confused enough notion of reality. Nothing, for instance, seems more certain to us than the solid "outside of things," with which we are constantly in contact. Dogmas and doctrines may be illusion, but the earth we tread on, the wall we run against, the cloud that rains on us, the sun that shines, are, at any rate, a piece of solid fact which nobody can dispute. This "solid fact" of the visible and touchable, say some aggressive disputants, is indeed all we do know. The invisibles about which metaphysicians and theologians discourse are mere doctrinal ghosts. When we talk of the things we see and handle we at least know where we are.

Yet a moment's reflection should show us the shallowness of this view. The outside world is nothing to us but a series of

thoughts. Our mind really constructs it for us. We talk of the world's colours, its scents, its sounds, but there would be no such things as colours, scents, or sounds apart from a mind which can be affected in these particular ways. The fact of one set of vibrations producing in us a sensation we call "sound," and another set a sensation we call "sight," is a mystery first and most of all of the perceiving mind. That the external world can be in any sense the same thing as the image of it formed in our brain, is a notion which the crudest thinker, as soon as the problem is fairly before him, must dismiss as impossible. That the "something outside" which affects us in these myriad ways is a reality, and that our relations with it are truly represented by the reports of our senses, is a thing of which we have and can have no logical proof. The world's very first demand of us—to believe, namely, that it is such a world as our thought presents—is a sheer act of faith.

That things are thus with us, that our thought world, far more than any external, is the one we know, will appear more plainly when we consider the mental laws and the way they work in constructing our world for us.

Have we ever considered what happens when we "see" an object, say, a boat moving on a river? Light rays, propagated by vibrations of inconceivable velocity, falling upon the retina have produced there an image. Upon this retina-picture the mind now begins its marvellous work. By one act it gathers all the colour and form impressions it has received into a single unity; by another act it classifies this unity, separating its individual qualities from its common ones, and by virtue of these latter placing the object into the category called "boat"; another act gives to the boat's motion a cause, either the action of rowers, or perhaps of a steam propeller. Vastly more are the mental actions and laws concerned than these, but enough are here to show that our boat on the river, as known at least to us, is a work, a very large proportion of which belongs to our own brain. The sense perception; the acts by which we unify and classify it; the placing of it in space and time; and that strange last act by which we are irresistibly led to attribute its motion to a cause, are all the products, not so much of the material object as of the marvellous laws within us. The external world, before it reaches us, has

we see, become a manufactured article, and the machinery is in ourselves. The wonder of it all and the awe of it grow upon us as we realise that these laws are none of our making; they were here, we perceive, in all the minds that were before us; are in all the minds around us; and the very world itself is built and framed in accordance with them.

Indeed, from whatever aspect we view this inner kingdom of ours, the mystery of it deepens. What are called clever people are apt to be vain sometimes of their mental achievements. They would be less so if they remembered that most of these achievements are carried on by a power that, while within them, is yet outside their own will and even their own consciousness. Our thought world carries on its operations largely without consulting us. The real creator in us is the Unconscious. In that abysmal depth, lying somewhere beneath our formulated thought, the operations are going on which, by-and-by, emerge on our view as completed ideas. Every thinker, for instance, knows precisely the experience which Stevenson thus hits off about his own work: "Unconscious thought, there is the only method; macerate your subject, let it

boil slow, then take the lid off and look in—and there your stuff is, good or bad." An excellent prescription for the young writer, but the very terms of it show that, instead of having been the performers ourselves, we are mainly spectators, waiting on the operations of another, who in mysterious ways and in obscure depths beneath the surface, is doing the thinking for us. "Is this my idea?" we say as it flashes into our mind. Why, no one is more surprised at it than ourselves. It is as much ours as the sunshine reflected on our lens. The illuminated lens is ours, but the light has travelled from afar.

But the fact that our thought world is, to so large an extent, worked for us rather than by us, must not blind us as to our share in the operations. Over a large part of its surface our will reigns supreme, and can make of it either a desolation or a paradise. Our thoughts are our companions, which we cannot get rid of. We may shake off every other society, but not this. It is the merest common-sense, therefore, to make it as good as possible. But there is no royal road. A man may buy his way nowadays into all manner of social circles, but his coin is not current in this domain.

Nor will rank serve. The son of Louis XIV., the Dauphin, had for instructors Bossuet and Huet. The one wrote for him "The Discourse on Universal History"; the other edited for him "The Delphine Classics." After he had outgrown his schooldays the object of these cares never touched a book, and about the only thing recorded of him is that he was fond of killing weasels in a barn. The lad was heir to a throne, and this was his inner empire! Of all the waste that goes on in our extravagant world the waste of our thought possibilities is the worst. Lords of this inner realm, we might stretch its boundaries till they touch the illimitable; could make every inch of its surface rich with flower and fruit; could populate it with the noblest minds; could open it to highest inspirations, to the very breath and prospect of the Infinite. Instead, most of us are content to run up a log hut on its border, to scratch its surface for a few kitchen vegetables, and to leave the rest as barren as Sahara.

With a well-tended thought world all his own, no man need call himself poor or fettered. Moneybags may voyage in his yacht to southern seas and be very much bored over the business.

The worker at his bench, if he know his inner privilege, can voyage to fairer realms and feel no fatigue. Let no man think his taskwork a monotony, though it be pin-making, or trench-digging, while his mind-realm is his own. There, as he hammers or digs, he may call up what scenery or what action he wills. It is here that thought life surpasses experience. In experience we take what comes, the rough with the smooth. In our inner world we can choose. And surely this is enough to give zest to the commonest career that, at will, we can live over again our choicest moments, recall those elect days when we touched life's best, and make our whole interior radiant with that reflected glory.

There are innumerable aspects of this theme which we pass over in order to touch, in closing, one on which the modern mind is painfully exercised; the question, that is, of our thought world as related to a future life. Readers of Schopenhauer will remember how, in pursuit of his favourite doctrine of the priority and predominance of the will, both in man and the world, he seeks to belittle the intellect. Our consciousness, he declares, is the mere product and parasite of the brain;

grows with it, decays with it, dies with it. It is the old argument of the Epicureans, which their great poet Lucretius has expressed with unsurpassable force. But it all rests upon a fallacy which a schoolboy ought to perceive. For when we propose to make reason depend upon a brain we must extend our reference, and make the Universal Reason, the mind we discern everywhere at work in the cosmos, dependent upon a brain also; "which," as the logic books say, "is absurd." True psychology is coming more and more to realise that the thought world within us uses the brain as an instrument rather than as a cause. The instrument is no more the creator of the thought than Beethoven's piano was the creator of his music. The instrument might wear out, but the music can be reproduced elsewhere.

