

PILGRIMS IN THE REGION OF FAITH

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Pilgrims in the region of  
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PILGRIMS  
*In the Region of Faith*

AMIEL TOLSTOY  
PATER NEWMAN

*A Thesis with Illustrations*

by

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ROBERT BROWNING IN MATTERS OF FAITH"



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MY MOTHER



PILGRIMS

*In the Region of Faith*



## *Preface*

IT was one of the happy surmises of simpler days—a surmise which received much support in well-tested facts—that, by the benign appointment of God, wherever poisonous plants were to be found ready to deceive the unwary, or creeping things with poison in their tongues, there also were to be found the very herbs and balms which would grapple with the element of death in them; that the soil which bore the bane, nourished the antidote.

\* \* \* \*

I am quite sure that it is true wisdom and the one effective method to answer an

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age out of its own mouth. God hath not left Himself without witness, and least of all in the century which has just closed, the century on whose spiritual products we are living.

One proof that an Invincible Mind is dealing with us for our well-being is that every powerful mood which invades or infects an age has already a touch of its own opposite: that what is all the fashion is already nigh unto perishing: that reactions, relentings, protests do arise out of the unplumbed depths of the soul of man.

We are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. As often as we forget that this is our predestined lot—source at once of our grandeur and gloom, and think to settle down upon some solving *word* as though it were final—and this either on the right hand (as did Newman), or on the left (as do many)—forthwith things begin to gather within us and about us which make us unhappy or afraid, and we rise again, because we must, and strike our tents and pursue

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our further way. It is one mark of the people of God that, like Abraham and Isaac and the children of promise, they “dwell in tabernacles,” in temporary habitations of the Spirit, in places wherein to rest for a time, wherein to lose the immediate strain, wherein to await the call of God to the next stage and venture of the Spirit.

\* \* \* \*

The *substance* of what is here given on “Newman” appeared in the first issue of *The Union Magazine*. In what I have written on that great and good man I detect a tone of controversy which I should have avoided if I had known how to write differently and yet to be quite faithful to myself. F. D. Maurice characterised the Tractarian atmosphere as that of a “charmed dungeon.” I acknowledge the “charm”—few days of my life pass without some contact with Newman; but I see the “dungeon,” and have written as I have written. Newman is one of those with

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whom one must agree or disagree with a certain violence.

He's sweetest friend, or hardest foe  
Best angel or worst devil ;  
I either hate or—love him so,  
I can't be merely civil.

J. A. H.

JESMOND, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE,  
*April, 1906.*

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“Inexplicable, in a sense, as man's *personal agency* is—nay, the one perpetual miracle—it is nevertheless our surest datum, and our clue to the mystery of existence.”

“It is the pressure of the answer that puts the question.”

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PIERRE LOTI, in the "Iceland Fisherman," describes a storm in the Arctic seas which caught a Breton fishing-boat. The hero of the book—the man with whom he is dealing—was at the wheel, and Loti sets forth the agitations of his soul, as, rising from the depths in him, they came one after another into his face. At the outset, when the storm seemed to be but one of many, an emergency for which ordinary prudence and daring would serve, the man at the wheel showed no alarm—jested even, and that roughly, with his fellows, like youth rejoicing in that element of contradiction in which it hails its task.

As the storm thickened and revealed itself as no ordinary affair, the man held his peace, except in moments when strange and senseless oaths escaped him.

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As the terror of the deep began to settle upon him, his face became fixed and unnatural, like the face of a poor, trapped beast.

As the night gathered round, bringing no abatement of the elements, giving to every horror another turn of the screw, as the toiling boat, burdened with water, no longer rode upon the waves, but sagged and struggled in the troughs, like one who knows that the day is lost, the man, now frozen to the wheel, began wildly and without consciousness to recite his prayers.

At the last, when all indeed was lost, when, so to say, there was no further use for a man's ordinary faculties, that face, white, hard, tense before, seemed at one definite moment to kindle and soften as though the bitterness of death was past. In place of the terror of the deep, there seemed to have come the spirit of a great contentment; instead of conflict and cursing and despair, the holy light of some difficult but accomplished reconciliation.

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And with the ancient human cry upon his lips—wherein surely we are not deceived, else all is vain—“Lord, have mercy upon me,” “Lord, receive my spirit,” Jan went down into the depths.

“Thy way is in the sea, and Thy paths in the great waters!”

Differing greatly in tradition, in temperament, in training, as do these four Pilgrims who are considered in the following pages, they arrived at the point which constituted the crisis for each of them by the force of what were essentially the same principles.

In every case pure reason had brought them, or was threatening to bring them, to a standstill; and they began to resume an energetic and harmonious life, only after they had taken what, for each of them at that moment, was a leap in the dark. This leap they took, not because it was the evident way of *truth* for them—of that they could not speak—but because it was *the one way of life*. They had arrived at a

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lonely point in their thinking, where, as it seemed to them, two alternatives were alone intellectually possible—the interpretation of things which implied God, and the interpretation which, however men might cover the bleakness of it with words, involved the denial of God. Of these two alternatives which seemed intellectually competent, one only, the interpretation of faith, was possible on the moral plane. From the other they simply *shuddered*. Now in these deep matters, wherein a man is dealing with himself in an irrevocable way, *a shudder is an argument*.

They were saved when they saw clearly, so clearly that the insight had something of the constraint of a word spoken to them by the Author of their being, that there is something in man more primitive than reason, and at the last more authoritative, viz., the instinct to live, and when they permitted that elementary force, the force of life itself to carry them round the difficult *dead-centre*. One might, indeed, pur-

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sue the analogy of the *dead-centre* and the *fly-wheel*, discovering many a quite fair and fruitful parallel. Particularly this: it was no more intended that we should live without the momentum of feeling and desire and faith, without the inertia of a long established and actual world, than that an engine which was built to run with a fly-wheel, and has hitherto run with a fly-wheel, should continue to run after the fly-wheel had been detached.

As for Amiel, he did not take that leap in the dark which for him also was the strait gate unto life. He would not permit life to have its generous way with him. He withstood the daring of his own soul. That is the pathos of his story, as he himself was aware. He knew that it was just that which was wanting in him, which was essential to every man who would be himself.

We live by faith; and the event of our time in the region of pure thought is that men are now to be found who are not

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ashamed to say so, and to defend the life of faith as the only conceivable and rational way.

It may be true that no intellectual justification of a quite coercive and overwhelming force, no justification in terms of reason in the narrow sense, can be given for the very things by which we live. But we are acting in a becoming and necessary way when we behave handsomely along the line of such evidence as we have, though we go beyond the evidence itself. In short, we do well to *believe* in the line of our elementary needs. Certainly, in the dizzy moments when only two ways lie before us, and the next step must have something in it which shall be irrevocable, it is incumbent upon a rational being to take that step which leads unto life.

So long as we are here in this world there will always be a gap between the things of faith and the things of sight; but it would help a great many people to come to peace with themselves, and to settle

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down to some good purpose in this life, if it could be brought home to them once for all that that gap in the evidence will not be filled up in the experience of any one, *until he puts himself into it.*

In the building of the bridge across the Forth, and near to its completion, a day arrived when the two great arms of the central span approached one another, until they almost met over the abyss. A space however still remained; though even at that stage it was apparent that the bridge was intended to be *one*,—all the labor from the north side to find its complement and justification in all the labor from the south side. That narrow gulf was not spanned, the ideal was not fulfilled, the thing did not become what all the time it was seeking to be, until into the blank interval the workmen built the platform on which at the very moment they were standing—the platform which had supported them from the beginning, the platform on which they had done all their work from its foundations in the sea!

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Between faith and sight, between the seen and the unseen, between the evidence for anything which is purely good and the corroboration, there will always be an unbridged space, a cleft, a halting on the one side and on the other, everything indeed recommending that the breach be closed in order that we may proceed as men with our real business in the world. But nothing will serve to bring the two together except that a man put himself into the breach. Once more, we live by faith; what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

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“Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living and your belief will help to create the fact. The scientific proof that we are right may not be clear before the day of judgment is reached. But the faithful fighters of this hour, or the beings that then and there represent them, may then turn to the faint-hearted who here decline to go on, with words like those with which Henry IV. greeted the tardy Crillon after a great victory had been gained: ‘Go and hang yourself, brave Crillon, we fought at Arques and you were not there.’”

“What makes a man is the sense that he has committed himself.”

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IN Dante's "Inferno" the way to Hell proper lies through the Stygian Mere. In the city of Dis, which forms the vestibule to Hell proper, just within its gates, the souls of those who in this life denied the essential things of faith, endure eternally the fruits of their choice. The point is that, according to this infallible wizard of the soul, who never uses an idle word, doubt or denial of God is a condition which men come to as the result of the mismanagement of their own hearts, as the result in one way or another of some private moral failure. In that dreary Stygian marsh, which in Dante's scheme leads to the abode of the doubters, the souls of *the sullen* lie buried in the clammy ooze. These are they who in this present life were guilty of the sin of sadness. They

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permitted a certain gloom to hang like lazy smoke about their hearts. They invited the sense of discouragement to stay with them. They lingered upon their own private reasons for being sad, and thus during their lifetime dwelt in an atmosphere of lament and dimness. They would not stir up their souls to take hold on God. They would not permit the fresh air of the morning, the glorious light of the sun, to have its generous way with them, to lead them out into manly and cheerful acts. They would not assert themselves and claim God against the thralldom of the disabling gloom. Therefore Dante convicts them of sloth. Beyond these, in that Inferno of his, which is simply the subterranean chambers of the soul thrown upon a screen, Dante, I repeat, places the doubters, the deniers, next to the slothful, on the side farther from the light, nearer to the uttermost state of darkness. In his view, that is to say once again, doubt or denial may creep upon the human soul and harden

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over it like a crust, not so much in consequence of this or that particular incident in the man's intellectual life, but as a last result of his permitting the disheartening things of human experience to weigh unduly upon him, to dwell habitually with him. According to Dante one may sink into an invincible attitude of doubt or denial, by simply encouraging within oneself the sad or dismal view of things, by refusing to entertain the evidence on the other side, giving it equal weight: nothing worse than that. But there is not anything which *could* be worse for beings such as we are, who have been sent into the world, not to hesitate about things, but to live our life once for all, with all our strength.

When all is said, there you have Amiel's story, with something of injustice indeed, the injustice which we always perpetrate when we try to find in the warm and various life of any man the mere illustration of a principle. But on his own con-

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fession, repeated again and again, that was Amiel's malady, his sin, in Dante's bolder phrase.

Henri Frédéric Amiel was born at Geneva in September, 1821. He belonged to one of the families who had fled to Geneva after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He inherited therefore the Protestant and Calvinistic strain. In our day, when we have accepted, it may be, even too solemnly, the doctrine of heredity, the circumstance that Amiel came of such a stock is not to be neglected. It explains something in him which otherwise it would be hard to account for. Whatever charges may be brought against Calvinism, one thing can never be denied to it—it brought men and left them face to face with God. But in bringing a man face to face with God you emphasize and define his own personality, so that henceforth he sees himself alone, with a certain majesty of behaviour as proper to him and incumbent upon him. Whosoever has been born of

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that line will never be able, in spite of the moral confusion which enlightenment may introduce into his later life, to rid himself of the idea that in the universe he stands alone, distinct to himself and to God, responsible and free. Amiel was never able, at heart he was not disposed, to lose entirely this sense of the reality of the human personality. He was a Hegelian with a difference. He never found solace in any philosophical view which threatened to extinguish the individual in the play of mighty and universal forces. He would speak of sin, and saw no prospect of better things for the world except by the moral regeneration of individuals.

Amiel was left an orphan at the age of twelve, and this circumstance doubtless helped to confirm that habit of solitariness which became at once the source of his greatness, and, when all is said, of his failure. There were few events in his life. He was known with any degree of intimacy only to a small circle of friends. Those

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friends, knowing the range and depth of Amiel's culture, were always in expectation that one day he would give to the world some really great work. But as the years passed and no great work was forthcoming, they became impatient, and, it would appear, did not hide from their friend that they considered him wanting in energy. He was always industrious, exacting of himself, and yet so far as results showed all to little purpose.

"We could not understand," says Scherer, "how it was a man so richly gifted produced nothing, or only trivialities."

At the age of twenty-one Amiel went to Germany for purposes of study. He remained there seven years. They were, by his own statement, the happiest of his life. At that time Germany seemed to have a monopoly of the world's first-rate minds, quite indisputably of the world's first-rate thinkers. Looking upon those days from this distance of time, what an outbreak of the soul, of the spiritual, it

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was! What boldness, what imagination, thought losing itself in poetry, reason hovering on the edge of dreams! This atmosphere penetrated Amiel, for he was by temperament predestined to it. On returning to Geneva he was appointed to the Chair of *Æsthetics* at the University, and five years later became Professor of Moral Philosophy. Once again he failed to realize the anticipations of those who knew his gifts. The fact was that Geneva, in those days of political stir and change, was no place for a man of Amiel's brooding disposition. He stood aloof from the enterprises that were on foot, and incurred the penalty—he was left alone. Yet all the while Amiel's was a nature which craved society, and needed the support of those who believed in him. But he was also one of those to whom friends must come, for he could not seek them. It is most likely that the people with whom he came into contact considered him a close person, who, it might be, secretly despised them all, who

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in any case was sufficient for himself; whereas, as we come to learn, he hungered for encouragement, for friends, for the presence of those who could understand him. He was at no time a strong man physically. Indeed, it puts us at the proper point of view for estimating Amiel, to remember at every stage that he was something of an invalid. His wisdom is the wisdom of those who are ailing. His wonderful outbursts of serenity and reconciliation with himself are the touching and pathetic recoveries of one who is never for one moment otherwise than fundamentally ill. He died in April, 1881.

We have passed thus hurriedly over the outward facts of Amiel's life for the reason that for our purpose those which we have alluded to are the salient ones. Further, Amiel's real history is the record of his opinions, his feelings and musings, his hopes, his misgivings, his haunting sense of defeat. "Let the living live," he wrote while he was still young, anticipating the

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event, "let the living live, and you gather together your thoughts, leave behind you a legacy of feelings and ideas; you will be most useful so."

It often happens that only when a man has died, and from the manner of his death, do we get that knowledge of him which enables us to do him justice. We blame a man for violence of temper, it may be,—and, when all is known, he may be to blame. But he comes to die. We learn the cause of his death—some affection of the heart—and immediately we see our old friend almost justified. Or we blame a man, and this brings us nearer to Amiel, for not doing work which we think he might do. We become impatient of him and pronounce him timid or lazy: but we learn at last, and when we can no longer ask his forgiveness, that he was so constituted, so limited by some malady which lay always in the background, ready to take advantage of him, that, on the whole, he did what he could.

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The story is told of a Scottish professor who called up a student to read and construe. "Hold your book in the other hand," said the professor. The student went on reading, apparently paying no heed. "Do you hear me, sir?" The student ceased reading, still holding the book as before. "Sir!" shouted the professor. Whereupon the student raised his other arm—from which the hand had been cut off! It is said that the professor rushed from his desk and, kneeling before the student, pleaded, "Will you ever be able to forgive me?"

Amiel died, having given nothing to the world in any way worthy of his peculiar powers, but he left behind him a work, which at once was the worthy labour of a lifetime, and at the same time goes far to justify his long delay. Amiel is so exclusively known by the "Journal" which he left behind him, which was published a year after his death, that when we use his name we mean his book. When we say Amiel

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we mean his "Journal," just as when we say Bunyan we mean the "Pilgrim's Progress," and when we say Augustine we mean the "Confessions."

When the "Journal" appeared, that happened which takes place when a new constellation floats into our sky. Those who are always on the lookout for any sincere treatment of life, hailed the new star, and communicated the discovery to one another and to the world; and soon it became common knowledge, amongst those at least for whom such souls as Amiel's signify, that a new light had taken up its abiding place in the firmament of confessional literature. Timid as Amiel was, he seems to have been confident that an honourable place would be found for his "Journal;" that it would find its way to certain hearts as all sincere words do.

It would be a pleasure to me to dwell upon some of the extraordinary beauties of Amiel's "Journal," its tenderness, its sorrow, and again, its knowledge, its critical

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value, its guidance in matters of art, of taste; its insight into those systems of thought which have influenced men and are still influencing us for good or evil; its wonderful power to detect and name the weakness which vitiates such systems. I should have liked, too, to dwell on its value as a mirror of the soul of man at this particular stage of time, of its value in helping us out with many an inarticulate trouble of our own; to repeat some of its so chaste and memorable sayings, prayers, cries. All this I must deny myself, and proceed, as I do now, to deal with him as a pilgrim in the things of faith.

