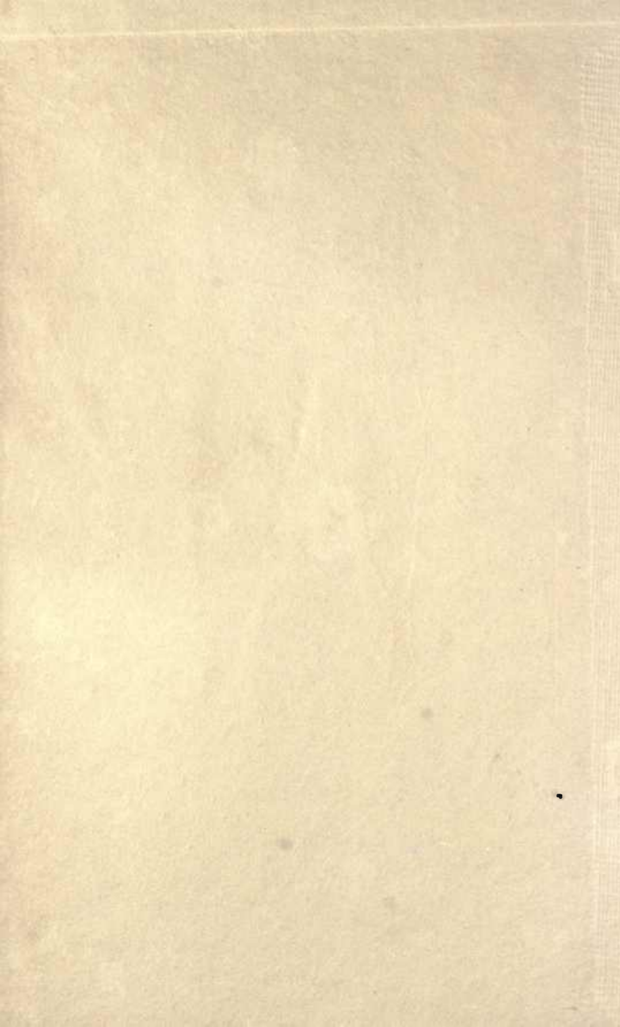

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PROBLEMS OF LIVING.

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BY

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Preface.

In these pages I have treated the human problem, both in its individual and social aspects, as essentially a transcendental one. The separate studies have been written under the conviction that the spiritual element in man is not only the one feature that gives distinction to life, but is the only adequate clue to our sphinx riddle of a world. The problem, as here dealt with, is followed on many tracks. But whether pursued along its physical, its historical, or its economic sides, or into our most intimately personal realm, it is ever in the sphere of the invisible that the answer is sought. Spite of the modern assertion to the contrary, our "problems of living" are finally religious, and look to religion for their solution.

But what religion? In these pages I have constantly urged the view that a faith adequate for such a purpose must be one that, free from sectarian limits, allies itself to the soul's

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universal affirmations, and is one with the inmost nature of things. I have argued that Christianity, properly conceived, is that religion, or contains it. But it must be a purified Christianity. Half the difficulties the modern man finds in Christian belief arise from faults of statement. Much of what is written here is accordingly an effort at restatement. The eternal revelation uses for each age its own special language. Happy is that teacher who catches something at least of the note in which the Unseen is uttering itself to his generation!

J. B.

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Problems of Living.

I.

Religion's Impossibles.

If we can imagine a man of high nature, trained in the science of the modern world, coming, without any prepossession, quite fresh to the study of the New Testament, what may we suppose would be his feeling? There would probably be a strange mingling of sensations. He would discover there unquestionably, for one thing, a moral infinitude that would stir him profoundly—a spiritual deep from without calling to the utmost deeps within. But, side by side with this inner grandeur there would be a strange sense of difficulties, of apparent contradictions, of intellectual and moral impossibles. Against Christianity's assumption of a personal and

beneficent God would arise in his mind all the metaphysical arguments from Democritus to Mill; its miraculous element would seem to be ruled out of court by the modern conviction of the uniformity of nature, and by those anthropological researches which have enlightened us as to the evolution of the myth. Perhaps even more staggering to our inquirer, bred, as we may suppose, in the principles of political economy, would be some of the Gospel's moral precepts. The Sermon on the Mount would seem made for another world than this. "Resist not evil"; "lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth"; "take no thought . . . what ye shall eat or drink"; would sound strange indeed. Christian people, he would discover, were passing by these words as impossible to their civilisation. Thoreau's verdict would seem to him hardly too severe when, quoting the words, "Sell all thou hast," and "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world?" he adds, "Let but one of these sentences be rightly read from any pulpit in the land, and there would not be left one stone of that meeting-house upon another."