The truer and higher our mind life becomes the more sure are we that our mind is fed, not by brain activities merely, but more, and chiefly, by Another Mind whose celestial ray streams into ours, and in whose Immortal Life we live. The fine thought of Plutarch concerning the *daimon* or guardian spirit of Socrates, that it was "the influence of a

superior intelligence and a diviner soul operating on the soul of Socrates" can be taken as true of all the nobler thought life. Our bodies may wear out and our brains; but the thought world which lies behind them is, as we have seen, a realm of its own, with laws of its own. By no possibility, as Tyndall himself confessed, can we find the nexus between muscular and nerve energy and a state of consciousness. They are a world apart. Death, which divides the two, destroys neither the one nor the other. An ancient word still expresses as much as we know. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

XXXI.

Morals and Eternity.

THE conception of eternity is a *differentia* of humanity. Apart from any question of a future life, the mere fact that man is capable of this immense idea, that it lies there as part of his permanent brain furniture, places him in a class apart. Said an English farm labourer once to the present writer: "There are two things that press upon my mind; one is the thought of boundless space, and the other the idea of time without end." It was pleasant to hear the words. The humble toiler, unassisted, had come upon the two things that have gone most to the making of man, considered as a thinking being. "The capacity of becoming conscious of the Infinite," says Lotze, "is the distinguishing endowment of the human mind."

But the study of infinity, especially in its aspect of eternity, has had some curious results. The effect on the human conscious-

ness and on human conduct has not been by any means uniform. There have been, in fact, the widest divergencies in the mode of conceiving eternity, with all manner of strange corresponding effects on morals and life. Nowhere than on this theme has religious thinking been more confused; nowhere has religious action blundered at times more pitifully. A glance over some of the diverse paths along which thought has stumbled here may help us in our quest for the proper track.

There is, for instance, a view of eternity which, followed to its logical issue, would leave us simply with a morality of "go as you please." In this scheme the only eternity is an eternity of matter and force. Matter is eternal, force is persistent. The universe discloses no such thing as final causes, no such thing as pre-determined ends. We must dismiss all idea of progression, of dramatic *dénouement*. A complete universe can, by the very terms, make no advance. The changes which science records are, as an American advocate of this view puts it, to be considered simply as "variations of cosmical weather." This odd combination of Spinoza and Buchner, of an outworn idealistic determinism,

with an equally outworn materialism, is not likely to keep any lengthened hold on modern thinking. Science, for one thing, is too dead against it. An *a priori* philosophy which denies progression because it contradicts an unproved abstract idea, has little chance against an ever accumulating body of facts which spell progression and nothing else. Evolution becomes here, as against contradictors of this order, the modern basis of faith. It sweeps magnificently into line with the New Testament doctrine of great consummations, of the

> One far off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves.

But the concept of eternity which pictures for us a changeless universe, an eternity of endless and aimless rearrangements of matter and force, is not only unscientific ; it is unmoral. Were it accepted the only morality could be one of convenience. To the extent it is believed in, human life becomes a jest or a pessimist tragedy.

> Quum tamen incolumis videatur
> Summa manere,

cries Lucretius. Despite all surface appear-

ances, "the great sum of things is seen to remain unchanged." And the conclusion is, as it must be of all thinking along that line, "Eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Religious aspiration in a brute universe, in which by some strange chance man's fevered consciousness figures for one brief moment, must be a joke for the stars. The only logical life course should be Omar Khayyam's :

> Drink, for we know not whence we came nor why ;
> Drink, for we know not why we go, nor where.

Sanctity is absurd in a cosmos of indifference. The foundation for what morality were left us would lie in Voltaire's answer to the man who wanted to know why, on such principles, he might not commit robbery or murder. "Because, my friend, if you do, you will probably get hanged."

It is not, however, solely in outside speculations of this order that we find a misuse of the idea of eternity. In quarters nearer home misconceptions about it have brought strange and sinister results. Religious thought on this theme has been continually stumbling upon two mistakes. One is the identification of

eternity with the idea of cataclysm and catastrophe. Successive generations of Christian people have gone on dividing their world-system into two parts—one the time in which they lived, which was about to come to an end, and the other, "eternity," which was to be ushered in by an overwhelming cosmic outburst. This idea, borrowed in the first instance from the Jewish apocalyptic systems which flourished so abundantly in the post-exilic and pre-Christian eras, had full possession of the Early Church, and has, since then, continually been renewed. The Christian Fathers, age after age, see in the circumstances of their time exactly the prophetically declared conditions which are to usher in the final scene. Under this idea great panics have at different epochs swept over society. One can hardly imagine a more terrible state of affairs than that which prevailed in Western Europe when Christendom reached the eve of its thousandth year. Prophets everywhere declared that this was the end of the age. The people believed them and shut up their shops, left the crops to rot in the fields, broke off from family relationship, and gathered in famine-stricken bands to await

the dread Appearing. The sensation of sheer terror probably never reached such a height in this world as when the ebbing moments of the fated year ran out to the close.

The lesson of these delusions has, however, not even yet been universally learned. In a recently published "History of the Plymouth Brethren" the author, a competent and cultured observer who has studied the movement from within, declares that "if any one had told the first Brethren that three-quarters of a century might elapse and the Church be still on earth, the answer would probably have been a smile, partly of pity, partly of disapproval, wholly of incredulity." The moral result of such a view, as pointed out by the same writer, is instructive. The men and women who have held this persuasion have systematically withdrawn themselves from large and important parts of human interests and responsibilities. They have left it to others to fight the battles of reform and of freedom. The early Brethren stigmatised the movement of Clarkson, Macaulay and Wilberforce for the abolition of the slave trade as "unholy." They discouraged philanthropy and even missions. Had the world been left to them

it would have had no art, no science and no literature. It is surely time that this view of eternity, as of a kind of approaching tidal wave that will by-and-by roll in and submerge everything that is, should be recognised by sensible men as provedly false and provedly immoral, and as such to be henceforth dropped and done with.

And with this must go another idea that has prevailed even more widely. It is that view which has regarded eternity as a kind of infinite Topsy-turvydom, in which all the principles of Divine government which we recognise in the present state are to be neutralised and reversed. The idea that the God we know could be also the God of the torturing hell of mediæval theology is to a really serious mind simply unthinkable. That because a man dies God's whole character should change towards him and become wholly dreadful, is a notion possible only to a barbarous and illogical age. It is as if a mother should love and cherish her child so long as it keeps awake, but, the moment it falls asleep, should change to a monster and devour it. There is only one consolation in studying the long reign of this theological nightmare, and that is, that the

laws of the human mind have always declined to deal with it seriously. The imagination refused to grasp it. Conscience would not be governed by it. In the ages when its reign as a dogma was most complete, character and morals were, in fact, at the lowest ebb. Humour made havoc among its terrors. The fourteenth century bards laughed at the priests and their stories. The human reaction reached its culmination in Rabelais, who treated hell in the manner of Lucian, and made Europe roar at the jocosities of the under-world.

It is time we reached that nobler concept of eternity which is at once the essence both of true religion and of true morals. The more we study it, both in the New Testament and in that other revelation given in the ever-growing human consciousness, the more we shall realise the inadequacy and the falseness of the travesties we have been sketching. In this clearer light we shall recognise the Apocalyptic thunderings and trumpetings as poetic representations of a something that in itself is entirely spiritual. The true eternity which Christ taught has, it is true, duration in it; death also and the Beyond in it; but these are the smallest part of the idea.