The prevailing note in Amiel is one of sadness, depression, despair. We have here a man who knows everything, who can see the world with the eyes of everybody, who yet, and it may be in consequence, can do nothing with all his heart and with all his strength. From one point of view there is nothing different in his spiritual career from what is essential in

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the case of every typical man of the nineteenth century—from Goethe to Tolstoy. Here once more we have the story of a man equipped, presumably at the outset of his life, with that natural faith, so to call it, that light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world, which is the endowment of birth, or the gift of God, as you choose to define it. In his case we must allow indeed that this native zest for life was never very heroic or robust. But it was there, and in a certain dim way it survived even to the end. We see this man also encountering the spirit of inquiry, of criticism, tasting of the tree of knowledge. We see the inner ferment which that contact produces, the increasing sense of a contradiction within him, between his original faith and the world of fact and experience. We have seen, or we shall see, concerning certain typical men of his century, how in one way or another, that primitive faith emerged from the conflict, on the whole victorious, though not the

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same, and bearing many a mark. We have seen, or shall see, them one and all, letting go the faith by which they lived, only to take a deeper or a higher hold of it again. To change the metaphor, we see these typical men swept off their feet for a time, but at length learning to swim, learning to be at home and to be themselves in the perilous element, or, in the case of Newman, getting on to a vessel which happened to be moored near by. In Amiel the story does not move on to a crisis, and never attains to the deliverance and solid advance which come with a crisis. He broods, and broods, and dies brooding. He has not the courage either to deny or to believe ; he will not commit himself in any final way to faith or denial. He is too good a man to do without God: yet he knows too much, he thinks, to believe without misgiving in any defined apprehension of God.

Now can we account for this difference in the spiritual history of Amiel from what we find to be characteristic of other pil-

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grims of his century, who, on the whole, felt the same challenge to faith from the side of the world? I think we can; and it leads us directly to what I believe is the root of this whole matter.

In one of his earliest pieces of writing—a review from his hand when he was twenty-one years of age—Amiel already betrays a certain moral disposition, which he himself does not hesitate to call cowardice. He is writing about the Renaissance, about that immense wave of thought, of imagination, of all kinds of liberty and fruitfulness which swept over Europe in the Middle Ages. Everything that Amiel says about the results of that movement is quite true: the significant thing, the sad thing, is that at twenty-one he should have said it. At twenty-one, by the decree of God, we should all be omniscient, ready for anything hard and strange. It is true that the Renaissance unsettled the old sanctions for life, introduced disturbing and qualifying ideas, and that in the transition and

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anarchy which followed certain beautiful and established things were unseated and destroyed. But at twenty-one a man's eyes should rather be upon the compensations and advantages that come with change. He should—to confine ourselves for the moment to this matter of the Renaissance—have eyes only for the wealth in literature and art which that shaking revolution brought into being; for the pictures, for the poems, for the new stir and joy of life, for the new sense that the world was vaster than men had dreamed; for the spirit of prophecy, that there were Americas to be discovered, Americas beyond seas indeed, but Americas also, untraversed continents at home, and in the heart of man. An able youth of twenty-one should have had eyes only for such things. Now, as a matter of fact, how did Amiel write? “The Renaissance perhaps robbed us of more than it gave us.” Quite true: and if that were all or were exceptional, it would only mean a wonderful maturity

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of mind in one so young. It would mean, too, that Amiel was so true to his Calvinistic and Puritan strain, that in his view anything was had too dearly, which even for a day imperilled the holiness and chastity of the soul. But he continues: "There remains the question whether the greatest problems which have ever been guessed on earth had not better have remained buried in the brain which had found the key to them, and whether the deepest thinkers—those whose hand has been boldest in drawing aside the veil, and their eye keenest in fathoming the mystery beyond it—had not better, like the prophet of Ilion, have kept for Heaven, and Heaven only, secrets and mysteries which human tongue can not truly express nor human intelligence conceive." You have there an utterance which has parallels in Newman; and the root idea of it is a certain cowardice, a certain want of faith in the human enterprise, really a want of faith in God, who has laid down the conditions of life and of

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knowledge. What he says is virtually this: That since the instinct to inquire, to learn, to put questions, leads to changes and dislocations, which may bring trouble and moral peril to individuals or to a particular generation, it would be better if men were to stop thinking—if they were to that extent to mutilate themselves, so that we might all have peace. Now, a man with Newman's temperament could say that, and, having adopted it as a final principle, could find refuge in it, as he did. But Amiel was a child of the Reformed Church so far that he had the incurable instinct to think out his way. That made the tragedy of his life. He could not but think out his way; he could never have accepted life with the condition that at a certain stage sincere thought should be discredited; and yet at the same time he was paralysed by an idea which mocked him, that there was no finality, no permanent worth or comfort in mere thinking.

You come to a view of Amiel, not es-

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entially different from this, if you consider for a moment a defect in his character, which he himself dwells on frequently and always with regret. He could not bring himself *to act*. He would never commit himself. He would never let himself go, and thus test the foundations of the world. He might, as he himself saw clearly, have saved himself from despair; he might have opened a way within himself for a new tide of energy and joy, if he had only declared that he was in love and had married; or if he had compelled himself even to so little as the regular publication of literary work. But he shrank from the definite, from the completed, from the concrete; and his "Journal" is the record, first and last, of the retribution which overtakes all such abstinence from life. "I have too much imagination, conscience, and penetration," he writes, "and not enough character." That is the root of his malady. It is what Dante meant by sloth, by the sin of sadness, which is the approach to the

state of complete denial. "To love, to dream, to feel, to learn, to understand—all these are possible to me, if only I may be dispensed from willing." *If only I may be dispensed from willing*—there you have the key to Amiel. "Practical life makes me afraid; and yet at the same time it attracts me; I have need of it. Family life, especially in all its delightfulness, in all its moral depth, appeals to me almost like a duty. Sometimes I can not escape from the ideal of it. A companion of my life, of my work, of my thoughts, of my hopes; within, a common worship; to the world outside, kindness and beneficence; educations to undertake, the thousand and one moral relations which develop round the first—all these ideas intoxicate me sometimes. But I put them aside, because every hope is as it were an egg from whence a serpent may issue instead of a dove; because every joy missed is a stab; because every seed confided to destiny contains an ear of grief which the future may develop."

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“I am distrustful of myself and of happiness because I know myself. The ideal poisons for me all imperfect possessions.”

“To be dependent is to me terrible; but to depend upon what is irreparable, arbitrary, and unforeseen, and above all to be so dependent by my own thoughts and through my own errors—to give up liberty and hope, to slay sleep and happiness—this would be Hell!”

“All that is necessary, providential, in short, unimputable, I could bear, I think, with some strength of mind. But responsibility mortally envenoms grief; and as an act is essentially voluntary, therefore I act as little as possible.”

All the while he saw quite clearly to what end this attitude of his would lead. “He who is silent is forgotten; he who abstains is taken at his word; he who does not advance falls back; he who stops is overwhelmed, distanced, crushed; he who ceases to grow greater becomes smaller; he who leaves off gives up; the stationary

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condition is the beginning of the end—it is the terrible symptom which precedes death. To live is to achieve a perpetual triumph; it is to assert oneself against destruction, against sickness, against the annulling and dispersion of one's physical and moral being; it is to will without ceasing, or rather to refresh one's will day by day."

And now let us ask ourselves whether, things being as they are, a man like Amiel who proposes, so to speak, to take up with life upon certain conditions, conditions which the common sense and experience of man hold to be a vain imagination—whether such a man, proposing such conditions, is ever likely to arrive at a solid happiness in this world, or to be able to see his way clearly in the region of ultimate truths. Amiel refuses—I should like to qualify the phrase and bring it more into harmony with the delicacy and tenderness of his attitude, but the word is not unfair—Amiel refuses to take part in life, and this on the ground that every act

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which a man commits, commits him and gives, as it were, a hostage to the future. Therefore he will abstain. He admits that generous impulses urge him at times to do something decisive, something which indeed will to that extent limit his life, but at the same time will express and define his life, giving it a kind of objective reality. But he pulls himself up on the threshold of action. Now there is simply no doubt at all that those who take up such an attitude, cut themselves off from certain fountains of insight and joy, and deprive themselves of those corroborations which have always formed an essential part, it may be even the basis, of the total wisdom of mankind. You can not see things until you are there. We know that all the knowledge which we come to have, the whole life of our mind and heart is provoked, is solicited out of the depths by the demands which life presents. A child in performing a task does something more; he discovers, he creates his mind, he adds

to and defines his own personality. Well, we might pursue that line quite legitimately until we arrived at this: that the greater the responsibilities we undertake and discharge, the fuller and wiser will be our knowledge of ourselves and of the world. But, not to dwell upon that, it is certain that there is a spiritual reaction which is really the glow of moral health, following upon and flowing from every deed in which we really commit ourselves, and this becomes in turn a kind of evidence that we are on the true way. In other words, the mere spectators in this world see nothing of the game. You must be in it before you can say how it feels. A man who simply ponders his duty has all the yoke of life without the anointing; whereas there is something like the whisper of a "Well done" at every step whereby a man seeks to discharge his evident duty and calling as a man. The Greeks had a myth enshrining some such truth as this. Antæus, in order to

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maintain his power of soaring in the air, must needs at intervals descend and touch the earth with his foot. The moral deeds of life, the deeds in which a man commits and engages himself, are just those points of the earth which the heavenly being in man, the pure spirit must touch, in order that he may soar again. To shrink from life, from actual moral performances, as Amiel did, is to put oneself out of connection with certain compensations, lights, whispers, which are themselves like wind to the heavenly flame. Tolstoy had this very matter in view when he laid down five conditions which a man must satisfy before he has any right to look for peace of mind, before he can expect also to have a sane and healthy outlook upon life, and towards the future. One of these conditions is that he must not break the link between himself and the world of nature—what Jean Paul meant, in part, when he said that every day should close with a look at the stars. A second condition is

that a man must work, actually labor with his hands, so that he may have a zest for his food, may sleep soundly and awake with happiness. The third—and I go no further—is family life, the very duties, claims, responsibilities, delights, which Amiel himself sees and desires and turns away from. Since these are among the conditions on which God intends our life to be lived, it may well be that no man has the right to speak about life, about what he needs and about what is given, until he fulfills those conditions in fact, or realizes them by the force of his imagination.

In Amiel, to look at this matter from another standpoint, we have an example of a man who sees so many things at once, who is so many-poised, that he can not bring himself to act decisively on any plain issue in life. His instinct, which, of course, would have urged him to act was balanced in his case by a sleepless, critical faculty—the Mephistopheles of Faust—which persuaded him that there were always

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reasons on the other side for not acting, or for acting differently. In him instinct and knowledge cancelled one another, so that he simply stood still. As he became aware that this was his condition, as every failure to act confirmed his habit of not acting, his moral hesitancy became morbid and fixed. He is a Hamlet of these latter days, one in whom "the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." Amiel is a classical instance of the man in whom culture or knowledge has weakened certain elementary powers, faiths, instincts, in the absence of which, nevertheless, a man ceases to be himself. He will not commit himself in any particular case—he sees so much on the other side and on all sides. He will not apply himself to one thing—there are in this world so many things. Now, if in any urgent matter, either of duty or of faith, a man refuses to *act*, to make a personal choice, simply because there are so many facts and circumstances in the world, which,

if he only knew them all, might lead him to act differently, or refrain from acting altogether, that man is going against the ordinary practice of life in every region. If he were to adopt such a principle consistently, he would do nothing at all, indeed he would become a maniac. For example, at this particular moment of time, everything so to speak, is happening everywhere. Outside the stars are shining, the wind is blowing, ships are sailing the seas, tigers are devouring their prey, men are drowning, starving, women are weeping, houses are burning to the ground; there are prisons, there are hospitals, there are asylums; in operating theatres limbs are being amputated, obscure diseases are being probed—all these things, myriads of things, whole continents of things, are happening everywhere at this moment; and yet for you, properly speaking, there is but one thing: you are reading this page. You know that in order at this moment to do anything, in order to be yourself in the

particular circumstances of the moment, you must if need be, put out of your mind all such vagrant and incoherent facts as I have mentioned. They are all of them facts, interesting, serious, critical, and upon occasion it may be your duty to meet them ; but you know that it would not be sane upon your part to refuse such ideas as are presented in this page, simply because the whole world, in its multitudinous details is living its life at the same moment. Well, the same is to be said of every definite situation in which we are called upon to act. We must practice a certain restraint upon vagrant and unrelated circumstances. We must select the facts which are essential ; and both intellectual and moral saneness consists in knowing what facts are relevant and what are idle and inadvertent. Just as by an act of your will, if need be, and in order to read this page, you must for the moment neglect the entire world, and confine yourself to the type and to the play of ideas

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and associations which it awakens in your mind; and by so doing—so far as this present moment is concerned—you live and assert yourself. So, in all personal matters which involve choice, judgment, decision, in matters of life or of faith, what you shall do, how you shall believe, it is necessary, when face to face with your question, to put away things which are obviously extraneous, and, with what wisdom you have, deal with the issue within narrower limits. In this way, by being faithful, that is to say, to himself in view of a narrow circle of relationships, a man will find that he is never really unfaithful to the wider demands of the whole world, if he could possibly be made aware of those demands. Plato would have destroyed the family on the ground that love given to one's friends, to one's home, was love withdrawn from society, from the wider human fellowship. But Aristotle had no difficulty in replying, that without the family there would be no school for

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love at all, that the corner-stone of the State was the hearth-stone. So, the only school for the widest moral practice is, to be faithful in the issues which meet us within the narrower limits. To do otherwise, to refuse at each step to act, on the ground that if we only knew more, or knew everything, we should act differently, or not act at all, is really to mutilate ourselves; it is in fact to propose an absurdity.

The ultimate bearing of all these considerations and of this argument, brings us back to the question which emerges upon any series of study of the Pilgrims of the nineteenth century. I mean the question of personal faith in the light, and under the challenge of that immense knowledge of the world which our age has inherited and achieved. And, to keep close to Amiel, we see in him how the question comes to present itself. He fails to attain to certitude, to a happy and habitual confidence in God and in life's meaning, because—to put it my own way—the evi-

dence is not quite convincing. Now, the evidence for God can never in a sense be convincing; that is to say, it can never be so indisputable as practically to coerce and overwhelm the human reason. Were that to take place, it would not be faith that ensued. Further, Amiel, as we have seen, will not take the only course which, as I think, so far confirms such faith as a man has: he will not proceed upon it. He failed, and could not but fail, because of those two conditions by which he bound himself. He would not believe once for all, because he was afraid that later knowledge might change his attitude; and for the same reason he would not act strongly upon such incipient faith as from time to time offered itself to him.

The very nature of faith in God, at least so it seems to me, demands that we act upon it on evidence short of absolute proof. Faith is most truly faith when it knows nothing but its own inspirations. Not that faith is entirely without evidence

or without very sound evidence ; but simply because faith is always a personal act, it will always be possible for the individual to take the other alternative. One thing also, I think, may be claimed. There is a sense in which, to quote the language of remote days, man is the measure of the universe. What I mean just now by that is, that the world, the universe, life, has a wonderful way of corroborating that view of it which for your own reasons you are taking. Set out with the idea, with the faith, that life is from the moral point of view utterly careless, that “as it happeneth to the wise man, so it happeneth to the fool,”—and the world, or your experience, will support that idea to some length ; but only to some length, and that not very far. Take, however, a deeper, a holier view of things. Settle with yourself that life is not given us for self-pleasing, but for self-restraint, for the practice and fulfilment of certain purer calls, and once more, now that your ear is trained to finer sounds, you will

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catch the approval of things, the well done of some mysterious and AUTHORITATIVE VOICE. You will feel that there is something in this world which appeals to you in a dumb, speechless way, to take the high road, the narrow road, through this world of ours. And even if you have no other foundation for the life of faith, *that* will serve, and if you are faithful to it, will, at the challenge of further things, become for you more and more.

Men like Amiel seem to be afraid to believe heartily lest they should be duped; but, as Professor James says, "I have also a horror of being duped, but I can believe that worse things than being duped may happen to a man in this world. Clifford's exhortation to us to avoid committing ourselves to any form of belief, lest we should discover later on that we had believed wrongly, is like a general informing his soldiers that it is better to keep out of battle altogether than to risk a single wound." And again, "As the essence of

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courage is to stake one's life on a possibility, so the essence of faith is to believe that that possibility exists."

In conclusion, after reading Amiel and feeling, by our sympathy with him, the torments of his divided soul—divided between his natural instincts, which in him, as in all men, are on the side of faith in life, those instincts warmed in his case by the spirit of his fathers, it may be, and by the natural poetry of his soul,—all that on the one hand; and the challenge of knowledge on the other: after reading Amiel, and witnessing this pathetic struggle, we are tempted in one or other of two ways. We are tempted, as he was at the age of twenty-one, to wish that knowledge might cease from the earth. But even could that wish be fulfilled, it is even now too late. The fact is, it is not an honorable wish at all. God hath made us, and not we ourselves; He has made us with the faculty for knowledge, and He has placed us likewise in a world where knowledge comes only by

mental industry. The other temptation is to disparage and abandon reason altogether, to hand ourselves over to some visible guide, some institution, it may be, which is bold enough to declare that it has no misgivings. Yet that may be a temptation which must be dealt with like other temptations. It is not fair or candid on the part of those who ask us to behold the anarchy into which reason has plunged us, it is not fair or candid, to contrast the present unsettlement with the state of perfect quietness, which would ensue, as it is alleged, were we to render implicit obedience to some visible and human institution. The true opposition and contrast would be, between the present unsettlement on the one hand, and the intellectual torpor, the cruelty, the superstition, which did, as a matter of fact, accompany the days of unquestioning obedience. No, we have no right to *will* implicit obedience without *willing* the consequences of implicit obedience. The truth is, we must go on fighting our battle,

not sadly at all, not with an ultimate *suspicion* of all things, but with that ultimate *confidence* in all things, that faith in God, which Jesus Christ asked us to take once for all into our hearts and to live by, in spite of all signs.