And certainly these objections are formid-

able; the difficulties are great. Not the less so that they lie upon the surface, and are the first things that catch the eye. It is interesting to note what their effect has been upon different classes of mind. Of these varieties of result there seem to have been three main types. A great host of devout minds, knowing by another process than that of the intellect the inward truth of religion, convinced by those "arguments of the heart" which, as Pascal says, "the reason does not know," have dealt with the difficulties by ignoring them. In order to believe, they have refused to think. A second class, in whom that inner sense has not been strong, have taken up their mental abode in the region of these contradictories and have refused to go farther. Such, with Feuerbach, have regarded Christian sentiment as a kind of mental disease; or, with Diderot, have denounced the Gospel as "absurd in its dogmas and unsociable in its morals"; or, with Condorcet, have declared religion to be "a supernatural extravagance founded on ignorance of natural laws."

But "the irresistible maturing of the human mind," to use Emerson's striking expression,

does not seem likely to favour either of these classes. It will not, for one thing, allow a religion that bars thinking. That were to tolerate what Plato calls "the lie in the soul." Even a mediæval pope could see that. Said Innocent III.: "*Falsitas sub velamine sanctitatis tolerari non debet;* we are not to tolerate falsity under the veil of sanctity," a noble utterance, which it had been well if his Church had better regarded. But the non-believers are not likely to survive any more than the non-thinkers. Feuerbach is not an authority to-day, though George Eliot translated him; and the reasons for scepticism urged by the eighteenth century encyclopædists are felt to be even shallower than their opponents' arguments for orthodoxy. The future is plainly with that third class who have reached a religion that at once thinks and believes, that believes because it thinks.

These last have their own way of looking at what we have called religion's impossibles, and it may be helpful to state, in one or two particulars, what that way is. We may glance first at the intellectual contradictories. Here, first of all, it is to be observed that, whether we accept or reject revealed religion, we shall

still have to dwell in the region of seeming impossibles. And that by the sheer limitations of our mental constitution. Whatever our creed, or no creed, we are, as the most pronounced Agnostic has to acknowledge, in contact with an infinite which, on whatever side we turn, beggars our logic. Both metaphysics and mathematics can construct pairs of propositions which, taken separately, the reason accepts as true, but which, placed together, stand as hopeless contradictions. Kant, and Hamilton after him, have drawn out lists of these in philosophy, and every mathematical student is familiar with similar ones in his own department. Religion, then, as dealing directly with an infinite which is beyond the range of our intellectual machinery, cannot be blamed for offering on its upper side difficulties which are found equally in every other department of human thought.

"Very well, so far as it goes," replies the Agnostic, "but that is not far. Indeed, so far as Christianity is concerned, it goes no distance at all, for the argument may be used with equal force of Buddhism, Shintoism, and every religion that exists in the world. Are

they also not grounded on an infinite which beats our logic? It is on the under side, on that sphere of human experience where our reason is at home, and where science can give a positive verdict, that your Christianity shows itself incredible. Its personal Deity, its Incarnation, its miracles, its morality, are to-day tried in the balances and found wanting."

We may look presently at some of these points separately, but first let us notice one or two considerations, common to them all, that are looming more and more in the modern mind, and that are putting the whole subject in an entirely new light. For one thing, the more the problem of personality is considered, the more clearly is it beginning to be seen that it is in the supposedly impossible Christian doctrine of Incarnation that the idea of a personal God becomes at all intelligible to us. It is being recognised that, on this planet at least, man is the appointed organ and voice of the Eternal Reason, and that only along this channel has the Soul of the Universe come to speaking terms with our consciousness. The personal, as we know it, we admit with philosophy, is *ipso facto* a limitation, and can never

be the whole of God. The Absolute in itself is for ever beyond us. It is

> The Somewhat which we name, but cannot know,
> Ev'n as we name a star and only see
> His quenchless flashings forth, which ever show
> And ever hide him, and which are not he.

But that Infinite Thought and Heart are, we see, on this earth, gradually fashioning for themselves a body and form in humanity. God, through the ages, is steadily pulsing upon man as the tide pulses, in successive waves, upon the shore. The evolution which physicists point us to as going on in nature is a small thing as compared with that evolution which goes on ceaselessly in the inner, the spiritual realm. The world-process is, in short, as far as we discern it, the ever clearer exhibition of God as Person, and that process is by the method of incarnation.

" But," says our Agnostic, " you are juggling with words. You are asking us to accept incarnation as a natural process, but your Christian incarnation is supernatural: it is full of the miraculous, and the miraculous, we now know, is only another name for the legendary." This has been the talk of culture during the last two or three generations, but

here again a new consideration is dawning. It may well be that a good deal in the Christian records which hitherto has passed as miraculous will hereafter be regarded as legendary, but that will in no wise dispose of an eternal miraculous and an eternal supernatural in the Gospel.