For, essentially, His eternity is not only then, but now; not only there, beyond the stars, but here, in the conscious soul. The eternal life He offers is not a mere uncountable sum of years. Its chief element is a conscious relation to, reception of, and fellowship with, that immutable spiritual Order which exists behind the veil. It is the sharing of that Divine reality of which the soul's most ardent aspirations are the faint adumbration; to taste of which is to know at once life's meaning, and its inmost satisfaction. To the man who inhabits this region, time and eternity are not two things, they are one. He sees the visible in the light of the invisible, *sub specie æternitatis.* The world is to him like one of those dissolving views, in which the scene we watch is already transfused by the gleam of the one that is behind.

It is eternity under this aspect that gives morality its one vital and efficacious motive, and to human life its true value and perspective. It is a view which inspires the whole man. Citizenship, science, art, politics, social law, become ennobled as part of a world-order which rests on an immutable spiritual scheme. The truth of all this carries its evidence in the fact

that our fellow becomes only entirely human to us, truly dear and valuable, as we discern in him something of this eternity. The man who gives clearest proof to his brethren that his habitual dwelling is in that region, who can bring to them largest spoil of this sacred Invisible, will be always recognised by them in the end as of all benefactors the highest.

XXXII.

The Christ of To-Day.

The title, without explanation, might seem almost an impertinence. Is the Christ of to-day, then, different from the Christ of yesterday or of to-morrow? Is not the doctrine of His unchangeableness the centre of Christian orthodoxy? That may be, and yet our title holds. For it is an expression simply of the relativity of our knowledge. In a sense Christ is the creation of each fresh generation, because each generation creates the world it lives in. The universe is to a worm what the worm can make of it. We cannot get an absolute knowing, because we cannot cut ourselves loose from the variableness of our knowing faculty. The universe grows with our growth. It is bigger with every addition to our own mental height. And this law of relativity holds equally in our religious knowledge. The difference between the perception of Christ which recognised Him simply

as "the carpenter's son," and the perception of the writer of the fourth gospel marked, let us remember, no difference in the object, but only a difference in the perceivers. And the point of view which gives us our vision is one which, apart from our will and apart from our moral condition, is perpetually changing. The twentieth century cannot see the Christ, if it would, with the eye of the middle ages. It sees with its own, and the later view will carry in it something different from the earlier. We may not quarrel with this fact, far less reproach ourselves because it is so. It lies in the nature of things. It is God's way with us.

What we want, then, is to discover the content of the consciousness of to-day concerning Christ and to reach some conclusions about it. And the first point we note is that our age brings to this study some fresh measuring instruments. By its new scientific process, and especially by its all-comprehending formula of evolution, it proposes to reinterpret all the phenomena of life, and amongst them all the Christian phenomena. The historical facts are studied in the light of a new science of history, including a science of the growth of legends and myths. The New Testament

literature has in our time been put under the microscope and every line of it critically examined. All the facts, all the historical material of that first century, all its mental and moral conditions, all the sources from which light, from however distant a point, could be thrown upon the central story of the Christian origins, have been investigated with a patience and an accuracy to which no earlier time offers a parallel. A great theological school, the Ritschlian, to which modern Christian thought is, in many ways, so much indebted, declares that only along this line of historical investigation is the truth to be reached, and discards accordingly what it calls the metaphysics of religion. In other directions there is exhibited a similar tendency to strip off from Christianity its element of mystery. The emphasis is put on the moral teachings of Christ. The splendid analysis of these teachings by a Wendt and a Bernard Weiss has given the world a new sense of the supreme equality of the Gospel ethic. A Tolstoi, cutting himself loose from the conventional orthodoxy of the Church, finds in these teachings alone what he considers a complete theory of living.

The historians and the critics have, indeed, laboured hard to give us the real Christ, and, especially in their work upon the teaching, it must be said not without fruit. And yet when we examine the Christian consciousness of to-day, where, at least, it is to any adequate degree developed, we are struck to find to how small an extent the external, visible history of Christ enters into the totality of its possession in Him. The history makes Him tangible to us as a human personality, fixes Him firmly upon the ground, gives Him a date in time and a place in nationality. He is there as visible and actual as Tiberius or as Tacitus. And yet, compared with what He stands for in the inner life, this purely personal story is as a cloud that forms upon a corner of the sky compared with the infinite blue beyond.

If one might speak of final causes in this connection, it could be said that from the beginning it seemed fore-ordained that Christ's external history should play only a subordinate part in His total representation. We seem ever unable to reach Him that way. A man travels over Palestine, studies the topography of Jerusalem and Nazareth, and feels as he comes away that he is not nearer but infinitely

further from his quest. The world contains no monument of Christ, no authentic picture. The early fathers who venture descriptions of His personal appearance fall into hopeless contradiction. Apart from the doubtful correspondence with the King of Edessa, we have not a line from His hand. We know Shakespeare by *Hamlet* and Goethe by *Faust*, but Christ published no book. Even that part of His career of which alone we have any written details, the period of from one to three years of His public service, we do not know how coherently to piece together. All we can say is, there is a personal history, but as compared with the totality of our Christ of to-day it is a fragment, a suggestion.

Who and what, then, is the Christ of to-day? First of all, He is the Power behind the New Testament. Not, to the modern mind, so much visibly in it as behind it. Just as science finds in all phenomena the manifestation of an unseen, ever-present Force, so the investigator to-day, turning over the Christian records, feels himself at every point in contact with the mystery that made them possible. Here, to the scientific mind, is the real question. For to whatever extent the inaccurate or the

legendary may have crept in to the New Testament, there is one thing in which its absolute reliability can never be questioned. It represents, with the accuracy of a hair balance, the impression made upon its writers by Christ's personality. The fourth gospel is the echo from the soul of its writer of the heavenly voice that had spoken to it. The Pauline Epistles show us what one of the deepest minds the world ever produced felt about Jesus. The different reports of these manifold collaborateurs vary with all manner of individual idiosyncrasy and standpoint. But not one of them fails to make us understand that the One whom he wrote about had made on the writer the impression of something heavenly, mighty, beautiful beyond all that was human, of One who had opened new powers in, and disclosed new horizons to, his own soul. But, by the law of dynamics, a given impression requires an adequate cause. If this was the impression, what of the cause? Thus is Christ to us of to-day for one thing, the Power, the radiant mystery behind the New Testament.

But the Christ of to-day is something more, in a sense we may say, something much greater

even, than the Christ of the New Testament. There we behold Him in the restrictions of bodily life. But now we see Him, as a sheer spiritual Power, traversing and transforming the ages. Psychological facts are just as real as any other—more so, indeed, for they are the only ones we really know. And the candid inquirer upon our theme has now to investigate the meaning of that Christ of the inner man of whom the subsequent ages are full. We have here to step beyond the bounds of Judæa and of Galilee, beyond the bounds of A.D. 30, and to discover the significance of the Christ in St. Paul, in Augustine, in Bernard, in Wesley. We have to compute here the whole content and quality of that stream of spiritual life which from the first century has been flowing in upon human souls and producing such wondrous experiences. What is the force that, in an Ignatius, condemned to a torturing death, impels him rapturously to welcome fire, cross, and wild beast if only he may "attain unto Jesus Christ"? That is one of a million of the inner testimonies. But they are all to the same effect. It is the simple fact to say that to all ages and conditions Christ has been the life of the soul. In this view the Christ of

to-day is an invisible world power, whose operations are in the interior of human hearts. And the force seems as continuous, as persistent, and as penetrating as that of gravitation.