The demand for the quietness of certainty may be a demand which God can not honorably satisfy, can not satisfy, that is to say, without injuring us, and spoiling His own plan in the human enterprise. In every department of our complicated life—intellectual, social, religious—we are at best only *on the way*, and therefore, of necessity, in movement. We can not hope for more than relative truth: we could not deal with more. Here, also, “as our day is so shall our strength be.” And, “what but the weakness in a faith, supplies the incentive to humanity?” The turning to visible authority may be nothing better than a concession to that love of ease which is ours in common with all animals, but which is no mark of the spiritual man.

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There is really nothing to be deplored in our apparent insecurity. As a matter of fact, there are lamps for faithful souls. To everyone who meets life seriously the challenge comes—to give his vote for one or other of two subtle, yet distinct and contending views. True, he may err in his decisions; but I make bold to say that the errors of a faithful man are before God of small account. Domine, si error est, a Te decepti sumus. Meanwhile, a man has not failed, if in his choice, in his personal and solemn vote on matters which test the foundations of his life, he has decided for that course which, whatever hazards it may raise, seems to him the worthier.

“The solving word for the learned and the unlearned man alike, lies, in the last resort, in the dumb willingnesses and unwillingnesses of their interior characters, and nowhere else. It is not in Heaven, neither is it beyond the sea; but the word is very nigh to thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest *do it*.”

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“The beauty of the world, and its sorrow, solaced a little by religious faith, itself so beautiful a thing; these were the chief impressions with which he made his way outwards.”

PATER, in *Gaston de Latour*.

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PROBABLY there is no one word which describes adequately the total impression which Pater leaves upon one who reads him with submissiveness and sympathy; as probably there is no one word which adequately describes the soul in any posture. Nevertheless, just as it is possible to name certain feelings which are present with us in any powerful mood, so we may discriminate certain lines or waves of influence which meet within us when we are under the spell of Pater.

For one thing, we enjoy in him that sense of comfort, so to call it, which it is one of the finest tests of style to bring to us. Mere words, discreetly chosen, have a charm beyond their sense. This may be, nay, must be, in virtue of a profound and elementary correspondence be-

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tween our soul and any manifestation of pure excellence. Certainly it is one of the proofs of style in words that they bring about us a certain atmosphere of comfort, of satisfaction, rising now and then to the pitch of a real exhilaration and joy.

It must have been this, and not anything merely violent and strange, that Humbolt had in his mind when he said it would comfort him on his deathbed if some one would but read to him a few lines from Homer, were it only from the lists of the Greek ships! He meant to say that choice and distinguished words themselves, apart from their content, have a composing and reconciling quality; that for himself they would allure him into quietness, and set his soul at that angle from which only the hopeful and assuaging things are seen.

If words selected faultlessly and arranged have in themselves this unction, it is not strange that the writings of Walter Pater have such power—I will not say to

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direct but—to nourish and promote the soul. In the case of Pater, even less than that of any other who has pushed his way into the heart of things, can we separate the style from the substance and intention of his work. With him, to a pre-eminent degree, the style is the man—the style with its strenuousness and gravity, “always on the look-out for the sincerities of human life”—to quote his own characterisation of another.

In his work from first to last he was engaged with the soul of man, beset as man is in Pater's view of him, by a world of incidents, proceeding from himself, it may be, or coming to him from other times or from the face of nature, all of these incidents being capable of setting up correspondence with man as though he were inhabited by a spirit. It is most likely this—that he is ever concerned with the soul, with its delicate but significant movements—which gives Pater's writings for one something of that power for God which

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one associates with the more excellent books of devotion—with Thomas à Kempis and the mystics. He belongs to the number of elect ones who seem to be urged invincibly to indicate, if not to declare, the intimate history of their souls—who thereby minister to souls comparable to their own in essential things, to those who have ears to hear. Men of his spiritual degree, of his sensitiveness—Augustine, Dante, Bunyan, Goethe, Carlyle, Newman, Tolstoy, so unlike each other in particulars, so like in this that each was compelled by the things of his own spirit to urge and feel his way out of certain perplexities, and to win what victory he did win, for the most part, by laying bare his own condition—fulfill the office of the priesthood, standing between us and that infinite to which our spirits bear witness, it may be obscurely.

That is an ingredient which is ever consciously with us so long as we are within the influence of Pater. He does us the immeasurable service of enabling us to ex-

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press and unravel ourselves. His words, by reason of their fine knowledge, continuously make discoveries to us of ourselves—of our latent and potential selves. They become channels by which our soul finds its way out. And with what delicacy and reverence he deals with man! What carefulness and reticence and hesitation! How he will not speak out! How he will describe the behavior of the soul in given circumstances, always, at the same time, with a deference to you if you should happen to think differently! How he will try again, refining upon the previous predicate! How he will wait for the right word—the word which shall reveal yet not limit or fix the soul! To this, I believe, we must trace much of the secret of Pater's spiritual charm, and of the power over us which he, by his friendliness and consideration of us, comes to possess. He will assert nothing concerning the soul until we are ready to agree. He almost makes *you* say the word which ultimately comes. Witness, as illus-

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trating what I mean, his habitual use of all manner of qualifying words and phrases. He can scarcely be brought to say anything which could have the effect of *defining* the soul. He will not speak of a feeling, but only of *a kind* of feeling, or of *a sort* of feeling. He will go up and down the scale of qualification by tones and half-tones, listening to each, seeking to "soften and modify the temerity of his propositions" until the most scrupulous could take no offence, but must consent.

It is probably true that this habit of qualification and endless misgiving over words, lest they should bear within themselves any "guilt or extravagance," has become a mannerism and defect in Pater. But it is the defect of a quality which ministers directly to his value for the spirit. With him it is no affectation, as of one who wished to display his dexterity and niceness. It is with him an instinctive courtesy and reverence for the soul in all its sincere, that is to say, in all its truly personal, attitudes.

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The work of Pater will always serve as a kind of confessional for those who, by their temperament or mental history, are aware of, and must always be aware of, a certain spirit of questioning in their religious faith. And it is from that point of view that we shall go on immediately to consider that book of his which contains his most finished and deliberate message on the things of faith. There is a stage, and in our day amongst educated people it has become to be almost a necessary stage, at which the writings of Pater are able to define our troubles to ourselves, and, in a way, to deal with them as no writer whom I know can with equal discernment.

For, Pater always honors and cherishes the soul. True, he hesitates on the threshold of faith, but he hesitates with his face toward the door, nay, with his hand upon the latch. He will not turn away, he can not turn away. When all is said, he finds what ultimate support he has, in face of baffling

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things, by listening to the singing and the prayers of those who are within the holy place, and far within.

If he is not "very sure of God," he is profoundly aware of the human soul and of its boundless relationships. He is "almost persuaded," not quite; and yet his most personal writing has a vividness, a power, a certain evidence of God, which are often not to be felt at all in the writings of those who profess that they have no doubt, but see God clearly.

There was, to the end, "a certain appetite for dimness," as he calls it, in Pater's spiritual nature. "Physical twilight," he says, "we most of us love in its season. To him, that perpetual twilight came in close identity with its moral or intellectual counterpart as the welcome requisite for that part of the soul which loves twilight, and is, in truth, never quite at rest out of it, through some congenital uneasiness or distress, perhaps, in its processes of vision.

Because of this unfailing sympathy with

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the human soul in all its real processes, however humble and obscure they may be, the best of Pater's work has the salt of an immortal life and fitness. To those who understand, it enshrines the faithful record of a human pilgrimage. It is "an artistic reception of a human experience." Thus far, at least, his contribution is on the side of faith, that he will not mock or disparage man, but is ever ready to catch some nobility of the soul, some uprising of generosity, however fleeting, as evidence that, in the ebb and flow of things, something, it may be, after all, stands fast, and that even in this human world that something may very credibly have its counterpart, its foundation and source and consummation—its idea, to quote Plato—in an everlasting order. "Those invincible prepossessions of humanity or of the individual, which Bacon reckoned 'idols of the cave,' are no offence to him; are direct informations, it may be, beyond price, from a kindly spirit in things."

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Pater, we repeat, is one of those who write for their own sakes. They are called by the spirit to speak. Men of his spiritual rank acknowledge an imperious need to declare how things are going on within them. They write in order that they may discover themselves. To straighten out the things of the spirit, to fix and name the obscure movements of the soul within, is laid upon minds of a certain quality like a doom, and it is a fire in their bones if they refrain. It is the one true call to the ministry of God amongst one's fellow-men. In this matter Pater was of the elect.

In his actual life, in Oxford, in London, he was an elusive and impenetrable figure. It was doubtless the penalty of his very delicate spiritual organization that few, even amongst his equals in many matters, knew him to any profitable degree. It must have been a difficult and unwilling business for Pater to deal with men in a frank and unreserved way. In his books, however, he has amply fulfilled that obliga-

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tion, which surely rests upon us all, to speak with simplicity and kindness to those with whom we find ourselves on the long highway of our life. For his books, strictly speaking, contain little besides his own "sensations and ideas." Even in his writings he shrinks, as we have said, from all definiteness, and avoids, by the very habit of his mind, anything like unqualified assertion, employing the impersonal method of parable, or story, or criticism. But throughout, it is a veil which hides nothing that it is profitable for us to know. In Pater's view, such reticence and self-effacing is but a true man's modesty face to face with life—with life which, in its length and breadth, and depth and height, no one presumes to know without possibility of error.

In "Marius, the Epicurean," Pater has, I believe, confessed himself in the only way in which a man of his temperament, of his privacy, could make himself known. He has told a story. It is the story of a life

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with features which he dwells on so knowingly, encountering circumstances which he describes with such tenderness and insight, moving on to a crisis and event which he conceives with such persuasiveness and grace, the whole living in such an air of reality that, in dealing with such a story, we are dealing, we may believe, with all that was substantial and permanent, in Pater's own spiritual career.

Marius is a young Roman of noble family who lived under the reign of Marcus Aurelius. We meet him first as a boy in his country home. And there already, Pater has the materials with which no one can deal with a tenderer understanding. For with Pater, a boy is ever the type of the beautiful, of the comely, of the soul itself; and with him the most precious instincts and loyalties which a man may take with him into life are just those which had their nourishment in the pieties, the affections, and the secrets of home. From the outset we feel that Marius is no

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ordinary boy ; and yet it may be that he is little different from most children. What distinguishes him from other boys may be that in his case that early sensitiveness, that openness to the unseen, that poetry and faith with which all children set out upon life, were not contradicted or poisoned by the careless brutality of older people.

The father had died while Marius was yet a little child, so that as a boy he could not recall what his father had been like. But he often thought about his father, vaguely and not always happily, not knowing anything surely. Marius, as was natural, grew up in a peculiarly dear and intimate friendship with his mother, the very absence of a father making itself felt in a certain seriousness and wisdom, which gave to their relationship something of the sentiment of religion. "Marius, even thus early, came to think of women's tears, of women's hands to lay one to rest in death as in the sleep of childhood, as a sort of natural want."

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From his earliest days, as Marius could recall when he had left those days far behind, he loved the simple ways of the country, its casual sounds, its quiet and even manners. From the first, he was acquainted with those elementary conditions of life—seed-time and harvest, the morning and the evening, the labourers in the field, the sheep and cattle out at pasture or in the fold—those elementary conditions, a reverence for which was a great part of primitive religion.

There were signs, too, even in those earliest days, of a profound sympathy for the sufferings of others, especially of the dumb creatures. And this laid the basis, or was itself an early sign, of a view of life which was always present to him, namely, that pain was in some way an integral part and constituent of the world, and that true goodness consisted largely of tender thoughts and tender actions towards the afflicted.

It was in deference to this feeling of

humanity towards dumb creatures that as a boy he destroyed the snares with which he was wont to entrap the wild birds. "A white bird," his mother once told him looking at him gravely, "a bird which he must carry in his bosom across a crowded public place—his own soul was like that."

As being the head of the household, it fell to him, though still a boy, to perform the religious rites of the home; and this he did, always with a natural and unaffected seriousness, understanding, as it seemed, their inner meaning. Indeed, partly, doubtless by virtue of a grace with which he was born, partly also as the effect for him of the quietness and seclusion of his early surroundings, Marius took with him into life a bias and predisposition towards the religious view. "He was apt to be happy in sacred places," he said of himself. Whatever was ancient, whatever had taken part with man in his long wrestling with the mystery of things and with his own experience, had the power at once of touch-

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ing Marius, of letting loose within him the fountain of pity and brotherhood.

“In the sudden tremor of an aged voice, the handling of a forgotten toy, a childish drawing, in the tacit observance of a day, he became aware suddenly of the great stream of human tears falling always through the shadows of the world.” Such was Marius, at the close of his boyhood, and before he had left, even for a short season, the shelter of his mother’s nearness.

From this point events followed quickly, and of a kind that could not but accentuate and confirm the habits and preferences of which he had already given signs. He fell into an illness which necessitated his leaving home for a time. Perhaps it was during this illness of his and in consequence of it that he fell into the way of communing with himself, of making plain to himself how things were affecting his outlook upon life in general; of realizing to his own mind such difficulties and things hard to understand as arose out of the events of

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his life ; of meeting quite candidly and of dealing with, as satisfactorily as he was able at each stage, those doubts and troubles of the mind, which from to time invaded his equanimity and threatened such faith as he possessed.

Brought into contact thus young with pain, and with the prospect, it might be, however remote, of death, Marius, to whom it was always a necessity to be honest with himself, was compelled to come to his own conclusion about life as it presented itself to him.

Shortly after his return home his mother died. Pater does not dwell upon her death or much upon the boy's feeling—that would have been too violent for his art. No modern writer knows more sympathetically than does Pater the immense sufferings of which children are capable, children at least from whom anything fine is to be looked for later on in the way of feeling. But he knows also that there is that within a boy—his very capital and resource of life—

which leads him after a time away from events on which it is not good or safe for him that he should dwell long.

As for Marius, the image of his mother never left his heart. In the very cast of his mind, in the demand which he made upon every faith which offered itself to him—that it should leave room for the play of tenderness, that it should be the consecration of what he himself had experienced as the dearest of our earthly relationships—in these ways he manifested his loyalty to her who bore him, who also by the gradual ministry of affection had prepared his heart for every high claim that might yet appeal to it. All through his spiritual history, as he himself came to see only towards the end of his life, faith for him always had in it a certain home-sickness, a certain yearning for a place made sacred by memories and a beloved presence, from which to set out in the morning, proposing to oneself high things, to which to return sure of a welcome, sure of refreshment

and clean rest, as it were in the evening, after a journey. To Marius, the faith of a man could not be more highly conceived than as the early ties of home and kindred, confirmed and purified, that which was natural made spiritual by the stress of our later life, by the separations which only discover to us how much we are to one another. It was out of a temperament of this kind, attuned by the affections of those first days, that later on he could say that "in our close clinging one to another he seemed to touch the Eternal." Marius could never have been finally satisfied with any faith which denied that there is, and this because there must be, a heart of tenderness like the heart of a mother, behind a veil.

At school, to which soon after his mother's death he went, he was from the first attracted to a youth named Flavian, somewhat older than himself. The two became close friends, though Marius was conscious of something in the tempera-

ment of Flavian and in the range and kind of his motives which would always keep them at a certain distance from each other. Flavian was one of those of whom we say, that "they are bound to succeed." With him intellectual difficulties, however much he might acknowledge them, would never be permitted to interfere with that worldly success which was the main business. Even at the age when Marius met him he would often speak with zest of what he would do, and what place he would strive for in the jostling world of men. But the two were much together. Together they read "The Golden Book of Apuleius," including the pathetic tale, full of a warm and exciting symbolism, of Cupid and Psyche. It was a memorable experience for Marius, giving him as it did his first glimpse into that glorious but hazardous world of sentiment which we associate honorably with sex. It brought over him a tremor, at least, of that convulsion which was to shake Dante at the

age of nine. As Pater says, "a book, like a person, has its fortunes with one; is lucky or unlucky in the precise moment of its falling in our way, and often by some happy accident counts with us for something more than its independent value." The reading of "The Golden Book of Apuleius" was the touch that alone was needful to quicken into life certain generous elements of his nature which forever afterwards would claim their due in any theory of things, in any faith which he might adopt.