What is the supernatural? When we come to the last analysis we discover that it is always what is above *our* natural. We are supernatural to our dog. We can do things which would be miraculous in him. We may, we suppose, say with Byron that "dogs have a religion and their gods are their masters." A civilised being with firearms, electricity, and all the modern arts, is as a god to a savage, and often receives worship from him. Each grade of being is supernatural to the one below it. When we toss a stone into the air we transcend the laws which belong to the stone. We may say, indeed, that a man of higher genius exhibits all this in relation to the common man. By sheer quality of his nature he does things which, in the lower man, would be as a sign and a wonder. How he came by this nature—questions of birth and what not—are not the point at all. The point is that he has it.

It is here precisely that the supernatural in Christianity lies. There is no doubt that the early Christian history is undergoing, in the modern mind, a process of re-setting. We have been accustomed to think of the Apostolic age as one in which, for Christians at least, faith was easy. Reading the Epistles and the Acts we have thought of those early believers as living in a world of constant Divine intervention. Jerusalem, Antioch, Damascus; the regions of Asia Minor, of Galatia, of Macedonia, were all hallowed by the immediate presence of God, who manifested Himself by constant miracle. To those religiously brought up, it is only by a special effort of mind they realise, what nevertheless was the fact, that for these early Christian messengers the world's processes went on precisely as they do for us to-day. As Paul journeyed across the Taurus, or pursued his way by the coasts of the Ægean, the same voiceless stars which we now behold looked down upon him from their glittering depths; the grim mountains, the storm-tossed ocean, the wandering winds, had the message for him they have for us; "the eternal silence of the infinite spaces" terrified him, doubtless, at

times, as they did Pascal. Not a grain of sand moved by any other law than moves it now. Whatsoever of God was to be found in the universe was no whit more apparent in it then than to-day.

What, then, had happened? Where, then, was the supernatural? We find it as soon as we begin to look for it in the right way. It was in the sphere, not so much of the physical as of the spiritual, not in man's outer so much as in his inner world. And the new spiritual development had come, as always, through a new personality. We are beating about the bush in talking about Christ's miracles. Christ is the miracle. He is the spiritual grade above us. He was bound to come; history was expecting Him, for she had taught that it is thus the Infinite is ever disclosing itself. One grade upon another. First the stone that lies on the ground, and then the man who defies its gravitation and tosses it into the air. When this higher spiritual comes we cannot say what it will do, either in the interior world or the exterior world. We can only wait and see. The witnesses will probably exaggerate what happens here; their story will grow as it passes

from hand to hand, and all allowances will have to be made.

But these will not affect the general result. For unquestionably a new note has been struck. While the external universe remains what it was, in that spiritual world which is man's most real abiding-place we discern a change. The tremors of a new vast movement have made themselves felt. A new vision of the Eternal has reached the human consciousness. Men look into the face of Christ and say with a conviction that transcends all argument that they have seen God. The outer world is the same as from eternity. But in the inner all things have become new.

But our opening question is at best only half-answered. It must be left to another chapter to discuss those seeming moral impossibles which, not less than the intellectual, front us in the New Testament.

II.

The Moral Impossibles.

In our last chapter, dealing with "Religion's Impossibles," we discussed some of the difficulties to thought which lie on the surface of the Gospel. We propose to draw attention to some of the problems it offers as a morality, a system of living.

As our latest civilisation and the Sermon on the Mount look each other in the face, do they in fact discover in each other any trace of resemblance? "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." But the front places to-day are for those who have laid them up most lavishly. "Take no thought what ye shall eat or drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed." But Society offers us a carnival of feasting, and is ablaze with splendid apparel. "Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also." But modern civilisation includes the soldier whose whole business it is to strike

back. What can this mean but that civilisation has tried the New Testament and found it impracticable; that while retaining its precepts as a form it ignores them as a guide for living?

Unquestionably we have in all this a difficulty of belief for the modern mind not less urgent than those of a more purely intellectual character which we have already examined. The Gospel seems at the surface as impossible on its economic and ethical side as on that of its supernaturalism and miracle. But here, as we found in dealing with that last aspect, some deeper considerations come in which, to a properly-trained judgment, will make all the difference in the verdict.

To begin with, as modern research has abundantly shown, we are all at sea in our interpretation of the Gospel till we have made allowance for the Orientalism of its form. Dr. Wendt, in his *Lehre Jesu*, has pointed out a characteristic of the ethical teaching of Christ to which we have not given sufficient attention. It is the rhetorical method, perfectly understood by His Eastern hearers, of pushing antithesis to its extremest form. He urged

what literally were impossibles, in order that His words might, as Guthrie used to say, "strike and stick." In most instances the very form shows they were not intended as literal. It was plainly impossible to receive, as a reward for fidelity, a hundredfold, not only of houses and lands, but of wives and of mothers. The statement in Luke, that if a man hate not father, mother and household he cannot be Christ's disciple, is in Matthew expressly changed into "loveth father and mother more than Me," the two formulas being evidently intended to mean the same thing. So the command not to lay up treasure on earth was perfectly understood by the disciples, explained to them as it was, in fact, by the conduct of Christ Himself. His society had an exchequer, and one that was by no means always empty. And the collections which Paul made amongst his Gentile converts, and his instructions to the churches concerning the raising of funds for Christian purposes, show that the first believers did not dream of interpreting Christ's words on this theme as meaning the abolition of capital. As Wendt has here so elaborately shown, the West must learn accurately to translate

the East; must find the proper equation between the luxuriant metaphors of the Orient and its own cold literalism of expression, before it has grasped the true ethical significance of the sayings of Christ.