If the facts are thus, or anything like this, what is the explanation? There is an early one that, so far as we know, has never yet been bettered, and the full significance of which we have perhaps scarcely yet fully grasped. It is that given us in the history of St. Paul. No human being probably has ever been more profoundly under the power of Christ, and yet he had never seen Christ in the flesh, and he scarcely ever refers to the facts of His earthly career. Yet he was persuaded of Christ as yet living and as the very centre of man's unseen world. His own inward life and the resulting external career were made, he unceasingly declared, by His touch from the invisible. Paul's assurance here is the more remarkable as he has nothing to say of the birth stories and nothing about what Harnack calls the Easter stories. What he knew was his own soul and the power on it of this unseen Christ.

What we have reached, then, as our Christ of to-day is, a human history, a personality

and a power behind. A cloud in the heavens, shall we say, and the infinite blue beyond, from out of which the cloud has drawn itself? And the cloud and the blue are one. The mystery is beyond words, and yet this is finally how it shapes itself: The Infinite to be the Infinite must contain the element of personality. It contains more than force; it contains, also, truth, love, purity, holiness. But these to have their true effect in the human sphere must personalise. The Infinite here must take shape. The limitless blue must yield its cloud. And it has done so. When in the secret place of our soul we build our God, we form Him not out of cosmic forces, not out of gravitation and chemical attraction, but out of holiness and love. And, lo! as we look, the form is as of the Son of Man! The Absolute as Absolute is not enough for the religious life. Man must have some fixed, visible point, some crystallisation, as it were, of the All on which his love and reverence may rest. That is where the New Testament story meets him. Here he finds the humanising and personalising of the Infinite Goodness. In the study of this Life he tastes eternity. And as he believes, the power to be good flows into him.

Therefore knows he to-day the Christ, not only as human, but also as Divine; not only as a figure in history, but as the eternal Now.

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

XXXIII.

The World's Surprises.

MAX MÜLLER says of the early Aryans that they seem never to have got over their first surprise at the world, their sense of its utter strangeness, and of themselves as strangers in it. It is a refreshing utterance. We have not sufficiently appraised our sense of wonder as a spiritual asset. In fact, *not* to wonder has been in more than one age lauded as a virtue. We remember how Aristotle, in the "Ethics," speaking of his "Magnanimous Man," says that "he is not apt to admire, for nothing is great to him." And the tendency of modern research seems, at first sight, all in favour of *nil admirari*. Science has swept the universe clean of the old elements on which wonder fed. The gods and goddesses have ceased from Olympus; dryads and genii no longer haunt the woods and streams. The world's poetry seems in danger of extinction under the empire of universal law. Where is romance when

everything has been explained? Long ago Keats protested at science's dry-as-dust programme:

> Do not all charms fly
> At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
> There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
> We know her woof, her texture: she is given
> In the dull catalogue of common things.

But our poets need not be afraid. It is not in the power of science to extinguish the soul's wonder at itself and the world. Busied for awhile with the new explanations, it discovers in the end that the problem has been thrown only one step further back. The primal mystery looms out behind more unfathomable than ever. There are people who talk about the improbability, almost the inconceivability, of a future state of existence. Has it ever occurred to them to speculate on the antecedent improbability, inconceivability even, of such a state as the one we actually find ourselves in? After it has been made certain to us that such impossible beings as we are actually inhabiting so impossible a world, the *à priori* objections against another life for us in another world become in comparison ridiculously small. It is worth while to catch

this view sometimes in its full force. We get it now and then when, in waking slowly from a dream state, after lying for a while in semi-consciousness, the reality gradually dawns upon us. "Is it actually true, then," we say, "that I am what I am, and where I am, and that things around me are as they are?" We taste to the full in that moment the world's strangeness. To have waked up in another sphere had been hardly less startling than to have waked up in this.

No scientific explanations, no cosmic theories, can take away the essential marvel of things as they are. When we explain the motion of suns and planets by a law of gravitation, which acts, we say, "as the square of the distance," we simply run up against another question that we are powerless to resolve: Why should there be a law of gravitation? and why should it act as the square rather than, say, as the cube of the distance? When we account for the world by tracing all back to an original revolving fire mist, condensing into planets and evolving in succession atmosphere, rocks, soil, water, plants, animals, and finally man, "why," we must ask, "did the original motion work along

these, out of all possible, lines, and what was there in the first impulsion that could produce such effects?" How, along this line of thinking, did the original blind force contrive to endow us, at this far end, with souls, and sympathy and religion? To reach this actual, what inconceivable hosts of improbabilities have been trampled over! The miracle of man, as conceived by the Hebrew cosmogonists, is nothing as compared with the miracle of man as conceived by the scientists.

To thoughtful minds the world's greatest surprise lies in its two-sidedness. To gaze in one direction gives us a fit of pessimism. We cannot look five minutes in another direction without being swept on the tide of a glorious optimism. It is this mixture of the divine and the sordid that makes the riddle. On the one side we have a sense of the splendour of life which makes even such a scoffer as Nietzsche break into rapture: "And truly," says he, "divine spectators are necessary in order to appreciate the spectacle which is here inaugurated, and of which the outcome can not as yet be imagined, a spectacle too fine, too wonderful, too paradoxical for its possibly being a

mere meaningless side-show upon some ridiculous star." But then that other side, the side of darkness, failure, pain and evil! How it has racked the human brain to find here something that is intelligible! We turn the pages of Plato, with his idea that the Creator, having to mix together necessity and thought, made the Universe as like to Himself as He could; of Aristotle, with his distinction between the inner form of the Universe and the outer matter, identifying the Divine perfection with the form and the imperfection with the matter; of a Leibnitz holding this to be the best world possible, the best solution of the problem in *maxima* and *minima*, of the union of the infinite with the finite. Every age has, in fact, had its solution, and ended by leaving the matter very much where it was. But it is this darkest side which leaves us most certain that we form part in no commonplace scheme, and that a world which offers us such surprises today has yet greater ones in store.