Another event happening about this time made its sombre addition to Marius' burden of human and inevitable experiences. Flavian was stricken by the plague, which about this time began to devastate Rome and the neighboring country, a plague the seeds of which it is commonly believed the Roman Campagna retains to this day. After a short, fierce illness the bright youth died. Marius had tended him like a mother, noting the pathetic

changes in the patient's countenance as death urged home its ruthless assault. On the last night, Marius lay as usual in the bed beside him, to be near him if he should seem to need anything. "Is it a comfort," he whispered to the dying lad, "that I shall often come and weep over you?" "Not unless I be aware," he faltered, "and hear you weeping!"

The death of Flavian had the effect of sending Marius back into the solitude of his own mind. He was conscious for a time of nothing but a profound anger against nature—an indignation against things as they are—the blindness of them, and terrible unconcern. But this death—and this is often the virtue of an added sorrow—had that influence upon him which real suffering never failed to produce; it let loose within him a great wave of pity for his fellow-men, considering afresh the burdens which they were doomed to bear, by the help of such dim lights.

If there was anything in Marius at this

stage which we might call faith, the death of Flavian served for a time to eclipse it, leaving him in darkness. That death, with all its accompaniments, as he now recalled them, seemed to mean only one thing, that the soul of Flavian had at that moment been extinguished.

It is the great merit of Pater's "Marius," and a thing which will secure for this book a permanent place in the confessional literature of the soul, that it always conceives faith as the reaction which a man makes against the incidents, the events of his life, as they variously come home to him.

Faith in "Marius" is perhaps best described as a man's reconciliation with himself and with the world in which he finds himself.

Marius was too good a Stoic and too much of a man to permit even such a fact as death—though it were to be established as a final and unrelieved fact—to paralyse that vitality of youth which was equally a fact, and having the claims of a fact.

He found a measure of relief in a method of treating himself which amounted to this: he compelled himself to look away from all the paralysing and disheartening things. He resolved to limit himself to the things that were actually before him, refusing meanwhile to raise any ultimate questions. There were many good things in life even for a soul like his. He determined that he would excel. He would furnish his mind, making it, as it were, a beautiful and comely abode. It might be that this present life, brief as it was, was all. Still, even so, there was no need that he should adopt the baser conclusion, saying, "All is vanity, therefore let me eat and drink, for to-morrow I die." Rather, suppose that for him there were no to-morrow, death ending all, still it was not in the power of circumstances to rob him of his inner dignity and erectness. He would "adorn and beautify his soul."

I must deny myself the digressions which are inviting me at every step, turning

aside here for one moment only to observe how every great work in literature, which has dealt at first hand with the human soul, has described this stage in a true man's recovery from the overthrow of his life after the first harmony has been broken by mortal sin, it may be, or by the spirit of questioning. To this place also Carlyle had come when standing, as it seemed to him, in a shivered world, he yet had the health to see that a man never was without a duty, a thing which required him to act immediately; that even in a shivered universe it was open to a man to "build up a universe within his own soul." To this stage also Faust came when he thought to restore the soundness of his disordered mind by a determined occupation of himself with the beauty of Greece.

And this is the very spot in the world of the soul whereon Dante stood when he awoke in the dark forest, and seeing above him a hill with the sun shining on its slopes, essayed to climb it, and failed.

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In course of time Marius went to Rome to take his place as amanuensis to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. On the way he encountered casually one who was destined to wield a quite immeasurable influence upon him. He met Cornelius, a young noble, a soldier of the Twelfth Legion.

Pater, on behalf of Marius, taxes his copious insight in describing to us the peculiar quality which was manifest in Cornelius, the atmosphere which clung to him, that grace of his which wrought so powerfully upon his hero.

In a word, Cornelius was a Christian, a Christian of the chaste and virgin days, when persecution purged the Church, suffering only those who were saints indeed to bear the sacred name.

“Some inward standard Marius seemed to detect in Cornelius there (though wholly unable to estimate its nature), of distinction, selection, refusal, amid the various elements of the fervid and corrupt life

across which they were moving together; some secret, constraining motive, ever on the alert at eye and ear, which carried him through Rome as under a charm, so that Marius could not but think of that figure of the white-bird in the market place as made true of him." (You see there the hint of his mother's face.)

Again, "with all the severity of Cornelius, there was (at the same time) a breeze of hopefulness—freshness and hopefulness—as of new morning about him." It was evident to Marius, further, that everything about Cornelius "seemed to be but sign or symbol of some other thing far beyond it." He seemed to live recognising "a light upon his way which had certainly not yet sprung up for Marius." The most delicate and suggestive feature in Pater's description of Cornelius is that Marius observed that he was "constantly singing to himself." This singing was never loud or uncontrolled. It was to Marius quite a new kind of singing. It was rather the

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gentle overflow of some quiet and generous emotion. He would begin to sing as though at the moment he were remembering some private reason for being happy, not that he ever really forgot it.

In everything that Pater says about Rome—in the circumstances which he selects, in the events which he accentuates, above all, in the background against which the figures move, a background of luxury and grossness in high places, of frivolity and the lust for bloody spectacles on the part of the masses of the people, groups here and there of rhetoricians and sophists, idlers and loafers in the spiritual world all of them, who used words never as the basis of personal action, but merely as playthings to illustrate their own dexterity and to fill the empty hours ; an age which believed nothing, in which the best wisdom recommended people to take up the attitude of apathy, the attitude of half-amused, half-contemptuous spectators, not to expect very much of mankind, just as you do not

expect fruit-trees to be other than they are ; and through all this and behind it, haunting everything, giving to everything a certain exaggeration (behind everything), the terrible plague dealing death swiftly—in all this, I say, Pater means us to understand, that his Marius, on entering Rome, came into contact with that mingled and dubious life which a youth of his mind and temperament encounters *now* when he meets for the first time the forces and currents of our present-day world.

On the night he entered Rome, at dusk, Marius heard a call out in the streets—a call, as it was put, “to play.” “*Donec virenti canities abest,*” a voice sang—“to those in whom their life is still green.” At that moment Marius remembered Cornelius, bethought himself how Cornelius would have taken a call like that. Perhaps it was the first victory of the living and permanent Christ over the mind of Marius!

His life in Rome was one long disillusionment. He had gone there to fill a

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post near to the person of the philosophic Emperor. He had gone full of the worthiest anticipations. But he learned how life puts to the test principles which seem invincible in books. He learned how there is that in man, and infecting society, working its way on all sides towards ruin and catastrophe, a something which will not be harnessed, or scotched, or eradicated by mere philosophy, still less by a philosophy which amounted to nothing but a studied blindness towards all disturbing things, a confession that all was lost indeed, but that we might harden our hearts at least and say nothing about it. He learned, though obscurely and scarcely putting it to himself so definitely, that we wrestle with a spirit, a Prince of Darkness; and Marius separated himself from the Emperor and the moralists just at that point.

They seemed to him to acquiesce in the evil and brutality which were rampant, though these on their own principles were unworthy of man. Aurelius was able to

look on, apparently without active disgust, at the bloodshed of the amphitheatre. He could make it consistent with himself to decree human sacrifices. And in these matters Marius, by virtue of his own purer instincts, reinforced as they now were by the gracious personality of Cornelius, felt "that Aurelius was his inferior now and forever on the question of righteousness." "Surely," he said, "evil is a real thing, and the wise man wanting in the sense of it, where not to have been by instinctive election on the right side is to have failed in life."

It was not only when he allowed his mind to dwell upon the bloodshed and inhumanity of the amphitheater that Marius became aware of a profound separateness between himself and those who—with the Emperor—were prepared to encourage, or at least not to forbid, such spectacles. In the greater part of the entire work Pater is engaged in showing how two processes were going on beneath the surface in the

soul of Marius—two processes, perhaps really one process, tending certainly to one result. It had been demonstrated to him in many a notable incident which he could recall, and it was being demonstrated to him daily in the loose, unreal, immoral, and despairing atmosphere of both private and public life, that even the boasted philosophy of Marcus Aurelius was but a branch of literature, a thing of words and phrases, without passion, or power, or purpose, because without any confidence in itself. It could accomplish nothing, face to face with the potent, and—for it—the ineradicable impulses and weaknesses of man. Nay, in the presence of Marius, admitted as he was to the home-life of the Emperor, and able to see him when he was off his guard, many a thing had happened which had but one meaning—that the Emperor was a most unhappy man, who only with a tragical suppression of his true feelings succeeded in keeping up a brave front before the world. Compelled by his experience

to lower one light after another, the Emperor seemed to be moving toward a view of life which left no room for hope, for the expansion of the human heart. He had lately uttered sentiments which could only mean that in certain circumstances it might be justifiable for one who could bear the strain no more to lay violent hands upon himself. "'Tis part of the business of life," he had written, "to lose it handsomely." "On due occasion one might give life the slip." And Marius could not help contrasting this wearied air which hung about the court and about society with the blitheness as of the fresh morning which he never failed to feel like a breeze from the face of his one Christian friend, Cornelius.

About this time, too, Marius witnessed something which was not meant for his eyes, but which he could not do otherwise than see. One of the young princes who was very dear to his father was pronounced to be dying; and Marius "saw the Emperor carry the child away, pressed close

to his bosom, as if he yearned just then for one thing only, to be united, to be absolutely one with it, in its obscure distress."

All this was part of a process which was going on within the mind of Marius. He was discovering new evidence each day that the best thought of his time, so far as it had become articulate, failed, absolutely and tragically, to account for, or to give energy to men to deal with, the facts—the sins and sufferings of our life. And parallel to this movement, hurrying it to its conclusion, was that other, which had begun within Marius at the moment when Cornelius crossed his path.

For the peculiar grace which he acknowledged that he found nowhere except in Cornelius began now to identify itself somehow with everything that had really been beautiful and satisfying in his past experience.

The image of Cornelius began to be a center round which gathered everything that had ever appealed to him in a tender

way. It seemed to him, for example, as though the grace of his departed mother, now become more powerful than life, had set him so much apart, was of the same kind as the influence which he acknowledged in Cornelius. He had the feeling that his mother had always intended—quite unconsciously, of course—those very things which Cornelius stood for.

Certainly life had discovered to Marius a void place, and it required something like an effort on his part—an effort which he could probably not have justified to himself—to keep him from yielding himself up to Cornelius, asking him plainly for his so precious secret.

Both of these movements that were going on within him, of disintegration on the one hand, and of reconciliation on the other, received about this time what to his sensitive and religious mind seemed to have the highest sanction. For one night “the last bequest of a serene sleep had been a dream in which, as once before he

heard those he loved best, pronouncing his name very pleasantly as they passed through the rich light and shadow of a summer morning, along the pavement of a city—ah, fairer far than Rome.” It was at this stage, too, that Marius one day suddenly asked himself this question. Since life faced candidly and honourably discovers to us that there are certain beliefs, presuppositions, principles, which we men, being such as we are, and placed as we are, simply cannot do without, may it not be that the fact itself that we cannot do without them is sufficient evidence that they are true?

Thus was Marius coming gradually, by the way of imagination and by the help of a certain tenderness in his very reasonings, to a willingness to believe in Him whom Christians worship as the father of men.

But I must hasten to conclude: and this we now may, without injury to the whole spirit of Pater’s work. For it would be more than Pater intended were we to

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speaking with greater definiteness of what befell Marius in the region of his beliefs, It is never Pater's way to speak out; he will only hint or give a cue. Nevertheless, Marius did take some further steps towards the peaceful healing of his long divided mind.

One evening, as it was drawing to dusk, Marius and Cornelius, on their way into Rome, halted at a door which Cornelius seemed to know. He knocked and they were admitted. It was the home of Cecelia, a young Roman lady of noble family, who had been left a widow by Cecelius—a confessor and saint. She was a Christian. As Cornelius stood at the open door he looked at his companion for a moment, as though to say: "There is still time for you to refuse to enter. There is still time for you to go on, on your usual way. For, if you enter, if you come within the influence of this home, you will never be able, and you will never desire to break away from its spirit and from its faith."

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And Marius crossed the threshold, knowing dimly, but quite unmistakably, that he had in some way closed a door behind him, and had now committed himself beyond recall for ever to that view of things which had been appealing to him for so long.

I shall not attempt to describe this sweet and holy home. If there is even one such home remaining in the world to-day, all is well, and the wild and homeless heart of man will not be able to resist its plea for ever.

Here again, the first sound that fell upon his ears was the sound of children singing. Chaste women and their children—that was what the home of Cecelia came to stand for ever afterward in Marius' mind. To him that home was like a bride adorned for her husband, its orderliness and seriousness like the eager and happy aspect of one who is looking for the coming in at any moment of some exalted yet not formidable Guest.

That evening, and more than once in the days that followed, Marius had opportunities to test, if he had been so minded, the spirit of this Christian home. But there was that in it which set all his questionings to rest. Here, if anywhere, was the only proper life for man ; here was the final and all-including point of view. In contrast with the despair which infected the wisest in his day was the radiant and habitual hopefulness of these people. He saw the graves of their little children, the flowers, the dainty loving signs, showing that these people agreed with him in regarding even the body with a certain reverence and hope. Death had been often here ; but it had left no sting, no bitterness. It had brought an added grace to their daily living ; it had only confirmed that faith of theirs which seemed so full of tenderness ; it had only added yet another treasure to the great sum of glorious things which later on, and in a better place, would be given them of their father.

“The temperate beauty” of this Christian lady “reminded Marius of the best female statuary of Greece.” In her he seemed to have encountered the type of a new and regenerate world. Here he saw how the body might be redeemed, and could be redeemed only by the spirit.

Here, likewise, he saw human industry become sacred and mystical—the daily tasks of life done as beneath the eye and for the sake of a dear Master who would not fail to note the humblest fidelity. Here, in Cecilia, never seen by Marius except with a child in her arms or walking by her side, he saw that new consecration of maternity, that new hallowing of the simple and elementary things of life which was then dawning upon the world in the story of Mary and her Child.

It may have been that Marius became conscious of a new feeling toward Cecilia herself, arising or threatening to arise in his own heart. But even were that so, it was another fine result of the new spirit

which was now dealing with him. For, if it was love, it was love as he had never known it, as no old poet had ever described it. In his case it was a sentiment full of reverence, serious and reticent; a love which would be satisfied, not so much by attainment as by self-denials and suffering. It was a love which would make him ready, which even now had made him ready to endure to the uttermost for its own sake, and for the wealth which he knew would come to him and overwhelm the pain.

And soon Marius was called upon to suffer for his faith, such as it was. Persecution of a fierceness hitherto unknown swept over the Church. Marius himself heard one read the letters from the churches of Lyons and Vienne, including the story of Blandina, the Christian girl who died under the tortures of the arena, whispering with her last breath, "I am Christ's."

It was in these dark days that Marius was stricken with the plague, with that mysterious instrument of death which had

all through his life been so much in his thoughts. Cornelius was with him at the time, and both were taken prisoners as being Christians. It was known that one of the two had not openly professed the Christian faith, but, uncertain as to which it was, the soldiers bore both away. That night Marius bribed the guard to set Cornelius free, for he supposed that Cornelius loved Cecilia. As for himself, the fever heightened so that he had to be left behind. In the pauses of his delirium he became aware that the simple people into whose hands he had come were Christians also. He heard them pray over him, accepting him as being without doubt one of their faith. He felt the mystic bread between his lips, and *in his weakness he did not refuse it*. "Abi, abi, anima Christiana"—Depart, depart, O Christian soul—he heard them pray; and as for the rest, "in the grey austere evening of that day they took up his remains and buried them secretly with their accustomed prayers, but with

joy also, holding his death, according to their generous view in this matter, to have been of the nature of a martyrdom; and martyrdom, as the Church had always said, was a kind of sacrament with plenary grace."

That is Pater's story of "Marius the Epicurean." It all means many things; it means, indeed, everything.

We might describe the total influence of the book in Pater's own words elsewhere, and say that it is the story of how, at last, "a man's sleepless habit of analysis had been checked by the inexplicable, the absolute; how, amid his jealously guarded indifference of soul, he had been summoned to yield, and had yielded, to the magnetic influence of another."

Or, we might say, quoting something which came into Marius' mind even when the dimness of death was in his eyes, namely, this: that in Jesus Christ and His followers, "there had been a permanent protest established in the world, a plea,

a perpetual afterthought, which humanity would ever henceforth possess in reserve, against any wholly mechanical theory of itself and its conditions."

For myself, I close "Marius" once again, with two feelings in my mind, two purposes, two standards by which to judge myself henceforward. They are the two feelings which Marius tells us came quite distinctly to him when, one Christmas morning, he was leaving the church in Cecilia's home, having been present at worship there. One closes "Marius" with the feeling, first, that now since we have tasted a joy of this purity and tenderness, one will always have, and ought always to have, a kind of thirst for it again; and second, one has the feeling, after such an experience, that it was surely in order to give us such a taste of what life might be, and to make us capable of receiving it (such draughts of Lethe and Eunöe), that "the Power who created us sent us into this world—not that we should be unhappy in it."