But an explanation of this kind does not go far. When every allowance has been made, the Gospel ethic stands at so immense a remove from the average human performance, as to excite despair in some minds and ridicule in others. Utilitarianism finds in it a negation of the general working principles of Society; asceticism regards it as a protest against civilisation. Through the ages we discern a long procession of anchorites, monks and enthusiasts of varied name, who have found in Christ's words a call to leave the world. Of later demonstrations of this order one of the most striking is that of the Danish theologian Kirkegaarde, a writer less known than he should be in this country, who, writing out of a powerful intellect and a profound religious feeling, proclaims the Gospel as an eternal protest against all the principles of the world movement of to-day.

But are these opposite interpretations the *only* ones from which we may choose? Does

the Gospel ethic offer us the dilemma simply of a rejection of Christ's words on the one hand, or of a breach with Society on the other? Surely not. It is to be remembered that in forming our judgment here we hold an advantage which earlier ages did not possess. We have the ethic plus eighteen centuries of history, along which we are able to note its action upon the world. To examine a system by analysis of its constituent elements is in itself something. There is much more when we add to this a study of its action over great breadths of time and upon an infinite variety of conditions. No adequate idea can be obtained without combining the two. It is precisely when we take this course and read Christ's precepts in the light, not merely of what they contain in themselves, but of their whole effect upon the world, that we get a proper appreciation of them. And the resulting judgment, we discover, is a balance between extremes.

For one thing, the Gospel's moral impossibles appear, in this light, not as an objection to Christianity, but as one of its most striking evidences. A religion to be of any service to man must, above all things, be an in-

spiration, an appeal to his soul's highest instincts. Its call must be to the infinite within him, and the morality it offers must partake of that infinitude. That is why religion has always been, for one thing, a prophecy. It is never content with the already attained, but calls for an illimitable progression. It is the soul's eye, which reveals to us spiritual deeps beyond our present range, just as our physical eye offers a view of unreachables in the starry heavens. It is precisely because Christianity in its ethic opens this moral infinite that it has been the inspiration of the world. Its magnificent imperative, "Be ye perfect," is at once caught at by the spiritual in us as the highest truth and reason of our being. An impossible, but an impossible which somehow claims to be realised. And we are at once set in motion towards it. The movement will be perhaps as that of an asymptote to a curve which ever approaches but never touches, but we know it is a Divine movement all the same. We have only to contrast the effect on us of this high vision, set for us in the sky, with that of some easy-going philosophy of living in everybody's reach, the everyday wisdom, say, of a Horace or an

Epicurus, to understand how indispensable it was for human progression that religion should offer us a moral law that lay, not near for our easy grasping, but high up in the heavens for our endless aspiration.

And the soul's verdict here has been abundantly justified by history. Each successive generation has found the Gospel ethic an impossible one to realise, but each has, in its turn, been, by its mystic drawing, advanced a stage. The world is absorbing this unattainable bit by bit. If anyone would know the force of the uplift let him read such a work as the *Gesta Christi* of Loring Brace, and learn how the hideous injustices of the earlier world, its cruelties, its monstrous oppressions, have, one by one, felt the impact of the new ethic, and gone down under it. This "eternity of sympathy and benevolence and purity," as Brace calls it, has, he concludes, "floated everything else in history like straws on its stream thus far." That ardent Spencerian evolutionist, John Fiske, predicts the time when the altruism of the Sermon on the Mount will become the normal social principle. "The meek shall inherit the earth." Christ's doctrine was, he says, a foresight of the moral

world-process and its result. With this celestial commandment hanging far up above him man marches "from a primitive social state in which he was little better than a brute towards an ultimate social state in which his character shall have become so transformed that nothing of the brute can be detected in it."

Nothing, indeed, is more interesting than to watch these results of the Gospel's moralising process upon the world. It has overthrown, not only oppressive interests, but equally oppressive theories. Of late years thoughtful minds have been weighted with the pretensions of a physiological determinism which has declared the moral character to be unchangeable, depending, as in this view it does, upon the organic structure and functions. But this system reckons without the spiritual world, and it is contradicted by the plain facts. The savages of Tierra del Fuego had sustained no radical modifications of organic structure during the period of missionary labour in their midst, but even a Charles Darwin bore witness to the complete moral transformation which the Gospel had wrought in them. When we come from the study of races to that of in-

dividuals the effect of the Christian ethic and of what lies behind it becomes more visibly wonderful. The past, happily, has yielded us not only histories, but biographies. There are hundreds of them extant, from the story of Paul to that of James Chalmers, and the metamorphoses they reveal are a greater marvel than those of Ovid. The lives of the earliest Methodist preachers alone, as a study in the possibilities of human psychology, may be matched against all the theorisings of a Schopenhauer and a Bichat. They reveal that a central fact of man's nature is its susceptibility to change under the impact of a higher spiritual power.