This conclusion, which the general outlook suggests, is greatly strengthened when we come to the study of history. A modern view has disparaged history as "dealing, not like philosophy and science, with ideas and concep-

tions, but only with endless particulars, with things that happened once and then ceased to exist." This conception by Schopenhauer of history, as a jumble without laws underneath it or purposes running through it, is matched in fatuity by that of another non-Christian thinker, Buckle, who, going to the opposite extreme, makes all history an affair of natural law, and reduces the difference between men and races into an affair simply of climate, soil and food. One might ask here why on this hypothesis a Germany, having the same climate, soil and food as Luther knew, does not continuously produce Luthers? Neither of these teachers offers a satisfying answer to the problem of history. As against Schopenhauer, we see in its events and persons the sequences of an ordered movement; we see its background crammed with purpose. As against Buckle, we discover it to be full of the unexpected, of the incalculable. It is because the universe exists not for the sake of laws, but of persons; because its, to us, invisible spheres are full of them, that we may expect continually vast births of time, the appearance of great natures, whose solitary thought and volition change the destinies of generations.

Unpredictable indeed and unimaginable are the turning-points of history. Imagine a Buckle in the year 1 A.D. studying Palestinian Judaism, and from what was there to see in the present, and from a past that for long centuries had been so arid, foretelling its probable future! What was there in the circumstances, and the outlook, to make possible the New Testament and the history of Christendom? And yet all this came. "Unto us a Child is born," and the key is turned in the door of destiny. On a minor scale the same thing is continually happening. At the end of the eighteenth century poetry seemed dead in England. Who remembers the names of the laureates of that time? Decades of barrenness succeeded each other, and then suddenly arose a whole galaxy, and the firmament shone with a Wordsworth, a Coleridge, a Byron, a Shelley, a Keats. To-day the literary drought is sore, but a new Shakespeare may be in the cradle. The world indeed, both of thought and action, is prepared for immense surprises in the immediate future. Those of us who are middle-aged have seen within our lifetime a change in ideas in the mode of conceiving the Universe, greater than any that has taken place before

through thousands of years. And the rate of movement now promises to be cumulative. We may be on the eve of discoveries, or coming within the sweep of influences, that will alter the whole face of humanity.

But the theme, treated thus far on general lines, has some personal applications. At the beginning we spoke of wonder as a spiritual asset, and we can now return to that. Men think a good deal to-day of their surprise faculty, and pay large sums to feed it withal. The Roman Emperor who offered a fortune to the man who could procure him a new sensation would find sympathisers to-day. People travel round the globe in search of its big things, the views that will startle and astonish. But this is, after all, a worn-out way of seeking the wonderful. The true way of travel here is not the lateral, but the vertical. The secret is not so much that of roaming as of mounting. A man who has seen the prospect, every day of his life, from his native village would scarce know it as viewed from a balloon. If as individuals we would seek the world's surprises it must be by the inner way. When we change a habit, when we start a fresh study, when we take on a new service, when we open a

hitherto untouched side of our nature to the free play of God's Spirit, we shall find ourselves in a new world. Life, as Madame Swetchine says, consists mainly of what we put into it. Natures that by constant endeavour and aspiration preserve their freshness, find an intoxication in every fresh dawn. To them, happy souls, is it given—

> To see a world in a grain of sand,
> And a heaven in a wild flower;
> Hold infinity in the palm of the hand,
> And eternity in an hour.

They have learned Emerson's lesson, that every day is the best day in the year.

That, too, is a poor life which, in the retrospect, does not abound in reverent wonder at the Divine goodness in the whole ordering of it. It is a fine observation of Ritschl that each man's belief in a personal Providence arises out of his own experience of God's leading. Stevenson found it hard to forgive God for the sufferings of others, but melted at the thought of His fatherly dealing with himself. And yet what a sufferer was he! It is the marvellous history of that hidden Love toward us in the past that heartens us for the future. When we steer towards some menacing fate that

fronts us we may meet it without fear. Its utmost shock will be a surprise of grace.

That is what will happen to us in death. Dying will not hurt us. Sir James Paget said that he had scarce known a patient who, when the end came, regarded it with fear, or with aversion. He believed, indeed, that it had its own pleasure, as has every other physical function. It was said of Bushnell that, "Even his dying was play to him." And why not? We agree with Erasmus that "no man can die badly who has lived well." And all that we have experienced in this world, the wonder of it, its deliverances, its trainings, its thousand gracious interpositions, lead us in our turn to the saint's trust of every age, that our passing hence will be to encounter the grandest and most blessed surprise of all.

XXXIV.

Life's Exchange System.

The world has abundance of written creeds, but it is the unwritten ones that really count. Each man carries his own. After a certain number of years on this planet we most of us gain a conception of life which becomes henceforth our working belief. Part of it inherited, and part of it home made, the whole gets shape and colour from our special experience. This private creed of the modern man differs often from the Catechism as much in what it contains as in what it leaves out. It is strange that theology should have failed so signally in furnishing the really vital formulas. The man in the street if asked for his idea of life, instead of quoting the Thirty-nine Articles, is more likely to turn to the utterance of some rank outsider. How immense, for instance, the vogue of Huxley's famous simile of a game of chess, where man is pitted against an unseen player, inexorably just,

demanding strict adherence to the rules, allowing no move back, awarding full recognition to skill and care, but meeting ignorance and negligence with certain overthrow!

And yet the illustration was a poor one. It is not true. At least not true enough, not *la Verité vraie.* In chess the win of the one party is the loss of the other, unless the game is drawn, when neither has any advantage. We refuse to accept any such result as the summing-up of life. Far nearer to the fact, surely, is the conception of it as a commerce, a system of exchanges. In a true commerce both sides win. Buyer and seller, the one who delivers and the one who receives, are alike benefited, and the series of transactions works for the individual and the general enrichment. The facts are certainly more solidly behind this view than that of the chess game. There are enough of them to permit us to say that, in the long process of the years, life's exchange system has wrought, not for a win at the price of an equivalent loss, but for a steady gain all round.

But we are anticipating. Our formula has not yet justified itself. Is it allowable to speak of the universe as summed up in an

exchange system? It would be presumption, indeed, to use the phrase as a complete explanation of the Whole to which we belong. But it may fairly be said to contain a great deal of it. For one thing, inanimate nature is, as we see, a perpetual commerce. Everything changes into everything else. Force is Protean. The same energy becomes in turn heat, light, electricity, motion. The chemical elements rush into continual new combinations. There is no such thing in this sphere as the solid and the immutable. The "everlasting hills" are none of them everlasting. The Matterhorn, as Tyndall said, is in ruins. Snowdon was once probably twenty thousand feet high. Its *débris* is scattered to-day over a dozen counties. The history of a planet is of an unceasing transformation, from moment to moment, and from æon to æon, until the fire mist from which it sprang resolves itself once more into the central heat.

It is, however, when we come to the plane of human affairs that our formula reveals its chief contents. And here it is not so much the mere process of change, though that bulks largely enough, as the give and take in it, the sheer barter element, that most strikes us.

Nature sits at her seat of custom and drives her bargains with an unfailing zest. Her weights and scales, her currency and values vary immensely as we mount to life's higher spheres, taking on, as we near the summits, a fineness, a quality of the ethereal, which baffle our own calculations. But from bottom to top there seems ever the rule of a *quid pro quo*, of a something for something, and never of a something for nothing.