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Pater himself died suddenly in middle life ; in middle faith also, as I think. At the close of a wistful and perplexing day, a day which grew clearer for him, as we wish to believe, in its later hours, Pater fell asleep, like Dante, on sloping stairs !

“And we are left to speculate,” as he wrote of Leonardo da Vinci, “how one who always loved beauty, and loved it in such precise forms . . . looked forward to the vague land, and experienced the last curiosity.”



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“The power with which we are convinced of anything is full, complete, unshakable, not when our arguments are logically irrefutable, nor when our feelings correspond with the demands of reason, but when man becomes convinced through experience, having tested the opposite, that there is only one way. Such a power of conviction we are given as to there being only one life, the following of the will of God.”—*Demands of Love and Romance*.

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ONE rises from a long reading of "Tolstoy" with a new understanding of what the old Hebrew belief may have signified, that whosoever presumes to look upon the face of God shall surely die. A merciful Providence (shall we say?) has taken precautions in the case of nearly all of us to blur our vision, to turn the last edge and keenness of our sensibilities, lest we should see more or feel more than we could bear or deal with. The same Providence, however, which spares men in the mass, endowing us with a certain last cowardice by virtue of which we will not stand or remain quite alone on the dim and tragic headlands of the spiritual world, has ordained that elect souls, here and there, from time to time, urged by an invincible calling, shall go out from us and face that Infinite on our be-

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half. "Death worketh in them but life in us."

Tolstoy belongs by every sign to this priestly order of men, who by their insight, by their gift of solitary thinking, of moral loneliness and suffering, hold man to his destiny.

It is not with Tolstoy's message with the dogmatic teaching which has come to be associated with his name, that we propose to engage ourselves at this time, but with Tolstoy from a very definite and exclusive standpoint. We propose to consider what to myself is his most precious contribution to our own time, and surely to all time, namely, the story of his spiritual pilgrimage—how the first harmony of life came to be destroyed within him, and how after many a trial and many a defeat a new harmony was at length established.

In its deepest principles—in its "form," as Plato would have said—Tolstoy's spiritual story differs in no way from that of

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Augustine, or Dante, or Goethe, or Carlyle. It is the story which has its classical setting in the Book of Job. Once again we watch a human soul in which the faith of childhood has been assailed by thought, by experience, drifting, yet always with many a cry of protest, out into the homeless seas: encountering there, by virtue of something ineradicable within itself and by virtue of something ineradicable in the nature of things, a crisis which puts a limit to its outward drifting and turns it passionately homeward.

Whilst it is quite true that Tolstoy's pilgrimage from the first unity of childhood back through misery and a crisis to a firm and sufficient harmony with himself and with life is in its salient and permanent features not new, nevertheless, simply because he is also a real and unaffected man who has fought his own battle with his own weapons, his story is altogether his own. Over and above those differences which subsist between all human beings, so that

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no two men who candidly reveal themselves to their fellow men ever say quite the same things, in the case of Tolstoy larger elements of a distinguishing kind have entered, and have given his testimony, features and qualities which were not elsewhere to be met with. There are, for example, two sets of circumstances which, crossing each other indeed and mingling, yet make separate contributions to Tolstoy's life and to his expression of himself. For one thing he has lived his life in Russia; and for another thing, the abiding life of Russia, its soul, its temperament lives in him. From these two separate considerations, for they are separate, Tolstoy's personal history derives its most impressive and singular features.

When I say that Tolstoy has lived his life in Russia, I mean by Russia not simply a geographical name: I mean that he, an enlightened and almost over-sensitive man, who, so to speak, knows everything, has been called upon to live in the midst of a

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society which, by its conditions, presents an unbroken contradiction to all his aspirations. The Russia of to-day cannot make use of men of Tolstoy's humanity and daring. Such men cannot work out in a free and healthy political life the glorious fires which are raging within them. They must in some way smother those fires. Therefore it is that of the men in Russia who have Tolstoy's humanity, some try to give up thinking about the state of their country; some, after a youthful plunge into revolutions, become case-hardened and sink into tame heads of households; some curse and emigrate, some commit suicide, some go mad. Despair has in various ways penetrated all. Some take to art, to literature, piano-playing, so that to-day the only great novelists, the only great executants are Slavs. We listen to their weird, rebellious music; we read their tales, so terrible in their melancholy; but it may be hidden from us that these men who write books and play to preserve their self-re-

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spect, to claim in the world a place denied them in their own country, or to keep their hearts from breaking. They write or play for the same reason as the Pilgrim Fathers had to emigrate in England's bad days. In art, in anarchism, in suicide the humane and enlightened Russian emigrates from a land which, nevertheless, he loves with a passion which perhaps we, who are of a cooler breed, have lost the power to understand.

In one of Maxim Gorki's stories the hero, after a wild life, comes to himself. For the first time, and too late for him, his eyes open to the general situation. He sees his pathetic fellowmen, their unending toils, the unrelieved drab and grey, like mud, of their surroundings, and the fire burns within him, the fire of indignation but of hope also, if all men will only see. He begins a crusade against things as they are, appealing to men of his own class, to merchants and employers of labour. But he feels that he only irritates them. As he per-

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sists they become more openly hostile, or they simply laugh at him. The last stage in his despair is reached when he sees men whispering together as though planning something with regard to him, and it comes home to him that these men are proposing to deal with him as a maniac.—that is, to lock him up.

As the utter hopelessness of ever being able to do anything strikes him anew, the poor man, mad in fact, lowers his head, and, rushing with a wild cry down a steep street, dashes out his brains against a stone wall at the foot of it! In modern Russia, a thinking, unspoiled man, who has still the warm, simple heart of the Russian, must either knock his brains out (one way or another) or follow Tolstoy and believe in God.

The other set of circumstances which make Tolstoy profoundly different from the notable Pilgrims of the Spirit, whose names have been before us, is that Tolstoy is a Russian, that the abiding soul of Russia

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labours and comes to self-consciousness in him. In this country we are at a disadvantage when we speak of the Russian. There is a subtle but obstinate hostility to be overcome within us. But such a feeling is due not to the real Russian, whom I am quite sure we should very much love if we knew him, and considered him in his almost divine patience. It has been provoked by what we read in newspapers about the sayings or doings of certain people at the top in Russia. But I would not go to those at the top—to the rulers, to the generals, to the diplomatists—for my knowledge of a people. They, through no fault of their own, are very much alike in all nations. No! I would go to the literature of the people, especially would I go to their literature of the soul—the things they say or sing or write when their heart and flesh cry out. For myself, I have little interest in the Russia, which, according to report, is always engaged upon some sinister diplomacy. The Russia I care for I find in

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Turgenieff and Tolstoy, in Merejkowsky, in Siebenkiewickz and what I find there is the great tender soul of a man who in simplicity, in directness, in his laughter and tears, is still a child. A virgin-soul it is still in touch with primitive nature, still deriving nourishment for his spirit from the mystery and magnitude of things; still haunted by God, unable yet to think of life as void of a momentous and eternal meaning. A child it is indeed, summoned, it may be, too suddenly to the tasks of manhood. Thus he stands puzzled on the threshold of baffling things, ready for any sincere comradeship. And when some hope, as is the way with children, fails him, he will break something that is near, or he will cover his face with his hands and weep, as though a quite infinite sorrow had befallen him. Tolstoy belongs to this young and primitive race, having its directness, its capacity for feeling in an extreme and infinite way the moods that visit us, the play of lights and shadows as we journey

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on. For "In Russia," it has been observed, "life runs to passion, to emotion, as in Greece it ran to intelligence, and with ourselves to action or practical matters." "Every Russian who has not been demoralized by commerce or officialism is a Pilgrim. He is a foredoomed Truth-seeker." It may well be that Russia is destined to be the Messiah of modern nations, alone fitted to baptize the Western world anew into emotion, into simplicity, into a genuine communion with God. All that is in Tolstoy.

And now, to proceed on our particular task, which is to define and follow the course of Tolstoy's personal and interior life, from the time when, leaving the clear pool amongst the hills, it fell wildly and painfully through dark and tortuous places until nearer the sea it has come to a space of fruitful peace. It is almost the whole truth to say that Tolstoy has written about nothing except his own interior history. Everything with him comes round to the

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soul, and is to be apprehended in terms of feeling. He is present in all his works of fiction. Olenine in "The Cossacks," Levin in "Anna Karenina," Pierre and Andréï in "War and Peace," Nekhludoff in "Resurrection"—they are all of them Tolstoy in various stages of his spiritual journey, Tolstoy in various moods—in the twilight of disillusionment, in the night of some despair, or in the glorious morning when he sings and makes melody in his heart. In addition, Tolstoy has put upon record in language which has no parallel for firmness, directness, unfaltering truthfulness, the story of his spiritual history as he recalled it. He has laid bare all his processes; he has kept nothing back; the result being books which must have the value for all time of S. Augustine's "Confessions." I propose to make very extensive quotations from these autobiographies, in fact to make Tolstoy tell his own story. For one thing, no one could tell it with such discriminating language, with such

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correspondence of words to things of the soul, as Tolstoy. And it may be that I have justification for using freely his own record of his pilgrimage in this, that I have faithfully gone over all the ground with Tolstoy, that I have made the long detour of all his characteristic works, of which his autobiography is but the inner and concentric circle.

Tolstoy was christened and educated in the faith of the Orthodox Greek Church; he was taught it as a child and as a youth. Nevertheless, at eighteen years of age, when he left the University of Kazan, he had given up all belief in anything he had ever been taught. He recalls how, when he was about twelve, a boy probably older than himself informed him airily that knowing people, professors, and writers of books, had made the discovery that there was no God. At that time he enjoyed the jokes of older people when they ridiculed his brother for his seriousness. He read Voltaire, permitting the Frenchman's mockery

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to poison his first fresh sense of things. The sum of it all was that at eighteen, so far as the traditional faith was concerned, the faith which he learned from the catechism and the schoolmaster, he had none. He showed his early interest in his own feelings by making the observation that although he had abandoned his hereditary faith, the absence of it did not seem to make any difference to him; and he went on to conclude that every other person was exactly in the same position as he himself was. He looked about him and saw that the hereditary faith which people were supposed to hold, really and as a matter of fact had no influence upon their lives. He saw that there was no difference between people who professed the national religion and those who did not, or if there was any difference it was to the credit of those who had frankly discarded religion. He assumed, judging of others from his own case, that the hereditary religion meant nothing at all to anybody, that it continued

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to sit upon a great many people not because they clung to it or felt their need of it, but simply because it had not yet been pushed from off them. A friend told him a story about himself which seemed to corroborate this view. He told Tolstoy how, "twenty-six years before, he was with a hunting party, and before he lay down to rest he knelt down to pray, according to a habit of his from childhood. His elder brother, who was of the party, lay on some straw and watched him. When the younger had finished, and was preparing to lie down, his brother said to him: 'Ah, you still keep that up?'" Nothing more passed between them, but from that day the younger man ceased to pray and to go to Church. For nearly thirty years he has not said a prayer, has not taken the Communion, has not been in a church, not because he shared the convictions of his brother, not because he had come to conclusions of his own, but because his brother's words were like the push of a finger against a wall ready to

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tumble over with its own weight; they proved to him that what he had taken for belief was an empty form, and that consequently every word he uttered, every sign of the cross he made, every time he bowed his head during his prayers, his act was an unmeaning one. When he once admitted to himself that such acts had no meaning in them, he could not but discontinue them. "Thus," concludes Tolstoy, "it has been, and is, I believe, with the large majority of men."

Tolstoy entered upon his manhood, having left for ever behind him, as he thought, the traditional religion, assuming too that most of the people round about him, as a matter of fact, were in the same position. There is, however, a wide gulf between Tolstoy and the average careless person. He was *conscious* that he had abandoned the old faith. It was, as we shall see, the void left within him by the removal of the old pieties and sanctions for life, which became in his case the seat, first of his

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spiritual misery, and at last the beginning of his hope. He entered manhood free from dogmatic bondage, but at the same time with a more or less active belief in God, or rather a kind of feeling for God. He joined the army, and fought in the defence of Sevastopol. There he began to write, and at one became famous. Already to discriminating minds in these first tales from Sevastopol, Tolstoy can not hide the outlines of his spirit. He can not keep back the cries, the yearnings, the protests, the shrinkings which he was afterwards to utter without ceasing. Although he had to be careful of the censor, already in these first sketches war becomes hideous, insane, immoral ; generals and captains appear as helpless and futile beings who, in the actual stress of things, can do nothing at all. Already, too, the one figure who catches Tolstoy's eye and brings the sense of tears into his pen, is the figure of the obscure and unregarded common soldier, with his dumb fidelity like a dog, with his inex-

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haustible patience. "I can not," says Tolstoy, "now recall those years without a painful feeling of horror and loathing. I put men to death, I fought duels to slay others, I lost at cards, wasted the substance wrung from the sweat of peasants, rioted, and deceived. Lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence, murder, all committed by me, not one crime omitted, and yet I was not the less considered by my equals a comparatively moral man. Such was my life during ten years. During that time I began to write, out of vanity, love of gain, and pride. I followed as a writer the same path which I had chosen as a man. In order to obtain the fame and the money for which I wrote, I was obliged to hide what was good, and bow down before what was evil. How often while writing have I cudgelled my brains to conceal under the mask of indifference or pleasantry those yearnings for something better which formed the real problem of my life! I succeeded in my object and was

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praised. . . . Before I had time to look around, the prejudices and views of life common to the writers of the class with which I associated became my own, and completely put an end to all my former struggles after a better life. These views, under the influence of the dissipation into which I plunged, issued in a theory of life which justified it. The view taken by my fellow-writers was that life is a development, and the principal part in that development is played by ourselves, the thinkers, while among the thinkers, the chief influence is again due to ourselves, the poets. Our vocation is to teach mankind. It ought next to have occurred to serious men who were engaged in teaching their fellow-men, to ask themselves, 'What is it that we are teaching!' or, 'Are we teaching anything?' or, 'Is what we are teaching right?'" And these questions did haunt Tolstoy in a very troublesome way. But he succeeded for a time in putting them aside. He was becoming rich, he was famous, he wrote on

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and on, as did others. "We were all then convinced that it behoved us to speak, to write, to print as fast as we could, as much as we could, and that on this depended the welfare of the human race. Hundreds of us wrote, printed, taught, and all the while confuted and abused each other. Quite unconscious that we ourselves knew nothing, that to the simplest of all problems in life—what is right and what is wrong—we had no answer, we all went on talking together, without one to listen, at times abetting and praising one another on condition that we were abetted and praised in turn, and again turning upon each other in wrath—in short, we reproduced the scenes in a madhouse."

To a nature like Tolstoy's, once a question has been raised there is no peace until somehow it is dealt with and composed. At this stage his difficulty, by his own account, was that he had become a leader, a guide, a teacher, while the fact was he had no message to declare to men, no light

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upon life, no clue to its mystery. During the six years previous to his marriage his mind became so engaged with his personal problem that for a time he withdrew to the steppes, to recover under the healing influences of nature his equanimity. By this time he had travelled in Europe, taking every opportunity to acquaint himself with the best thought of his time. It seemed to him that he found a foundation for his life in the ideas of progress and development which were current. He was so eager to embrace any positive faith with regard to the meaning of life, that he tried to put away from himself some difficulties which his quick mind detected in all the talk about progress as a moral aim or motive for man. He felt that men who had, on their own confession, no confidence at all in life, no conviction as to the "whither of all things," were ill-prepared to order the immediate steps. The gospel of progress seemed to him to be nothing better than a kind of fatalism with no right or

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qualification to answer the question which was gnawing within him. "Tormented by the question, 'How was I to better my life?'—when I answered that I must live for progress, I was only repeating the answer of a man carried away in a boat by the waves and the wind, who, to the one important question for him, 'Where are we to steer?' should answer, saying, 'We are being carried somewhere.'" Two events he records as happening at this time, the influence of one and the other being to show him the hollowness for the individual of any support for faith in hazy notions of universal progress. While in Paris, he saw a man guillotined, and on his return to Russia he was summoned to the deathbed of a very dear brother. With regard to the incident in Paris, he tells us that as he saw the head divided from the body . . . he understood, *not with his reason, but with his whole being* (a favorite phrase of Tolstoy's), that no theory of the wisdom of all established things, nor of

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progress, could justify such an act; and that if all the men in the world from the day of creation, by whatever theory, had found this thing necessary, it was not so. It was a bad thing. Therefore he must judge of what was right and necessary, not by what men said and did, not by "progress," but by what he himself felt to be true in his own heart. As for the effect upon him of his brother's death, a young, sincere, and able man, who died without ever having known what his life had been given him for, this was all that was needed to give the terrible fact of death its supreme place for Tolstoy amongst the difficulties which life raises in the way of faith. As he beheld his brother dying, he could only feel the irony under the consolations of "progress." "What boots it," as Lotze says, "that life on the whole is well, if in its details it is terrible!"