The religious anomalies which modern society exhibits are not then really the contradictions they seem. They reveal the differing curves of a world-process which, despite apparent aberrations, works towards one end. Civilisation is humanity in the making, and the Gospel ideal, which it often seems to negate, is all the time working at the task. The treasures of pearl and gold which civilisation shows are a part of the world's assets. They were there to be discovered and to be used. But Christ's word about humanity's real

treasure still holds, and the soul knows its truth. The soldiers whom civilisation uses are symbols of a period of physical force which even now visibly draws to its close. Each succeeding war goes nearer to making war impossible. The temporary setbacks are nothing in the history of an eternal progress. While man strays hither and thither in the search for a completer experience; while epochs open for him in which the physical and material seem to rule, in which his whole attention seems set upon the possibilities of his surface life; ever as he strives and fights, there shines upon him from its mystic height this transcendental Gospel, whose beauty and whose message he may never forget. Shine on and ever will it, till it has wooed and won him, till by its soft omnipotence it has conquered his world's last injustice and wrought within and without him its own ultimate of good.

III.

The Coming Creed.

It is an impressive feature of the present religious situation that such numbers of earnest people are in search of a creed. There is to-day a feeling, not only amongst doubters, but in the most religious minds, a feeling so widespread that it may almost be called universal, that the creeds which in the orthodox historic churches stand for Christianity are, in their present form, the survival of a thought-world which has been outgrown, and that they are consequently a hindrance to faith rather than its bulwark. Perhaps the most significant element in this feeling is, not so much the objections on scientific or critical grounds to this or that dogma, as the growing suspicion that, apart altogether from the question of their credibility, these doctrinal propositions are not the highest or final expression of the Christian faith. The feeling crops up in the most unexpected places. Here, for instance,

is Westcott, who, speaking of the Thirty-Nine Articles, says: "It is that I object to them altogether, and not to any particular doctrines. I have at times fancied it was presumption in us to attempt to define and determine what Scripture has not defined. . . . The whole tenor of Scripture seems to me opposed to all dogmatism and full of all application." From another side John Wesley, after one of the fullest experiences ever given to mortal of the action of religion in human life, declares in his old age: "I am sick of opinions. I am weary to bear them; my soul loathes the frothy food. Give me solid, substantial religion; give me a humble, gentle lover of God and man, a man full of mercy and good faith, a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love. Let my soul be with those Christians wheresoever they be and whatsoever opinions they are of." The citation may be fittingly closed with these remarkable words from John Henry Newman: "Freedom from symbols and articles is abstractedly the highest state of the Christian communion and the peculiar privilege of the primitive Church. . . . Technicality and

formalism are in their degree inevitable results of public confessions of faith. . . . When confessions do not exist the mysteries of Divine truth, instead of being exposed to the gaze of the profane and uninstructed, are kept hidden in the bosom of the Church far more fruitfully than is otherwise possible."

These witnesses had all signed creeds; they belonged to Churches which bristled with dogmatic propositions. Yet what is evident is that at the back of their minds lay a consciousness, not formulated, and therefore all the more powerful, that the strength and vitality of the Church lay quite otherwhere than in its tables of doctrine. And as we look through the history of the Christian centuries we find everywhere confirmation of this truth. The creeds arose out of the speculative, not the religious spirit. The "heretics" speculated first, and the Church met them with counter-speculations of its own. To wade through the literature of those early centuries, the literature which lies back of the creeds, is a discipline of incredible tediousness, but it helps one greatly to an estimate of the value of these products.

The ages that produced the formularies

were the least vital; the periods when they had the fullest sway were those of the greatest licence and degradation of character. Gregory of Nyssa gives us a vivid description of the absorption of the Eastern peoples in doctrinal metaphysics, when "knots of people at the corners of the streets in Constantinople discussed incomprehensibles, when, if anyone asked for a bath, the reply was, 'the Son of God was created from nothing.'" And yet was there ever a more frivolous or licentious population? And in Europe, during the Middle Ages, when the Roman dogma had the completest outward ascendency, the life of the people was at the farthest remove from the New Testament ideal. Dip into the English chronicles, say, of the fourteenth century, and you find that what religious spirit there is dwells mainly in the rebels against the prevailing dogma. The Lollards did some wild things. They smashed images, and as with the stalwart knight who took home the consecrated wafer and lunched on it with wine and oysters, they took at times odd ways of expressing their dissent. But the genuine Christianity of character and life at that time was, all the same, with Wycliffe's

"poor preachers" and the disciples they gathered.