So strict is her rule of payment here that it obtains rigidly in directions where Optimism would have asked for relaxation. She allows no advance without a seeming loss. The step forward must pay toll. Civilisation gives us watches and roads, but robs us of the savage's intuition of the time, and his unerring trail through the forest. We build towns and forfeit the countryman's virility. We reach our era of peace and lose the heroic virtues of the old war time. One revolts against Mark Pattison's dictum that "a time of peace and security inevitably tends to foster an umbratile and academic science; curiosity is withdrawn from the momentous questions which have interest only for noble souls," but one is unable to contradict it. Men win what seems mental

freedom, and often enough pay for it in moral energy. "Only think," says Vinet, "of France! So much liberty and no beliefs!" What a price for a supposed intellectual enlargement that which Clough expresses in his agnostic days:

> We are most hopeless who had once most hope
> And most beliefless that had most believed!

England could not get her Reformation even without paying over what seemed a large part of her moral assets. Froude's picture of the position under the Somerset protectorate is terrible, yet hardly exaggerated. "Hospitals were gone, schools broken up, almshouses swept away . . . and the poor, smarting with rage and suffering, and seeing piety, honesty, duty trampled under foot by their superiors, were sinking into savages."

This particular ledger of nature offers material that, it must be confessed, is sufficiently confusing to the moral sense. We have to leave it with the feeling that our knowledge of the accounts here is not sufficient to permit of our striking a balance. There are other volumes in which we can see

our way better. Weighted with immeasurable significance are, for instance, the facts we come across relating to the exchanges between man's visibles and invisibles. The world's history is largely one of this incessantly transacted human barter of the seen for the unseen, or of the unseen for the seen. We get glimpses also of the results, though they are but glimpses. From the beginning men have revolted against the system which demands that we should give up one thing to get another, and have asked why we cannot have both. How true to the heart of all time is this lament of an old thirteenth-century writer: "But no advice was I able to obtain how one should appropriate to himself three things in order to possess the fulness of his powers. Two of these things are honour and wealth. . . . The third is God's grace, worth more than the other two." He wants all three, but goes on to complain that he cannot find out how they can be all combined in a single life.

Pathetic bewilderment of each human soul, that from the beginning it is besieged by the rival claimants, with their cry of "Choose!" No line can we conceivably follow but it

involves the giving up of others that seem, as we leave them, so desirable. To energise is to forfeit quietude; in society we lose contemplation; in the city's gaiety we have missed the country's charm. At every step we pay. Nothing is given; all is bought. The Great Temptation is strictly on these lines. "All the kingdoms of this world will I give thee if . . ." and the price is named. A man gains a million and finds himself inwardly beggared. The mischief here is that men can reckon and put into exact figures the coarse visibles that entice them, while for the final treasures they give in exchange they have no calculus. There is no harm in a man's desire to be rich if only he will define properly. To be rich is ultimately a consciousness. One man is ten times more alive than another, at a height ten times the height of another. That is being rich. "Give me health and a day," says Emerson, "and I will laugh to scorn the pomp of emperors." Pagan Horace approaches the truth in his

> Cur valle permutem Sabina
> Divitias operosiores?

To exchange the quiet of his Sabine valley,

with its life of poetic contemplation, for the fevered rush for gold was to exact too hard a bargain. How much of life's highest range had been forfeited to make possible that inscription on the monument of Sardanapalus: "Eat, drink and (sexually) love, for all else is but little worth!"

The bartering of invisible for lower values, and its inevitable life impoverishment, which makes up so much of the human story, serves, however, to set off the more vividly the peculiar and supernatural splendour which attaches to the opposite form of commerce. "Something divine," to use the words of Aristides, is surely mingled with a humanity that has made such ventures of faith, such offerings of visibles for invisibles as are on record. What was the inward reckoning, what the uncountable coin paid over to the man's spirit which made a Tyndale satisfied to devote his splendid abilities to a task which he was beforehand convinced was to bring him, not riches nor honours, but torture and the stake! What motive, what inner force is this that sets a man on a work by which we, without paying him a penny, obtain our English Bible, while he for reward gets long lodging in that dismal Belgian dungeon

where he sits through the cold winter nights shivering in the dark, until its door opens to his executioners! Who shall say that a race whose annals contain such stories is born to commonplace destinies? The prophets and martyrs know better. The path they tread, and the goods they offer and receive hint at transactions of the soul, in its commerce with the Infinite, which make the bargains of Wall Street or our Capel Court the mere hucksterings of the gutter.

And this leads us to a question in which all that has gone before is summed up. What is the ultimate nature of life's exchange system? We have insisted that Nature keeps tally and demands payment for everything she offers us. But is that the final word on the subject? No. When we get to the matter's deepest heart we find the word there is not debt but grace. Nature's business habits, her exactions, her demand always of a something for something, are only a *modus operandi* which veils a deep mystery of Good that lies behind. The payment got out of us is really a gift to us, and one of the most precious. Listen here to the confession of a modern spirit, one of our most gifted and representative. Robert Louis

Stevenson has laid bare the innermost of the thing in this marvellous utterance of his own experience: "But indeed with the passing of the years, the decay of strength, the loss of all my old, active and personal habits, there grows more and more upon me that belief in the kindness of the scheme of things, and the goodness of our veiled God, which is an excellent and pacifying compensation." Nature's hard bargaining with her suffering son had let him, the one-time sceptic, into the secret of a boundless Love!

And must we not include death itself, that *ultima linea rerum* of the ancients, as only a part of "Life's Exchange System"? Science joins religion in ignoring the old "ultimate boundaries." Seeming destructions are in its view only new beginnings. It was both science and Christianity which mingled in the sentiment of Wordsworth when, as Aubrey de Vere records, he "frequently spoke of death as if it were the taking of a degree in the university of life." We shall have come well out of our life commerce if, as the account draws near its close, the give and take, the gain and loss, have left for final result the full assurance of this great Christian hope; if we are in the company of

those to whom apply the noble words of our Edmund Waller:

> The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
> Lets in new light through chinks that time has made;
> Stronger by weakness, wiser men become
> As they draw near to their eternal home.

XXXV.

The Spiritual in Teaching.

TEACHING is often thought of as a class function, but it is vastly more than that. When we have reckoned up the twenty thousand odd Anglican clergy, the yet greater array of Nonconforming ministers, and the vast host of public instructors, who in all spheres, from the infant class to the University lecture-hall, are drilling the nation's youth, we have only touched the fringe of our national army of teachers. Artists, poets, statesmen, physicians, are all in it; so is every business man; so, *par excellence*, is every father and mother. The teaching comes by word and deed, and by things that are beyond either. For, in addition to what we are specifically doing in our trade or calling, we are all in our daily habits and conversation exhibiting a certain philosophy of life, a mode of regarding the universe and the human relation to it, which makes us, whether we

recognise the fact or not, the exponents of a doctrine.

Looking over the immense and wonderfully varied fields of human activity we discern in them all, we say, a teaching, and the question now is as to the relative value of this teaching. What we want here to point out is that in all these departments, however seemingly remote from one another, the quality of the work depends on the presence or absence of one element. In painter or politician, in architect or business man, in parent, schoolmaster or preacher, the note which Nature demands, and which will decide their real worth, is the note of the spiritual.