Hoping, it may be, to keep off the insistence of his own questioning spirit, Tolstoy, on his return home, devoted himself

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to teaching. He also accepted a magistracy, and busied himself in affairs. But the inner ferment never at any time subsided, and at last, his health threatening to break down seriously, he betook himself as we have said, to the steppes. There he enjoyed a certain leisure from himself, and wrote his charming story, "The Cossacks." Let me quote a few lines, which, to discerning eyes, will show at least the promise of daybreak in the soul of Tolstoy. "The hero, Olenine, has gone out pheasant shooting alone. He lies down in a thicket where a deer had lain before him and had left the imprint of his body on the leaves. He is suddenly seized by an unutterable sensation of happiness, of love for all creation. The very gnats that annoyed him at first began to have a claim upon him as part of the whole situation. He makes the sign of the cross and murmurs a prayer. 'Why have I never been happy?' he asks. He reviews his life and turns in disgust from its unredeemed selfishness. Suddenly a

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light breaks upon him. 'Happiness,' he cried, 'consists in living for others; that is clear. Man aspires to happiness; therefore it is a proper desire. If he tries to get it in a selfish way, in seeking wealth, glory, love, he may not succeed, and his wishes remain unsatisfied. Then it must be selfish desires which are wrong, and not the wish to be happy. Now, what are the dreams which may be realised apart from our outward circumstances? Only love and self-sacrifice!' He jumps up, rejoicing in his discovery, and seeks impatiently for some one to love, to do good to, to deny himself for. And returning to the village, he insists upon presenting his horse to a young Cossack who had been his rival in the affections of one of the village maidens. He loved every one so much that he felt that his remote hamlet was his true home, that there was his family and his happiness, that nowhere else and never again could he be so full of joy."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Crosley's "Message of Tolstoy."

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On his return from the steppes he married the delightful "Kitty" of Anna Karenina. For fifteen years the responsibilities, the joys of family life, his bodily vigour, daily labours, his increasing power and fame as a writer—these succeeded in keeping at least within bounds the old question, the old cry for light upon this life of ours, for faith, for confidence as to life's meaning. But now it returned to him with redoubled energy. The question since his brother's death came now before him rather than in this way: "What is that meaning of life which takes the sting and bitterness from death?"

He began to wander about the fields, and was a victim of low spirits. The same questions kept sounding in his ears, "Why?" and "What after?" At first it seemed to him that these were empty and unmeaning questions; that the answers were well known, and such as he could adopt, whenever he cared to take the trouble. But they presented themselves to his mind with ever-increasing frequency,

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demanding an answer with greater and greater persistence, grouping themselves into one dark and ominous spot. It was with him, he says, as in every case of a hidden, mortal disease; at first the symptoms are slight, and are disregarded by the patient, but later they are repeated more and more frequently, till they end in a period of uninterrupted suffering. The sufferings increase, and the patient, before he has time to seek a remedy, is confronted with the fact that what he took for a mere indisposition has become more important to him than anything else on earth, that he is face to face with death. He had thoughts of taking his own life, and for a time would not handle a gun for fear of what he might do in an access of despondency; and yet his mind was perfectly clear. He had a loving and beloved wife, a happy home of children, and as for his bodily vigour, he could keep up with a peasant in mowing. He sums up his condition in a story, which once heard can never be forgotten. "There

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is an old Eastern fable about a traveller in the Steppes who is attacked by a furious wild beast. To save himself the traveller gets into a dried-up well, but at the bottom of it he sees a dragon with its jaws wide open to devour him. The unhappy man dares not get out for fear of the wild beast, and dares not descend for fear of the dragon, so he catches hold of the branch of a wild plant growing in a crevice of the well. His arms grow tired, and he feels that he must soon perish, death waiting him on either side, but he still holds on; and then he sees two mice, one black and one white, gnawing through the stem of the wild plant, as they gradually and evenly make their way round it. The plant must soon give way, break off, and he will fall into the jaws of the dragon. The traveller sees this, and knows that he must inevitably perish; but, while still hanging, he looks around him, and finding some drops of honey on the leaves of the wild plant, he stretches out his tongue and licks them."

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“Thus,” continues Tolstoy, “I cling to the branch of life, knowing that the dragon of death inevitably awaits me, ready to tear me to pieces, and I can not understand why such tortures are fallen to my lot. I also strive to suck the honey which once comforted me, but it palls on my palate, while the white mouse and the black, day and night, gnaw through the branch to which I cling. I see the dragon too plainly, and the honey is no longer sweet. I see the dragon, from whom there is no escape, and the mice, and I can not turn my eyes away from them. It is no fable, but a living, undeniable truth, to be understood of all men. The former delusion of happiness in life, which hid from me the horror of the dragon, no longer deceives me. However I may reason with myself that I can not understand the meaning of life, that I must live without thinking, I can not again begin to do so, because I have done so too long already. I can not now help seeing that each day

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and each night as it passes brings me nearer to death."

Here, then, Tolstoy came to a standstill, here where all the elect souls have stood. The question could not now be postponed or evaded. He felt he could not live with self-respect, with integrity, until the question had received some final and irrevocable solution and the question had come to be this: "Is there any meaning in my life which can overcome the inevitable death awaiting me?"

He searched the science of our time, its philosophy, its practical wisdom, for a solution, for an anodyne even, to this inner torment; but in each case turned away disheartened, repelled. Tolstoy revels in his contempt for science the moment it presumes to deal with what for him were the really important things, namely, the whence, the why, and the whither of life?

"For the practical side of life, I used to say to myself, all its development and differentiation, all tends to complication

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and perfection, and there are laws which govern this process. You are yourself a part of the whole. Learn as much as possible of the whole, and learn the law of its development: you will then know your own place in the great unity. Though I feel shame in confessing it, I must needs own that there was a time when I was myself developing, when my muscles and memory were strengthening, my power of thinking and understanding on the increase; that I, feeling this, very naturally thought that the law of my own growth was the law of the universe, and explained the meaning of my own life. But there came another time when I had ceased to grow, when I felt that I was no longer developing, but drying up. My muscles grew weaker, my teeth began to fall out; and I saw that this law of growth not only explained nothing, but that such a law did not and could not exist; that I had taken for a general law what only affected myself at a given age."

Again "the relation of experimental sci-

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ence to the question of the meaning of life, may be put as follows: Question, 'Why do I live?' Answer, 'Infinitely small particles in infinite combinations, in endless space and endless time, eternally change their forms; and when you have learned the laws of these changes, you will know why you live.' " In short, when science presumes to deal with causes, with the final cause, with reality in fact, it begins to talk nonsense.

Tolstoy is led to ask himself at this point how it comes to pass that the people round about him are not aware of the problem which is haunting him like a nightmare; and he explains to himself why they are at ease, or seem to be. People of his own class, the cultured, the intellectual, save themselves from the terrible contradiction between faith and life as we know it, and take part in it, in four different ways. "One way is to ignore life's being a meaningless jumble of vanity and evil; *not* to know that it is better not to live. For me not to know this was impossible,

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and when I once saw the truth I could not shut my eyes to it. Another way is to make the best of life as it is, without thinking of the future. This again I could not do. I, like Sakya Muni, could not drive to the pleasure ground when I knew of the existence of old age, suffering and death. My imagination was too lively for that. Moreover, my heart was ungladdened by the passing joys which fell for a few rare instants to my lot. The third way is, knowing that life is an evil and a foolish thing, to put an end to it, to kill oneself. I understood this, but did not kill myself. The fourth is to accept life, as described by Solomon and Schopenhauer, to know that it is a stupid and ridiculous joke, and yet live on, to wash, dress, dine, talk, and even write books. This position was painful and disgusting to me, but I remained in it."

And now having reached with Tolstoy this lonely place from which he looks across the dark and senseless waters of an

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infinite sea, let us—and it is a much pleasanter task, though not more valuable for ourselves—(let us) make plain to ourselves what considerations led him away from the dizzy brink and brought him back into the warm circle of our common life. I have said that he stood upon the last shelf of things looking out into the blankness. Well, it is only the truth to say that his first step back from that place was taken when he turned his face and began to *look* back into life. For the solution of life must be found, and is found, within life itself—though the saving clue may be very deep and very fugitive and obscure. We saw, a moment ago, that Tolstoy admitted that there was one way of getting out of the difficulty, out of the contradiction between life and faith, or rather between life and reason. He could put an end to his life, but the fact is, he went on living. Why was that? We have his word for it that it was not cowardice. It was not that he was restrained by thinking of his family. No, he

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tells us, it was because that course seemed wrong and impossible for him. The same force of reason which made him dissatisfied with every theory of life urged him nevertheless to keep in life. To put the same thing in another way. It did seem that no quite reasonable defence of life could be given. You could not say "this" or "that" is the meaning of life, and it is a meaning which is not destroyed by death. And yet, there were—to quote Pascal—reasons, it would appear, beyond reason. There was the instinct to live, which, to say no more, was as truly part of man's nature as those powers of reasoning which had up to this point brought him all his trouble. Reason—the intellectual faculty, the critical faculty—had its place, and must not be denied; but there was something deeper. There was life itself, of which reason was but a late fruit. There was this ineradicable instinct with its claims, its insistence, the instinct to live; and looking into the heart of that instinct, he saw that it was

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✓ itself a kind of faith. The instinct to live was but the unconscious belief with which every man was endowed, that somehow life—and it followed a full true life—is possible, and therefore is demanded by the Author of our being. This result, though it may be stated thus briefly, became clear to Tolstoy first in glorious moments of insight, of self-surrender, and only afterwards became the ground-work of his convinced and logical doctrine of life. But my point is that his face is now turned the other way, turned home, turned towards the reconciliation, however remote he may still be from perfect intellectual satisfaction. ✓

You see how the controversy is progressing within him, and how daybreak is already in the sky for him in a quotation from *Anna Karenina*: “‘In the infinitude of time, of matter, of space, an organic cell is formed, exists for a moment, and bursts. That cell is I.’ This was a gloomy sophism. He saw in it the cruel jest of some evil spirit. And Levin, the happy father of a

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family, a man in perfect health, was sometimes so tempted to commit suicide, that he hid ropes from sight lest he should hang himself, and feared to go out with his gun lest he should shoot himself." *But so long as he pursues the old energetic life*, he feels that he is useful and happy. And when, in the field one day, an old Mujik tells him of a certain "honest man" who "lives for the Soul and remembers God," these simple, old-fashioned words have an extraordinary effect upon him—"the effect of an electric spark suddenly condensing the clouds of dim, incoherent thoughts"—so that "he felt that some new impulse inexplicable as yet filled his heart with joy." Now, the faith that Tolstoy was in search of, was not something which would save him the troubles and penalties of thought. And it was not something which would justify him in being morally idle, like those who say "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world"—and themselves do nothing. The faith which Tolstoy was seeking was, such

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a way of looking at things as would support and justify him in consecrating and quickening and bringing to their *fulfilment* "those ancient, instinctive, vital currents that hold the goodness of the race and carry it on from age to age." Tolstoy came into faith, when he accepted as the habit of his mind, as the law of his nature, that inner blessedness which so far had come to him only in moments, only in flashes. He remembered that those moments, those flashes of inner blessedness had come to him always when he was done with self-seeking; always when he had given up the life of worrying thought; always *when he had taken life for granted*; always when he yielded himself to a profound current of generosity, of human tenderness, of brotherhood which was *there*, as much *there* as this more superficial faculty of reason. And it at last came home to him that a man has *faith*, has a personal and unconquerable belief, has at length a hold upon the true meaning of life, who regards it as

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his one duty, and the very reason for his existence, to keep his own soul at the angle of love, at that angle which catches and reflects a certain profound and unutterable joy. "Faith is love in a common life."

He saw that all our intellectual misery raises from us men trying to do what is none of our business, namely, to discover the origin of life. Our business is only with duties, with obedience, with our own passage and striving from evil to good. The men who bother themselves about the origin of life, when they ought to be concerned *with its aim*, Tolstoy likens to a "miller who, concluding that all the success or failure of his mill depends upon the river, allows the machinery to go to pieces, and notwithstanding the counsel of his neighbors, at last persuades himself that the *river is the mill*."

Another mistake which, as Tolstoy now saw he had been making, was that he had been asking the meaning of life from men

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who, like himself, did not know it. That was as reasonable as it would be to go amongst invalids, asking first one and then another, the secret of health. If he wanted to know the meaning of life, the proper course for him was to consult that body of the people in whom, up to this point, the unity of the soul has been maintained; those people who still live by an elementary principle of life, an instinctive consciousness which they do not ask to have explained to them, that life itself, with all it holds, is good, is right.

He went to the peasantry, to those who create life, and their life appeared to him in its true significance. "I understood that this was life itself—this namely, labour, brotherhood—and that the meaning given to this life was a true one, and I accepted it."

"The more I studied the lives and doctrines of the people, the more I became convinced that a true faith was among them, that their faith was for them a neces-

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sary thing, and alone gave them a meaning in life and a possibility of living. In direct opposition to what I saw in my own circle—the possibility of living without faith, and not one in a thousand who professed himself a believer—amongst the people there was not amongst thousands a single unbeliever. In direct opposition to what I saw in my circle—a whole life spent in idleness, amusement, and dissatisfaction with life—I saw among the people whole lives passed in heavy labour and unrepining content. In direct opposition to what I saw in my own circle—men resisting, and indignant with the privations and sufferings of their lot—the people unhesitatingly and unresistingly accepting illness and sorrow, in the quiet and firm conviction that all was for the best. In contradiction to the theory that the less learned we are the less we understand the meaning of life, and see in our sufferings and death but an evil joke—those men of the people live, suffer, and draw near to death, in quiet confidence

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and oftenest with joy. In contradiction to the fact that an easy death without terror or despair, is a rare exception in my own class—a death which is uneasy, rebellious, and sorrowful, is among the people the rarest exception of all. These men, deprived of all that for us and for Solomon, makes the only good in life, experience the highest happiness both in amount and kind. I looked more carefully and more widely around me, I studied the lives of the past and contemporary masses of humanity, and I saw that not two or three, not ten or a hundred, but thousands and millions had so understood the meaning of life, that they were both able to live and to die. All these men, infinitely divided by manners, powers of mind, education, and position, all alike in opposition to my ignorance, were well acquainted with the meaning of life and of death, quietly laboured on and endured privation and suffering, lived and died, and saw in all this not a vain, but a good thing.”

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My task is done: for in the Kingdom of the Spirit a man is already home whose face is turned homewards. From this point, Tolstoy goes forward with an increasing positiveness. He never again felt a shudder of the old misgiving, of the last misgiving. Once for all he had decided that for him at least life was simply not possible without faith. And by the logic of the heart he moved up to that position which Pater, by a curiously similar process, attained: that since there are certain presuppositions, postulates, beliefs, without which a man simply cannot live, is not this a presumption that these presuppositions, postulates, beliefs, do signify the permanent universal truth? "I had only to know God, and I lived: I had only to forget Him, not to believe in Him, and I died. What was this discouragement and revival? I do not live when I lose faith in the existence of a God; I should long ago have killed myself if I had not had a dim hope of finding Him. I only really live

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when I feel, and seek Him. What more then do I ask? And a voice seemed to cry within me, 'This is He, He without whom there is no life! To know God and to live are One. God is Life. Live to seek God and life will not be without Him.' And stronger than ever rose up life within me and around me, and the light that then shone never left me again."

The last written words of Tolstoy, to which I have access, very fittingly conclude this sketch of his spiritual career. He is dealing with the great human fact of Death, which, as we have seen, was wont to loom so bodingly through all his thoughts, numbing all his energies in a certain heart-sickness. Observe what a tame creature Death is to him now.

"Man cannot, while living in this world in a bodily form, picture life to himself otherwise than in space and time; he therefore naturally asks, *where he will be* after death? But this question is wrongly put. When the divine essence of the soul which

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is spiritual, independent of time and space, enclosed in the body in this life—when this divine essence leaves the body it ceases to be conditioned by time or space, and therefore one cannot say of this essence that it *will be*. It *is*. As Christ said: ‘Before Abraham was, I *am*’; so also with us all. If we are, we always have been, and shall be. We *are* . . . Human reason, which can work only in the conditions of time and space, cannot give an answer concerning that which is outside these conditions. One thing only is known to reason: that the divine essence does exist, that it has been growing while in this world, and that, having attained a certain extent of growth, it has passed out of these conditions. Will this essence still continue its functions in a separate form? Will the increase of love produce a new accumulation? These are but conjectures, and of such conjectures there may be many; but none of them can give certainty. One thing alone is certain and indisputable, that which

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Christ said when He was dying: 'Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit.' That is to say, at death I return whence I came. And if I believe *that* from which I have emanated, to be reason and love (and these two realities I know), then I shall joyously return to Him, knowing that it will be well with me. Not only have I no regret, but I rejoice at the thought of the passage which awaits me."