This kind of inquiry wherever pursued gives the same results, and they are not favourable. But while theology and the Church, in the matter before us, yield only a negative outcome, another experience, in a different field, has meantime been accumulating its treasures, and at an opportune moment, is able to offer them for the elucidation of our problem. That half-expressed feeling of the unsatisfactoriness of the Church formulas, as either a ground or a statement of the faith, which we found in a Westcott, a Wesley and a Newman is, when we turn in another direction, suddenly illuminated, and shown as by a flash in its true logical relations, by the light which comes from another sphere.

While the Church has been busy with its propositions, another power has been quietly rising by its side, and influencing with an ever-increasing potency the sphere of human affairs. This power is science, in its application to the arts of life. We talk of creeds. What are the creeds of science and how does it express them? When we have understood the bearings of that question, and of its

answer, we shall possess, if not the solution of our theological problem, at least a substantial help towards it.

Modern science may be said to be a church which has no infidels in its constituency; whose decisions are accepted by all classes; whose work is everywhere recognised as beneficent; and which advances, with ever-increasing speed, toward the conquest of its world. What, we ask again, of its creed? Undoubtedly it has one; but it has come by it, and it uses it, in a quite different way from that to which the Church of theology is accustomed. For one thing, it has reached its infallibility by persistently refusing to be regarded as infallible; by making mistakes and acknowledging them; and by leaving all its decisions open to every species of test. And theology will only regain the ground it has lost, and secure once more the world's intellectual respect, by following in this track. It will have to renounce its bogus infallibility, and gain its certitudes where only they are to be found.

But this part of the method of science, important though it be, is perhaps not the chief lesson it has to teach. That comes when we

study the way science uses its creed. It is not, we discover, occupied in incessantly repeating it. It does not sing, chant or recite it. It does not impose it as a test, or require a subscription to its articles. Yet its creed is ever present, at the base of all its operations. And it cannot afford to be incorrect in it, for error throws all its operations into confusion.

Observe an engineer as he plans and builds his bridge. His entire working belief is there. His theories of statics and dynamics; his convictions about currents and wind pressures, about leverages, about the properties of the arch and of its thrust on buttresses; his views on the relation of beauty to utility, all are there. He has not sung them, or shouted them or subscribed them. He has built them into his bridge. His creed is embedded in his work. And men, when they find the work good, proclaim the creed to be sound.

Our engineer, it may be observed, has, outside his work, all manner of theories. He may have interesting things to say on the ultimate properties of matter; may doubt, with Berkeley, whether matter exists at all apart from mind. But the world will take his ideas on these outside questions lightly.

They are at least "pious opinions," which he may hold or not hold, and no one a penny the worse. What men insist on is that his beliefs on bridge-building and the other things which he contracts to do shall be sound. In that sphere they will tolerate no heresy.

In this way of using its creed, science, we repeat, has, just now, a lesson of supreme importance to teach theology. The Church, if it be wise, will also discover that its belief is given it, not for incessant subscribing and chanting and repeating, but as a plan to work by. Its creed should be a programme. No article of it should be allowed that cannot be expressed in the form, not so much of words as of works and institutions. Is not this, after all, God's way of expressing Himself? He has a belief, we may be sure, but He is marvellously sparing of words. Time was when men held that He had shouted propositions from the clouds. To-day we are disposed to say with Thoreau, "The perfect God in His revelation of Himself has never got to the length of one such proposition as you, His prophets, state." He has said enough to us, but not in words.

When the Church has found this way of

expressing itself it will have no trouble with heretics. We put our creed into a word, and straightway our neighbour is ready with his counter-word. The ring of our syllables irresistibly invites opposition. But when we have put our belief into our character, into our deed of kindness, into our hero-sacrifice, there is no room for arguing. And what of our creed cannot be expressed in these ways, what of it remains as mere words, untranslateable into things, may well be left out.

The Church of the future will, there is little doubt, organise itself upon these lines. The coming creed will be a programme; it will be a statement of the laws of the spiritual forces, and of their application to the regeneration of men. And the business of the Church will lie in that application. Its life will be found, not so much in its verbal affirmations as in the institutions it develops, the character it creates. The great apostles and evangelists of the race have instinctively gone upon these lines. Wesley accepted the theological conceptions of his time, but his working power lay in a creed which was a programme. He believed in a living God, revealed to him in Christ, and he believed in a present spiritual

energy which by faith and prayer could be made operative to the converting of men. With these for working principles he could have cut away most of his speculative notions, and no harm done.

The Church began without the creeds, and it has no more need of them to-day than in its first age. The missionary will go forth now, as then, equipped with a Power and a Programme, and will find them enough. Taking in his heart the love of God and of his fellow, the mind of Christ and the Spirit's energies, taking with him also, as far as may be, the arts and crafts by which God's revelation of perfect human living is expressed, he will win new victories of faith, and with none to gainsay the triumph.