By the note of the spiritual we mean the recognition, back of every form of living and working, of an Unseen Holy, of a Divine and Infinite Purity, Beauty and Love, by which these several activities are to be inspired, and to which they are always to look for final appraisement. This view of things is one against which, in different quarters, very vigorous revolts have been made; but the issue of those revolts confirms the fact that the universe will tolerate no other. In art we have seen a fleshly school; in literature a

realism which boasts of describing the naked fact with no ideal behind it; in public affairs there have been men who have formed themselves on Machiavelli. These attempts are sometimes described as wicked; it would be much better to call them mediocre. A really great nature can never endure itself in such conditions. The proof is when we see such a nature and study what it instinctively seeks for and founds itself upon. Arnold was reverenced at Rugby not for his specialty in teaching classics or history, excellent though that was; his unique hold on English young manhood lay in something outside text-books. It lay in character, and the character, again, rested on a sacred mystery behind. And there is no schoolmaster worth his salt of whom a similar thing may not be said.

A great painter puts all this on his canvas. To gain mastery of form and colour is only the alphabet of his work. The task which fires his soul is that of making "the light that never was on sea or shore" to stream through a landscape or to inspire a countenance. So when men carve or build. It is not only in a St. Mark's at Venice, where the whole New

Testament has been translated into marble, that architecture represents the spiritual idea. There is no structure, ancient or modern, as our Ruskin has magnificently shown, but either defies it or does it homage. And if, in public affairs, we note the career of politicians, statesmen, or rulers, it will be found, without exception, that, in the long run the men who really impress their fellows, and whose work endures, are citizens of the Unseen. Whether it is a king like Alfred, or a revolutionary like Mazzini, or a middle-class Radical like Bright, their power lies here.

What we want now, however, specially to deal with is the place of the spiritual in the teaching more definitely recognised as religious. An Italian ex-priest and professor, the Abbé Casamichela, who became a convert to Protestantism, and so knew both sides, said that while Rome hid behind her gorgeous externality a miserable poverty of thought, Protestantism made up for its simplicity of external worship by a glorious affluence of ideas. The antithesis is flattering to Protestantism, but needs to be taken with a certain reserve. Affluence of ideas is an excellent thing in religion, but it is not the only nor,

indeed, the highest thing. The teacher's power here will depend on something more even than his intellectual range, and that is his relation to the spiritual world. An Indian sage gives us the whole secret in his saying that "the best preacher is the man who has attained a true liberation of soul." In Laurence Oliphant's phrase he is one who "has lived the life."

It is curious, in this connection, to see the efforts men make after originality in religious teaching. They annex foreign languages and literatures, look up all manner of obscure subjects, cultivate at times the wildest phantasies in the frantic endeavour to find something new. They forget that the only true and healthy originality is that which comes from the constant growth of their own soul. If we want our "old things" to become "new" the method is to see them from the variant standpoint of an ever-deepening life. And this deepening will come by practice, by action, more even than by study. When a man knows a religious truth simply as a doctrine he will preach it in a certain way, probably a very dry way. When he has ventured something on it; lived with it; suffered over it; triumphed in it,

he will preach it in a very different way. The teacher becomes inexhaustible by putting himself thus in right relation in his inner world; by going ever deeper into it, not speculatively, but actually, and offering always what he finds.

Such a man discovers that the false in teaching lies not so much in its wrong relation to outside fact as in its wrong relation to his own spirit. The heresy of heresies is to proclaim and urge upon others what we ourselves have not realised. On our soul's peril let us not talk of a thing we have not lived. Rather let there always be more lived than we can utter. Montaigne has a passage somewhere in which he expresses his scorn for Cicero and Pliny for seeking glory by the mere style of their writing and speaking. Cæsar and Xenophon, he says, would never have written of their actions had they not felt that the actions in themselves were greater than their words. Which reminds us of what Plutarch so finely says of Cæsar, that "his ambition was nothing but a jealousy of himself, a contest with himself, as if it had been with some other man, to make his future achievements outshine the past." The ambition here was not on the highest plane, but the principle is one for us all. There is no

way of retaining freshness as a teacher but by a life which, in its ever-increasing possession of the spiritual world, continually outshines the past.

And it is a deepening inner life that constitutes the best of all securities for a sound doctrine. As we become surer of God and more acclimatised in His truth, holiness and love, we can look upon the bewilderments of dogmatic utterance from a very safe standpoint. Not that we are going to be infallible. We may make abundance of mistakes; only, as Joubert says, "there are some minds which arrive at error by all truths; and others which arrive at great truths by all errors." The true soul will be wrong often enough in its arguments, but right in its conclusions. A teacher, for instance, may state the Christian doctrine of the Atonement in a way which, from the philosophic or the forensic or the scientific standpoints, may be riddled with objections. But if he has stated it so that men have gone away with a new hatred of sin and passion for holiness; with a deeper insight into the love of God, and his law of sacrifice; and with a fresh great hope for the utter redemption of this sorrowful world; we say that whatever the

faults and ragged edges of his theory, as a religious teacher he has not gone far wrong. If we are in right relation with Eternal Love, Truth and Righteousness, we shall steer our way through doctrines without fear of shipwreck.

Such teachers will find the movement of the modern world as full of spiritual meanings as the old allegorists did the stories of Job and of Jacob. That line of the German Claudius which so shocked Dr. Pusey—

> Es kam mir ein Gedank von ohngefähr
> So sprach' ich wenn ich Christus wär,

in this view seems not at all shocking. They realise that they are interpreting the world of to-day on the lines of the Christ-spirit, and in their measure, are speaking of it as He would were He here.

To sum up. Our work and life form a teaching the value of which depends on our relation to the spiritual world. Unless we and our work are rooted there, we and it are as a bubble that breaks on the passing wave. In religion we can teach nothing effectively that we have not first lived. Our measure as teachers will be in the measure of our experi-

ences. We can give only of what we have received, and we are receptive only as we practise inner obedience. The men who are mighty in this field are those whose height of attainment gives a quality of its own to the words they use, who use speech as a channel along which flow influences that no words can translate.

XXXVI.

Behind the Veil.

HUMANITY, says Comte, consists more of the dead than of the living. We who are now here are the veriest fragment of those who have looked upon the sun. Life is a glimpse and a vanishing. The crowd that rolls in and out of London every day is as great this year as last, but its constituents have altered. Vast gaps would yawn in it were it not for fresh recruits. *Uno avulso non deficit alter.* The newcomer fills the vacant place. But the vanished ones, what of them? They were so completely one with us, so much at home in our midst. Their laughter is still in our ears, the light in their eye haunts us. They were more to us than all the world, and now . . . ! The journals are full of news, but of these there is no word. The earth is a Babel of noises, but on this one side the silence is absolute. Our planet rolls in space from end to end of its vast orbit; the solar system itself

is sweeping, with us in it, toward an unknown bourne, but never are we carried within sight of that undiscovered country into which our beloved have passed. How well the heavens keep their secret! No, it is not the world's uproar that plays havoc with our nerves. It is its maddening silence, where we pant to hear a voice.