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“If the Lord were pleased to kill us, He would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hand, neither would He have shewed us all these things, nor would at this time have told such things as these.”—*The Book of Judges*

“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the spirit do ye now make an end in the flesh?—*St. Paul to the Galatians.*

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IT would be difficult to name another, who, by the force of his solitary genius and personality, has wrought such a change in the religious life of a country as has been effected by the life of John Henry Newman. It is the bare truth that his influence upon the religious temper of Great Britain, notably upon England, indirectly upon all English-speaking peoples, is at this moment beyond all our powers of calculating. Not to speak of those, who in great numbers, have followed Newman into the Church of Rome, his ideas with regard to faith, with regard to the proper relations between faith and reason, with regard to the Church—those ideas have invaded the Church of England, which he left, and have now become the working basis of that Church. Since Newman's

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day the Church of England has not been the same. Since his day the note has been changed; her face is turned another way—his way. Other churches have felt his influence to a less degree, but all have felt it, and are destined, it may be, to feel it still more powerfully. But wherever the emphasis is laid upon the Church as an institution, rather than upon the Kingdom of God as a Spirit, there Newman's teaching has found an opening, and, once in, has never been expelled.

It will only be fair to myself to state here that whatever I may be led to say of Newman later on, it is in no case to be understood as casting doubt upon the character of the man, upon his sincerity, upon his anxious and scrupulous purpose to be loyal at each stage to what at that moment he conceived to be his duty.

So much of Newman's work is controversial, and the things he is contending for seem to men of a different temperament in many cases so unreal and so unprofit-

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able even when they are established, that we may easily forget the total contribution he has made to the spiritual substance of our time and of all time.

Whatever we may think of Newman's mental history, whatever criticism and, at times impatience we may have for the reasons which he gives in justification of the various steps he took, and of the last step, we must never suspect the real honesty of the man—he being such as he was—his exact obedience to what he conceived to be the will of God. It was an error here which proved fatal to Kingsley in his controversy with Newman. His charge against Newman of insincerity and lying should never have been made. Newman, in fact, lived under a light which would be intolerable to the majority of even very good men. Indeed, as has happened in the case of others, it was just this very sincerity of his, his exact obedience to his own restless sense of what was right, it was this which gave to his behaviour, as

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outsiders observed it, the appearance of shiftiness and planning and cowardice. For myself, if I needed any proof that Newman was entirely sincere with himself, that however tortuous and incalculable the way he took, his aim was always pure and purged of self-seeking, I should only have to read the writings he has left behind. No man could write English like Newman's English who was not himself a faithful man. No one could see so clearly and tell so distinctly what he saw in the inmost recesses of the soul who was not in the habit of being quite alone with himself and with God.

It may be that, when all is said, we owe some grudges to Newman. It may be that he has hindered the real progress of the Kingdom of God, that he has retarded the recovery of man from superstition, from a natural love of darkness. It is probably true that he has revived amongst us the spirit of bigotry, and—unless we had safeguards—of persecution, and thereby has compelled us and will

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compel our children to fight for principles which, as we thought, would never again be assailed. Perhaps he has encouraged all the churches to look backwards rather than forwards. Perhaps he has done much to make good men suspect their own best instincts, to curb unduly within themselves that daring of the soul which has been the good providence of the world. Perhaps he has thrown open certain subterranean chambers, concerning which, God, who moves through history, ordains that once closed they shall remain closed. Perhaps he has taught us to REMEMBER "those things that are behind" which an apostle bids us "forget." Perhaps his whole intellectual fabric, his whole scheme of life, his premises and arguments, and his conclusions, rest upon nothing better than that natural terror of our immense and unfathomable surroundings, which our religion, culminating as it does in Christ, was given to sanctify, it may be to banish, for ever. Perhaps Newman's entire sys-

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tem rests, when all is said, *not upon revelation, but upon reason*, upon reason working in holes and corners. Perhaps it all rests not upon the revelation of God, but upon his own terrible analysis of man, which way madness lies. Perhaps it has, as its root idea, not that faith in God to which Christ invites us, but a certain SUSPICION of God, a certain terror of what the Almighty might do to us if He were minded. It may be that all this is a true charge against Newman. Indeed, it was his boast that he had accomplished many of these things. And, so far, we blame him.

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding all these things, there is that in Newman for which all good men will continue to give God thanks, and will be glad to lay a reverent stone upon his cairn. For one thing, Newman's life, simple and severe, unvexed by any low or unworthy aim, strung rather to the very breaking point by the immediate sense of God, was a shining protest against the easy and indolent, and almost patron-

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izing attitude towards religion which satisfied the great mass of people in his day. One sees a meaning in this man's coming into our midst. He lived altogether for God, in absolute surrender to what he believed to be God's will. The secular spirit of his time, far from tempting him gave him pain. He was always simple, unaffected, austere. He never paraded his gifts, but rather in his private conversation, as in the pulpit and in his books, practised a certain reserve. "God and the human soul," as he again and again declared, were to him the only two realities. This was the impression which he made upon his contemporaries, and it is what we feel as we read what he has left behind. His sermons are models of simplicity, and of what was his constant aim—REALITY. There is nothing extravagant, nothing of colour or excess; everywhere there is the atmosphere of a high seriousness, of a certain aloofness from the world, which at times approaches contempt for it.

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Now that we have alluded to his sermons, perhaps we could not do better for our present purpose than consider them further, and through them make a definite entrance into the proper mind of Newman. The preaching of such a sensitive man was sure to be full of his own story. Hearing him preach, trained ears may hear him confess.

Newman had many natural qualities which, penetrated as they were by the man's awful seriousness, and by his conviction that what he said was true, made him a great preacher. He had a commanding presence. He had not the face of a common man. It suggested to Froude, the historian, the features of Julius Cæsar; the same combination of seriousness and gentleness.

It sometimes happens that when we meet a man in private whose writings we have read, or whom we have heard in public, we are disappointed in him, and nothing that the man may ever write or

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say afterwards will make him an impressive figure for us. It was not so in Newman's case. Men who were admitted to close quarters with Newman felt that he really possessed those reserves of intellectual and personal holiness which his spoken or written words had suggested to them.

It may be that many of his most characteristic sermons do not impress us. We can convict him of special pleading and want of fairness towards views other than his own. But nothing could surpass, as an instrument for producing a keen impression upon selected minds, the severe and chastened speech, the insight, the grace, the allusiveness, the rage against sin, the fine scorn for average standards of life, the superiority to the ways and maxims of the world, which are the features of those sermons. But they have their defects. True as they are, they sin against the whole truth.

In saying that, as I do very deliberately,

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I mean that whilst Newman knows the human heart to a weird and shaking depth, there are levels of the human heart which he either does not know or will not trust. He knows, almost too well, the souls of sinking and baffled men ; he does not know or will not trust the testimony of those whom God has made glad. He knows the soul in those hours when a man is confused, at a loss. He knows a man when—for one reason or another—his face is towards the darkness. I cannot imagine Newman joining himself to those women of Bedford, whom Bunyan found “sitting at a door in the sun talking about the things of God. . . . Their talk was about a new birth . . . how God had visited their souls with love in the Lord Jesus, and with what words they had been refreshed, comforted, and supported against the temptations of the devil. . . . And methought they spake with such pleasantness of Scripture language, and with such appearance of grace in all they said that

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they were to me as if they had found a new world. . . .”

The atmosphere which surrounds Newman is so different in quality from that, that it is only a firm way of stating the difference to ask whether Newman or Bunyan believed ultimately in the same God!

Newman knows the human soul, but for the most part only on its dark and troubled side. He knows it in its varied disasters, in the hours when mere knowledge fails, when the things in which he trusted mock a man. Indeed there is in all Newman's preaching a kind of mocking at man.

To describe this atmosphere which infects his preaching from another point of view; he never uplifts you. He suspects all the kindly humanities. He knows your secret, rather than God's secret for you. He knows you and yet with a certain injustice. He does not know you at your best. He knows how to corner you, how to crush you, how to expose you. He will not give you the benefit of the doubt. His

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words do not, speaking properly, humble you ; for when we are humble we are ready to believe ; his words humiliate you ; and when we are humiliated we are ready to despair, to plunge into any abyss.

The one proper effect of all Newman's preaching seems to me this, to make men feel insecure, to make them confused, at a loss, desperate, ready to give themselves over to a certain slavish panic to some authority which could hardly be anything else except visible and external and self-contained. There is no logical course for the man who wrote Newman's Anglican Sermons, or for one who believes them to contain the whole truth about God and man, except ultimately to do what Newman did, abandon his own inherent right as a man to think, shrink from the splendid perils of responsibility, and thus fall a victim to the fascination of a church which makes the prostration of the reason the first condition of communion with her, and her unrelenting terms of peace.

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In all the quotations which we may subsequently make from Newman, you will feel that the real effect is always as I have said—to baffle you, to lead you to suspect yourself, to make you timid and uneasy, contemptible in your own eyes and ready to surrender. You will feel that whatever power his words and ideas may have, rests upon a certain element of terror in the human soul which, even according to our faith, is not the earliest or the deepest faculty in man, but something which invaded man and remains for ever opposed to God's idea of man.

Granted that this terror—which let me say, by the way, might be aroused and let loose within us to a pitch that would have more than served Newman's purpose, I mean even to the point of madness—granted that this terror is a true faculty of the human soul, it is not the only faculty, nor is it at all the faculty by which man has come into his spiritual inheritance thus far. The love of life is as deep as the fear of

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life—nay, it must be deeper. The profound sense which has its roots below consciousness, and appears most sweetly in little children, whom Christ instanced—the profound sense that it is a friendly world into which we have come, and that life is an opportunity rather than a risk—it is that wholesome instinct, purified indeed by fear, confirmed by faith, on which man has come thus far. And, to close this portion of our survey, on which we may have dealt disproportionately, Clough's triumphant line stands: "If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars." If we are wrong in our hopes we may be wrong in our fears, for both reside indestructibly within the human heart, and Christ came into the world to put an end to man's ancient timidity and misgiving. In the balance of man's hopes and fears Christ entered the scale of man's hopes. Let not your heart be agitated (the very trembling of a balance is indicated), BELIEVE in God, in Me, in the future!

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Whilst it is true that Newman avoids all excess or exuberance in his language, and compels himself at all times to say less than he might have said, he had nevertheless a most dramatic and impressive way of delivering his message. For example, do you know anything more startling than this sentence from his "Apologia"—(a sentence which, in the judgment of the late Bishop Westcott, shares with another in Browning's "Muleykeh" the rank of being the most pregnant line in the whole range of literature)? Newman is speaking of his own private belief in God and of the poor and shifty ground on which it rests apart from the authority of some external and abiding institution, and here is how he delivers himself:—

"Starting then with the being of a God (which, as I have said, is as certain to me as the certainty of my own existence, though when I try to put the grounds of that certainty into logical shape I find a difficulty in doing so in mood and in figure

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to my satisfaction), I look out of myself into the world of men, and there I see a sight which fills me with unspeakable distress. The world seems simply to give the lie to that great truth of which my whole being is so full, and the effect upon me is in consequence, as a matter of necessity, as confusing as if it denied that I am in existence myself." Here follows the sentence which I wish you to note. "If I LOOKED INTO A MIRROR AND DID NOT SEE MY FACE, I should have the sort of feeling which actually comes upon me when I look into this living world and see no reflection of its Creator." He then proceeds to show how the Roman Church is the witness and support of his belief, but gives reasons which have no force for those of us who, to say no more, hold that the real knowledge of God is always by faith, not by sight, and is, strictly speaking, personal and incommunicable, the gift of God Himself. "Hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope

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for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it; and the Spirit also maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." And again: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things NOT SEEN."

But those words, with their swift horror, with their touch, as one might say, of madness—"if I looked into a mirror and did not see my face"—may serve as an example of Newman's tremendous power with words; they may serve at the same time as an illustration of the kind of assault which his preaching makes upon his readers. He looks into the human heart and sees no sign of God. He looks across the fields of secular history or into the laws and processes of the natural world, and he finds no steadfast ground of faith. One by one he puts out the kindly lights—the little genialities and courtesies which even the uncouth world permits itself to show us. He awakens misgivings, he raises doubts where, as you imagined, everything

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was well secured. He will not suffer you to rest your faith, or take encouragement for faith, in anything within your own moral or emotional experience, in any feeling or mood or purpose, however generous and unworldly it may seem to you. And then, though, to speak fairly of Newman, he did not for many years see that this was inevitable—then, when you are crying for something to believe in, for something apart from your own glancing and unsteadfast moods, which have now become suspect; for something that will end the strife of doubt and misery; as you picture yourself alone in the midst of your awful surroundings in this world and in the world to come—you are ready to hear of an Infallible Church which will release you from thinking, and are ready, not in faith, but in despair, to cast yourself into her arms.

His most powerful passages are just those in which he is demonstrating how helpless we are even by the help of God

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(as it would seem) to think out our way in this world; how difficult, how mysterious our human lot is, how hazardous therefore to risk ourselves upon the support of any mere feeling, however warm, which in a moment has grown cold. And it is all true, if it means that we need to have a perfect confidence in God, and to believe that our security in this world and throughout eternity depends not upon our poor and fitful holds on God, but upon His Almighty hold on us. But that is not at all what Newman means. In these passages and throughout his teaching there is a scarcely veiled contempt for man as he is—for his efforts and enterprises, for his confidence in his own reason and endowments. Even where it is not his set purpose to dishearten a man, to poison the wells for him, taking away his self-respect, that is in nearly every case the effect of Newman's preaching. As we listen, the feeling creeps over us like a cold hand that it is almost an impertinence for us to think for ourselves, or to

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rely upon any instinct of our own; that we are in a hopeless case; that the best thing that could happen to us would be for some strong Company (so to speak) to take over our miserable private business.

I believe it is quite just to Newman to say that though there are shades and degrees, and though different people will feel what he says in different ways, this is always the kind of effect which his message leaves. You are crushed. You are overwhelmed. It may be, you are mocked. He undermines your self-respect, and thus leaves you either agnostic or superstitious. Henceforth, you are ready to believe nothing, or you are prepared to believe anything. But he takes all effort from you, all desire to help yourself. You weep, it may be. Yes, once or twice, Newman might even lead us to shed tears. But they are not our best tears. They are blinding tears, not the tears God sometimes gives us, through which we see shining gates in front. No; you weep,

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not for your sin, but simply because you are thinking what a blunder everything is, and that there is no way out of the entanglement except by a sacrifice of a kind that, as you somehow feel, a loving God need not have asked of you.

And now, let us review some of the salient points in Newman's public career and in the history of his religious opinions.

The question is often asked, how was it possible for a man of Newman's strength to take the journey which he took and to end where he ended. The best answer, I think, is to say that Newman was born a Roman Catholic. I mean, that according to his own story, from the time when he first formed ideas for himself, he showed a tendency towards that prostration of his reason before authority, an inability to endure suspense, which were sure in all his circumstances to lead him, where as a matter of history, they did lead him. He himself tells us that when he was quite a boy,

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about ten years of age, he had a verse book in which, at the heading of the page, he drew as it were instinctively a solid cross. He was always superstitious. On entering into a dark passage or room, he invariably made the sign of the cross. This happened long before he adopted Roman opinions. It seems to have been with him a matter of temperament or instinct. In his youth he read the books which were written to controvert the Christian faith. These, however, made no impression upon him. This may have been so, because he had answers for the sceptics; but more probably it was due to his inborn habit of believing. He never passed through a period of real and fundamental doubt. He knew the difficulties that men were raising with regard to faith, the questions which were being asked; but I doubt whether he ever felt the direct challenge of them. He had made up his mind. By the time he was sixteen he had already resolved to enter the Church. In due course he went

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to Oxford. There were some notable students in his time. Gladstone was there. Whateley, John Keble, Pusey, Williams, Marriott, and,—Hurrell Froude, who really awakened Newman and set him his course. Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, had just left. Jowett, Temple, the writers of the *Essays and Reviews*, were coming or had come. It was a stirring time, both in politics and religion. There were rumblings which might signify anything. There were shrewd minds in those days, who expected nothing less than the disestablishment of the Church, and who saw in the distress of the time and in the sullenness of popular opinion, the spectre of an immense, and it might be, a bloody revolution. For one thing, it was still the days of the Corn Laws; and for another thing, Queen Victoria, that good woman had not yet come to the throne. The year 1832 was approaching. Reform was in the air. The Bill for the Emancipation of Catholics was before Parliament. It was characteristic of

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Newman and his friends that they opposed that Bill. I say, it was characteristic of one who, I believe, never shrank from saying openly that truth, the Kingdom of God, had to be defended from heretics and schismatics, if need be, by the power of the civil arm, by persecution and disabilities.

In his opposition to Catholic Emancipation, Newman manifested that hatred of all that we call progress which was instinctive with him and explains everything.