IV.

Religion and Justice.

One of the most significant features of modern thinking is the shifting it discloses in the centres of moral interest. The Church needs to take note of the fact that the questions men are now asking are not those for which its formularies provide answers. What the masses are discussing to-day is not justification, but justice. The artisans of the Continent have become almost fiercely hostile to organised Christianity, because, in their view, it is allied with a social system which oppresses the worker. They scorn its charities and ask that instead they may receive their rights. While ideas of this kind are germinating amongst the people we find some of the best minds moving along a similar track. Tolstoi and Ruskin unite in making the redress of social injustice religion's first work, if not its *raison d'être.* The theologian Rothe declared that if Christ were to return to earth now His

interest would lie in social and economical rather than in ecclesiastical developments. The younger generation of religious teachers are possessed more and more by the same thought. In Germany an influential school of theologians is devoting its whole religious ardour to reclaiming, in the name of Christianity, a more equitable basis for the common life. Students at college are being told that in their preparation for the pastorate their study of Numbers must be, not that of a book in the Pentateuch, but of percentages of work and wages, of cubic feet of air allotted in workrooms and sleeping-places, of the death-rate in certain trades. In some prophets of the time the new sentiment has taken the place of the religious passion of an earlier day. The intensity of its note is seen in this typical passage of Maeterlinck: "For it is enough that we should feel the cold a little less than the labourer who passes by, that we should be better fed or clad than he, that we should buy any object that is not strictly indispensable, and we have unconsciously returned, through a thousand byways, to the ruthless act of primitive man despoiling his weaker brother."

The significance of all this, for discerning minds, becomes the plainer when we remember that it is precisely from movements of this kind in the human thought and feeling that history is made. Every action, says Emerson, has a thought for its ancestor. These thoughts before long will bring forth actions. Their general spread and acceptance is the more striking when we consider the past that is behind them. The sentiment of justice, as we now understand it, is one of the world's latest growths. In the great Pagan civilisations, so full as they were of intellect and varied power, the very idea was non-existent. The Greek citizenship, as expounded by an Aristotle, rested on a basis of slavery, in which the slave had no rights. In India the caste system, which shut up each class in limits it could never pass, was wrought not only into the religion but the very life of the people. And amongst the Western nations, so slow has been the perception of rights, that the English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, an owner of slaves.

Yet it was in England, amongst the Western peoples, that we discern the first movings of

the public mind towards a true theory of social conditions. Hobbes in the seventeenth century had made an incursion into this field, but his anti-social system, which regarded man as naturally at war with his neighbour, and Government as a divinely-ordained power for keeping him in check, was early felt to be an unsatisfactory solution. Cumberland, who followed him, argued in opposition, that the social system rested not on mere force but on sentiments of justice and altruism resident in human nature. His argument as to the rights of private property shows, however, by what tentative and halting steps the idea of public justice has progressed. He shows with much acuteness that property holding is justified by the fact that an undisturbed possession by the individual of goods and tools is necessary to the general well-being, but he entirely overlooks the question whether the original distribution of these goods was in any sense a just one. Hume, in his turn, treats of justice in relation to property, and argues that the problem here has arisen from the fact that there is not enough of external goods to go round. The notion of justice has been evoked because, first, the supply of goods is not ade-

quate to the general need, and, secondly, because man as an individual is selfish. Herbert Spencer's treatment of the theme is more abstract. He defines justice as the principle that every man has freedom to do what he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man.

The cautious and temperate movement of the English mind on these questions is in striking contrast with the fierce rushes, the wild leaps in the dark, of Continental theorists and leaders. The "*Contrat Social*" of Rousseau, viewed in the light of modern knowledge, is the absurdest of theories, but it was a call to arms which precipitated the Revolution. Later came the still wilder "phalanstery scheme" of Fourier, and later still, the German Socialism of Marx and Lassalle, whose fundamental assumption was that capital is the people's foe and oppressor. Amongst millions of working men in Germany, France, Belgium, and other European countries that idea still holds sway. With these multitudes Socialism is a religion; the capitalist is the enemy, private property is robbery, and the Church as its upholder is a participator in the crime. The abolition of the whole

existing system is a condition of the worker coming to his own, and of the human progress towards the millennium.

The movement which has reached this extreme has provoked rejoinders of not less violence. The fiery denunciations of a Lassalle have been met with the finished cynicism of a Nietzsche. To the charge that the propertied classes have exploited the workers, the philosopher replies, "Quite so, and it is precisely their business to go on exploiting. It is the proper function of the strong to compel the weak, and they can do so without fear, for the weak will always be weak and in their power."