There is no subject on which the teacher of to-day, who is supposed to have any message for his fellows, is more eagerly questioned than this, of what, for us and ours, lies behind the veil. We all have such heavy stakes in this venture. If we have reached the middle age, half our friends are already over the border, and in a few years their lot, whatever it is, will be ours. What is the outlook? Is there any new light on this theme? In one respect we note a striking change of position in the educated mind of to-day. If it has not discovered any fresh ground for belief, it has very clearly recognised the futility of what, not so long ago, were regarded as very excellent reasons for disbelief. We have in view all that has been said on the negative side, from Lucretius to Schopenhauer, and it is surprising how little it amounts to. The French encyclo-

pædists imagined they had settled the question. Their arguments to us are simply amusing. We turn, for instance, to Diderot's *Entretien d'un Philosophe*, and find our philosopher talking as follows: "If you can believe in sight without eyes, in hearing without ears, in thinking without a head, if you could love without a heart, feel without senses, exist when you are nowhere and be something without extension and place, then we might indulge this hope of a future life." Could a more parochial view of things be imagined than this? Spinoza might have taught our Diderot better. Anyone with the smallest modicum of philosophic imagination could picture for himself beings in other spheres to whom the connection of thinking *with* a brain would be as impossible as that of thinking without one appeared to the encyclopædist.

The whole negative argument from materialism, is, in fact, out of date. We are beginning to realise that the problem of a life to come is involved in a new way with the problem of the life that is. "Behind the veil" relates to "now" as much as to "then." To the instructed eye the material world by which we are encompassed is itself a veil, from behind

which a partially hidden reality dimly shows. Plato's enigmatic utterance about matter, ὕλη ἀληθινόν ψευδος "matter the true falsity," stands here for us as the shadow of a truth. What we think we know of the visible world is largely a projected image of ourselves. The "thing in itself" behind the show our senses create for us is an unsolved riddle. The supposition that the universe amounts to just what our five senses report would be a philosophy worthy of Bumbledom. For ought we know a thousand new senses might be created in us, and each find outside its answering world. And the senses we have stop short on a track they have not half traversed. There are colour and sound vibrations going on perpetually around us of which our eyes and ears report nothing. What, on the one side, lies beyond the millions of stars revealed by our telescopes, and, on the other, beyond the minutest visible open to our microscopes? We are left without a guess. All we know is that we are in the midst of a system of infinite life and potency, where every advance of our powers of perception reveals new depths and possibilities of being. The veil that hides things from us is not death. It is our own limitations.

The sense of the visible as only the shadow of a greater reality behind comes with more difficulty to some races than to others. The Western peoples are not specially gifted on this side. Theirs has been largely a material mission. To root themselves solidly on the planet, to learn its surface laws, to enrich themselves by the clever manipulation of its forces, this has been the Western function. The East gained an earlier sense of what lay beneath. The world's great religions are Oriental. Egypt lived thousands of years before Christ in the acutest perception of an invisible world. In its Vedanta philosophy India also, in a far antiquity, beheld the world as phenomenal, resting on a Divine which alone was real, declaring man's hold on immortality to be in the surrender of what in him was earthly and transitory. But no race of man, whether in East or West, is permitted to escape this discipline. Sooner or later, after our first intoxicating experience of the visible, does it dawn upon us that all this is only a screen. The very senses that linked us at first so firmly to earth turn traitor to it later, and cry "illusion!" The world is in this respect a Church, whose teaching and ritual none may

evade. As friend after friend departs, and our own years tell their story, life becomes more and more a vast expectation, a wait till the curtain shall be raised. That humanity, spite of itself, is drilled always into this attitude is, for those who see any purpose or coherence in life, a sufficient hint of what is yet to come.

While these thoughts have been with humanity, as it seems, almost from the beginning, there are considerations belonging specially to our own time which point all in the same direction. Evolution, for instance, gives us life as a perpetual ascent. Each grade of being takes in all that is beneath it, with something of its own added. Man, as we know him, sums up in himself the laws and forces of inorganic matter, the vital principles of vegetable and animal life, together with a whole higher world of his own. His organism, by its subtle magic, transmutes air and water, vegetable and animal, into its own superior form. Why should not this ascent continue? Why should not the inner economy of the human spirit contain, in its turn, a principle by virtue of which the essentials of the personal human life shall be lifted to a yet higher term, in a yet higher sphere? The argument gathers weight

in proportion to the values which are being dealt with. If matter, as we now know, is indestructible, preserving its being through infinite changes of form, what is there in the nature of things to forbid our belief that its nobler partners, spirit and personality, are no exceptions to this rule? And when to all this we add the considerations opened by the later evolutionary researches, showing as they do that the lower organisms are practically immortal; that death has come in as part of the struggle towards a higher structure—come in, that is, not as the lord and tyrant of life, but as a fellow-labourer working towards its furtherance—we realise how the evidence accumulates which bids us look for higher fruitions, as well as for the solution of our enigmas, "Behind the Veil."

There is one side of this theme which we hesitate to touch. The subject of spiritual communications from the unseen has been too often the hunting-ground of the religious adventurer, of those who exploit the human yearning for purposes of their own. The world seems hardly yet sufficiently trained, either scientifically or morally, for a safe exploration of this enchanted land. Yet things from this

side have swum into human ken which refuse to be ignored. More and more are they arresting the attention of the leading minds. It was Kant who said of ghostly appearances: "For my part, ignorant as I am of the way in which the human spirit enters the world and the ways in which it goes out of it, I dare not deny the truth of many of such narratives." The late Professor Sidgwick held that the evidence of the apparition of persons at the point of death to others at a distance amounted to scientific proof. On the question of the actual communication between spirits of the departed and those now living, the result of the researches of a London committee of eminent men of all schools of thought, appointed some years ago for this purpose, was sufficiently suggestive. Its finding, in substance, was that communications were made which could only be accounted for on the supposition of an invisible personal agency; but that this agency, in the majority of instances, seemed in point of intelligence to be below the normal human level. The plain inference from this would seem surely to be, that the souls we have known and loved when disengaged from the body enter upon spheres of being too refined and too remote to be

cognised by our mortal sense, and that those within reach are only inferior or degraded types.

What we have mainly to note is that life's silences and separations are a purposed discipline. The pains here are the spirit's "growng pains." The heavens are mute, not because there is nothing to say, but because the time is not yet. Meantime our business is to develop more and more that spiritual sense which gives us, here and now, the vision of life in its wholeness. "Heard you not that sweet melodious music?" said Jacob Behmen to his son, when dying at Gorlitz. There is a more than mortal music already audible to attuned ears. The elect souls are already free of the world behind the veil. They are on pilgrimage towards that fatherland. "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. . . . But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly."

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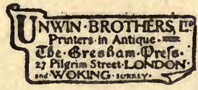
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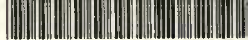
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