And it was not only in the sphere of politics, but in the sphere of religion itself, that the spirit of inquiry and readjustment was abroad. New opinions were beginning to be held as to the authority of the Scriptures. Science, in our modern sense, had begun to assail and to undermine all established opinions on the facts of nature, and on the genesis of man. It seemed to Newman that the ark of the Lord was in danger. He did not for a moment consider whether the time into which he had been born might not be one of those times

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which need to come, when the human mind is called upon to rid itself of encumbrances, for which it has no urgent need, in order that it may acquire new treasures, and new confirmations for its faith in the new country to which all things are inviting it. Newman, and those who were with him, were genuinely afraid that in sweeping the house for the lost treasure, men might sweep out the treasure itself; or to vary the metaphor, and to quote our most ingenious and spirited apologist, they were afraid that in emptying out the bath, men might empty out the baby too.

But here as elsewhere, Newman was guided not so much by reasons as by the whole bias of his nature. All change was hateful to him. He suspected research and was never weary of showing how inadequate all men's words are to deal with those mysteries and elusive facts which they presume to describe. To him, faith was above everything else, obedience to authority, the unconditional, and if need be,

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the abject surrender of the human reason to the doctrines of the Church. It was about this time, that he conceived a hatred towards the work of Luther and the Reformers. He often declared that "the spirit of lawlessness came in with the Reformation, and liberalism is its offspring." He confessed that he had a horror of the principle of private judgment. In short, Newman was always on his way to Rome, though he was not always aware of it.

The position which Newman occupied could not long withstand the gnawing assaults of his own restless logic. He held that the doctrines of the Christian religion—and in his teaching it is always these, and not spiritual obedience which are the objects of faith—had been delivered to the Church. The Anglican Church having, as he thought at this time, an unbroken descent from the Apostolic age, held the true tradition. To believe was to accept that tradition. He saw that an Infallible Bible needed an Infallible Interpreter. If every

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man had the right to make his own interpretation, where, then, would be the guarantee for unity and for truth? That being his position, Newman soon found himself in difficulties. In reading the Fathers, doubts began to arise in his mind whether his own Church, and not the Roman Church, was the true home of authority. Each Church made the claim, yet their testimonies conflicted. But history showed him that the Roman Church was more primitive, and the doubt arose whether the Anglican Church were really Apostolic.

He began to study the constitution of his Church and that study confirmed his uneasiness. He saw that Queen Elizabeth, in establishing a form of religion in England, was anxious to bring all the religious parties within the realm into harmony. The Church must be Protestant, but, at the same time, the old Catholic priests must be made welcome to its communion. And so the thirty-nine articles were drawn up, with sufficient indefiniteness to permit

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men who held divergent and even contrary views accepting them, or some of them. As Newman realized all this, his misgivings deepened into a conviction that the Church of England was not the true Catholic Church. He saw that the Church of England herself was in doubt about those very things which were troubling him. There was no decision in her voice.

He looked across to Rome. For Newman to look across was ultimately to go across, for he could never endure the torment of a divided or hesitating mind.

It was for him a time of very deep distress, and he resolved to go abroad for rest and change. In company with Hurrell Froude, he travelled in Italy and Sicily. Even then he did not realize that he was drifting into the Church of Rome, although it must have been evident to any one who was allowed to share his thoughts at that time. His letters from the Continent are full of the Catholic services in which he is joining. The Roman Church fascinates

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him by its very bulk, by its unquestioning and unruffled acceptance of things as they happen to have come down through the ages. It is a curious and, to myself, a sad spectacle to see any man who has "begun in the Spirit thinking that he will be made perfect by the flesh," to see this man blind to all the ignorance, to the slavishness, to the mental deadness, to the superstition, which were then rampant in Italy and Sicily—things for which the Roman Church was largely responsible, and for which she ought to have held herself responsible—to see this man blind to all that, or again excusing it all, even praising it, because, at any rate, in those same regions there was no revolt of the human intelligence against the tyranny of tradition. It is to me a tragical point to which a man has reached, when, rather than that men should apply their minds to the facts of life and of the soul, and find reasons, if they need reasons, for the faith that is in them, he would have them sink, as far as men may,

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to the intellectual imbecility and quietness of sheep that merely graze, and breed, and die! For, "how much better is a man than a sheep!"

In Sicily severe illness overtook Newman. It was after his recovery, and while he was on the voyage from Palermo to Marseilles, that the beautiful hymn, "Lead, kindly Light," was written. It came to him as they lay becalmed for a whole night in the straits of Bonifacio. He felt that, like his ship, he too was drifting, and he hardly dared yet think what port was likely to receive him. Speaking for myself, the the man who wrote "Lead, kindly Light," was nearer, even as he wrote, to the true spirit of faith than the same man in later years, when he had, by a definite, and, for him, irrevocable act of self-abandonment, sold his high, even if perilous, birth-right.

The captain of that orange boat which bore Newman to Marseilles was in his own sphere, living by the simple faith which alone God requires of men. He was put-

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ting out to sea, and the only assurance which he had that he would ever reach the coast of France was that his ship had the power to float, that others had set out and had arrived, that his compass was true, or, if that failed, that the stars would keep their places and would shine.

Newman returned to Oxford, and continued to preach for some years in St. Mary's. It was earnest, searching, sad work, with never a touch of the joy of the Lord. "His sermons during those years appeared to be the outcome of continued meditation upon his fellow-creatures and their position in the world, their awful responsibilities, the mystery of their nature. A tone, partly of fear, partly of infinite pity, runs through them all. Men are met on all sides with difficulties. Life seemed to be not the proof, but the contradiction of Christ's Gospel. And in the background, unexpressed, but forming itself into words, was the unconscious hint that in some visible community there must lie

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the secret, in some society must be man's sole resting-place." They contain "exquisite passages, speaking the language of the world, yet most unworldly, displaying a subtle knowledge of human nature"—a priest's knowledge, I was going to say—"its twistings and weaknesses and self-deceptions: recognizing with an awe that approaches to dread the impenetrable mysteries of the stupendous darkness in which man for a moment emerges to play his little part and vanish: well fitted to leave a strong impression upon the callous worldliness of men, and penetrating painfully to the very heart of the anxious and inconsistent Christian." But there is no inner freedom in them, no Gospel, no good news, no news at all; only the reiteration of that natural despair, that terror of the law, that awful sense of forlornness, which would indeed still weigh us down to death if Jesus Christ were struck out of our hearts.

But he was an unhappy man who

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preached those eight volumes of Parochial and Plain Sermons.

In 1841 Newman resigned his position at St. Mary's, and retired to Littlemore, a village three miles from Oxford. The end was near. In regard to the Anglican Church, he was already, as he describes it, "on his death-bed." In 1843 he was received into the Church of Rome. He underwent a short probation; visited the Pope; was placed at the Oratory in Birmingham; became a cardinal. He died on the evening of the 11th of August, 1890. He tells us that he experienced little change on entering the Church of Rome. He says that all his doubts were resolved, but from his own account we should rather say that he had given up his very right to have doubts, to weigh and choose at least "with all his strength," and "with ALL HIS MIND," as we are commanded. In short he had given up his right to hold a personal belief.

In drawing these notes and this com-

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mentary to a conclusion, I wish very humbly, as becomes me, but quite resolutely, as also becomes me, to offer three short criticisms of Newman's life-long principles. They are criticisms which I must try your patience only so far as to indicate, asking you, however, to believe that they rest upon well considered reasons. I said Newman's life-long principles ; for, as we have seen, his entrance into the Church of Rome produced no real change in his mental attitude. That step was for such a man inevitable, sooner or later. It was the natural result of a habit of mind which Newman never did anything to correct or restrain, and concerning which he never raised the question whether, in the light of history, it was not a habit of mind which had been responsible for some of the darkest and most ghastly pages in the annals of the race.

1. In the first place, it would be an easy matter to show that the thorough denial of the right of private judgment in

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matters of faith would put an end to faith, and thus work its own refutation.

Every doctrine of the Church, as stated in her formularies, was, at the outset, the result of long and at times very bitter controversy. Every doctrinal statement, that is to say, was the result of an accumulation of private judgments which, at a certain point, became so harmonious, so representative of the dominant opinion of that particular age, that the Church of that age gave its sanction and authority to the statement.

And besides that : to accept a doctrine, to assent to it, implies, if the acceptance is to have any value, an active use of one's mind, a certain deliberateness and choosing. A man's beliefs ought not, surely, to be things which are fixed upon him, so to speak ; things which he must not even read too interestedly, lest he should begin to think about them, and thus involuntarily deviate into pronouncing secret judgments upon them. Surely, if a man's belief is

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to retain any moral worth, or to signify anything for the man himself, or as a testimony to the world, it must have the corroboration of his mind, the assent and approval and joyful support of his whole manhood.

Once more: while Newman denies the right of private judgment to decide in matters of faith, he himself was led by his own reason, by the restless exercise of all his faculties, by his own private and lonely sense of what for him was right and necessary, into the Church of Rome.

Newman's "Apologia" is nothing at all if it is not a defence of the right of the individual to judge upon matters of faith. His private judgment led him into Rome: another's private judgment, having weighed his reasons, may keep him out of Rome.

There is no need to doubt that once a man has made up his mind that, so to put it, he has no mind worth making up, once a man has made up his mind that he cannot think with safety, that there is an incurable

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vice or fault in his thinking apparatus, whenever he brings it to bear upon religion ; once that point has been reached, he will have no further mental anguish, as Newman claims that he had none after he took his step. Of course not. A man, let us say, has a limb which gives him great pain at times, and continual uneasiness. He drags it about with him and in consequence spends miserable days. At length he has the limb amputated. From that moment, though many are never the same after such a shock, (from that moment) he has not a single twinge in the limb which has been taken off. Certainly not : but he is less of a man by that limb. And so, from the day in which he finally withdrew from his reason, the right to think in any decisive way upon the doctrinal statements and traditional claims of his Church, from that moment he seems able to accept things or helpless to reject them, which, in other days he would have instinctively refused. Faith, having lost the curb of

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reason, may appear at any moment as the most childish credulity. Thus we find Newman in his later and Catholic writings seriously defending miracles which are merely grotesque, believing in the virtue of sacred oils, and rags and pieces of wood, maintaining with his matchless literary style, stories which many an equally devout person would prefer not to believe. Because the doctrine of the Roman Church declares that the sun moves round the earth, Newman will not say plainly that there the Church was wrong, and is wrong. Though even young children know that relatively to the earth the sun stands still, and that it is the earth which goes round the sun, Newman will only ask with a subtlety and disingenuousness which should be a warning, "How can I say which of the two moves until I know what motion is?"

2. My second general remark, by way of criticism of Newman's career and its conclusion, is to notice as characteristic of

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him, his attitude of suspicion and hostility towards the movements which were peculiar to his time, movements which will be celebrated in history, not as deeds of darkness, but as eminent signs of the spirit and energy of God.

In all this suspicion and hostility Newman surely showed a lamentable want of confidence in God, a lamentable forgetting of the saying which he tells us affected him so profoundly, though in a very pretty way by comparison with this other—*securus judicat orbis terrarum*—which to a believing man simply means “God rules.”

Newman saw nothing hopeful, no ground for thanksgiving, in all the mental enterprise of the Victorian age. To him it was all tainted with the denial of God, and therefore only mischievous. He never, so far as I can recall, gave God praise for the rise of hospitals, infirmaries, asylums, for the abolition of slavery, for the improvement in the circumstances in prison life, for the betterment of the general condition

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of the people, or for the marvelous spread of the Gospel and the name of Christ in heathen lands. And yet these, it may be, as they are signs, many of them, of a growing sensitiveness towards our fellow-men, a growing sense of our mutual responsibility, may have been the cathedrals which the century was raising, witnesses and monuments of the soul in man, and thus to the glory of God. This was in no way Newman's view. In his eyes the intellectual movement of the time was but the outbreak of man's sinful pride, and as often as he encountered it, he showed his teeth, as though his bone were threatened. To him it was all little better than the rebellious building of another Tower of Babel, and it could only end in a confusion of tongues.

3. My last general remark is this: There was another alternative which always lay open to him, offering a solution of the difficulty into which his own embarrassing premises had led him.

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He believed that Christ had founded a Church on earth. Good! In the Anglican Church he confessed that certain notes of authority were wanting. The same was true of the Greek, the same of the Roman. But considering these things, that no historical Church corresponded even in essential signs to the perfect ideal of the Church of Christ, manifesting God as inevitably as the sun radiates light, might he not have been led to that conclusion which at once puts all our human enterprises into their humble place and yet mocks none of them, but leaves us looking hopefully towards God,—the conclusion to which the apostle came, who, in his day, had the care of all the Churches, the conclusion, namely, that we *all* of us “have the treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of ourselves?” Making, as we must ever make, the deduction due to our human weakness, surely it was open to him to see the true Church wherever the mind of Jesus Christ

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was seeking to find expression and a home! True it is that we are far from having yet apprehended that for which Christ apprehended us. Nevertheless, today everywhere Christ is preached, and therein with a greater he might well have rejoiced. It is the task of all the ages, and not of one age only to bring on perfection, when Christ shall be all in all, when "there shall be no Temple therein for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it."

Was it not always open to him to break away from the purely worldly and physical and apparent as tests and signs of God's Presence, and to take up that truly Catholic outlook upon this immense human scene, acknowledging in every holy undertaking, in every advance of the mind of Christ upon the minds of men, in every soul whom Christ inhabits, in every community which bears evidences of the Holy Spirit—acknowledging in these the first-fruits of the coming harvest, the first and in this hour of time the invincible, rays of that

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Eternal light which is coming and coming through all ages, until Christ shall be all in all?

Why, since he could not see all the notes of the perfect Church in any one existing Church—antiquity, authority, sanctity, and the rest, did not Newman, like faithful Abraham, still look for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God? Why did he not abandon that premiss which tormented and entangled him through all his journey, a premiss which was always false, and in contradiction to God's way everywhere, the premiss and first requirement, namely, that the true and only Church must of necessity be one in a visible and material sense: why did he not rise above that lower level of judging men and institutions, and declare with that greater preacher of Christ, who received his message by Revelation of the exalted Lord: "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the Mother of us all?"



## FURTHER THOUGHTS

### FROM MY NOTE-BOOK ON "NEWMAN"

My fear of unmitigated "Science" is that it will drive men into superstition.

"We were made and meant for and must have God."

The truth underlying Newman's "Pilgrim's Progress" is the justice of his appeal to history, to life considered broadly. For it is the fact that man has faced his tasks, has endured immeasurable pains, and the long monotony of his existence, by the help of his beliefs, because he has kept a window open to what to him at each stage was the Eternal. Newman was right in feeling, as he did, that knowledge by itself leads to death, and in protesting against the tyranny of one faculty of the soul, viz., intellectual reason, in the name of man's total nature. But he failed to indicate the true place which the reason has in matters of faith.

A truth (the converse truth) underlies Huxley's phrase, "the sin of faith," the sin of credulity.

We must be prepared to reject that which is contradictory to the laws of our mind; yet on the other

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side, we must never forget that all the great human enterprises—patriotism, marriage, fidelity to kindred, martyrdom, are all works of faith—have been accomplished and are still pursued, not in obedience to reason, but in obedience to mysterious impulses, to some divine enthusiasm with which the Creator loaded man at the beginning and still replenishes him, in obedience to an instinct which is blind to consequences, seeing clearly only the immediate thing.

Compare Balfour's dominant idea in his philosophical writings, that all great movements have been "irrational."

Perhaps Newman in his search for certainty was seeking something which God has not ordained for men.

I verily believe that if we were perfectly sure of God, so that we could say "There He is," "There His will is absolutely, and without the very possibility of mistake to be known," I believe that it would destroy all moral initiative, and would alter the very nature of the soul.

"That were the seeing God, no flesh shall dare."

If the entire world without exception believed that the Pope was God's actual plenipotentiary and representative in the world, really believed that as we believe that fire burns, it would bring thought and religion itself to an end. Cf. Robert Buchanan's

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poem "The Eye," or that passage in Browning's "The Ring and the Book," containing the lines:

"What, but the weakness in a faith supplies  
The incentive to humanity?"

And then, as Professor James puts it, saying what it was high time somebody had said, "There is that within us which is prepared to take a risk."

"A religion which is not a certainty is a mockery and a horror" (Carlyle).

This is the truth underlying Newman's dialectic. Man's innermost need is for REST, for BONDAGE. But surely this must be spiritual. When the object of faith is something VISIBLE, then it is no longer faith, but sight, and inferior. Faith is of the unseen, but morally inevitable. Faith says "it must be so." Its intellectual basis is that in our best hours WE are not deceived, that our minds are in harmony with God, that HE has not made man in vain.

May not the incarnation of God in Christ have as its profoundest interpretation this: that in Jesus Christ we have God's sanction and corroboration of our holiest human hopes and dreams?

"If it were *not* so, I would have told you," said Jesus.

From this point of view, Hugo of St. Victor's great saying is but a passionate plea that life is ultimately reasonable, that God is just: *Domine si error est, a Te decepti sumus!*









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