Most of us, however, realise that the social question is not to be settled by cynicism. What are the other ways? There is that of fact and argument. The attack on capital, for instance, which has characterised the cruder Socialism has been, for all thinking persons, conclusively refuted. It is one of the first lessons of political economy that without a reserve force, such as capital represents, there would be no possibility even of living, to say nothing of progress. The idea, also, still cherished amongst the proletariat, that

the world's wealth is produced entirely by the "labouring classes," and that capital is largely a robbery of their proper share, has also again and again been disproved. What, for instance, are we to make of the simple fact that three times as much wealth is produced now by the same working population, that is, by the same muscular power, as in an earlier generation? What has made the difference? Not the labourer, but the thinking brain behind him. The real question here is, "What are the proper wages of ability?" A calculation has been made that, of the English national income, labour produces five-thirteenths, and the fruits of invention and combination—that is, of applied ability—eight-thirteenths of the whole. In other words, it is the thinker who has been the great wealth-creator; and as the sum works out, this man behind the labourer—call him combiner, inventor, capitalist, *entrepeneur*, what you will, the brain behind the tool—appears to have taken for himself actually less rather than more of the balance due.

Clearly, if the destruction of capital, or even the equal sharing of it amongst men, be the demand, it is for ever an impossible one, for

the nature of things is against it. Were we all put on a pound a week to-morrow, the old inequality would be rampant in a fortnight. Some would have spent all, others would have saved; there would be the clever use of the pound and the stupid use of it, with the result that the old cry of the "haves" and "have nots" would again be heard in the land. The supposition, indeed, that social justice means equality is one of which all sane men should by this time have effectually rid themselves. There is no such thing in heaven or in earth. The universe was not built that way. On this supposition the ant might shriek its wrong in not being an elephant, and the human family in a mass revolt at not being archangels.

It is strange that amid all these confused cries for "rights" and for "justice" it has occurred so little to men to inquire as to what have been the real factors in men's progress and happiness. For, when we look beneath the surface, we find that the Power behind the scenes that has really created history has worked on a plan that pays no attention seemingly to these watchwords. The human uplift is traceable almost always to something so different. We know astronomy, we travel

by railway, we read *Hamlet*, we conquer small-pox, we listen to the "Moonlight Sonata," we experience religion's sublime emotions and inward victories—in a word, we enjoy our whole human inheritance, not because of social programmes, but because Newton's and Stephenson's, and Shakespeares and Jenners and Beethovens, and the prophets and apostles of the Spirit have from time to time appeared amongst men and conquered for them a fresh territory of life. "The value of a truly great man," says a modern writer, "consists in his increasing the value of all mankind." Somehow heaven's method with us in these matters goes so much deeper than our Parliamentary prattle. A dozen great souls vouchsafed the world to-day in different departments would be worth all the political manifestoes.

The key to the social problem is a deeper one than that of political economy. It is the New Testament key. It is a matter not of codes, but of spirit. The French Revolution and kindred attempts have sought to bring the millennium in by force. *Sois mon frère ou je vous tue.* But men will not become brothers by a threat of being killed if they don't. The art of social living is learned not

in the school of polemic, but in that of the Crucified. We shall only secure the human brotherhood through the Christ love and sacrifice. When by God's mercy a fresh baptism of that Spirit comes upon us we shall get our justice. What good men will then come to see is that the real conception of the human relation is that of a household, a family. There is no equality in family life. The parents have a different position, a different influence, a different income from that of their children. But the differences contribute to, rather than take from, the family happiness. The strength of the strong here is for every weak one, and the love is from each for all. The whole question is one of feeling. The sentiment we have inside our door is simply to be carried outside. No child within our doors, while we can help it, will go without food, or clothing, or education, or opportunity, or love, and when we have all transferred this feeling to the other side of our door, have made it the working idea of the community, we shall be solving the social question in the only way in which it can ever be solved. Here is a Church programme that might well unite us all. It is that of building the State upon the Mind of Christ.

V.

Cosmic Free Grace.

THE immense movement of ideas observable in modern theology has given birth to the fear that a serious portion of the faith held by our fathers has disappeared. That is far from the truth. What has happened is not a disappearance, but a resetting. All that is vital in the earlier creed is still with us, but in a changed form. It is almost a rebirth, but one in which the old lives again in the new. Science, for instance, is giving us back the theological predestination in its concept of law and heredity. And the whole of what the old divines knew as "the doctrines of grace," now almost foreign to our generation, will, we predict, come back upon us with the force of a new conviction when reset in that greater cosmic conception to which the later research has introduced us. It will be seen that the order of things under which we live is, substantially, none other than that of

the "free grace" which Augustine and the Puritans proclaimed. What is more, the range of the doctrine will be found to be far wider than that of theology proper. It affects in the most intimate and vital manner our conclusions as to the economic and social questions about which the world is wrangling to-day.

The doctrine of the old divines was that we were in the universe as pensioners on a royal bounty; that, personally undeserving, we had received everything for nothing; what we held was not a debt paid to us, but a gift bestowed; our position was one, not of rights, but of privileges. And this doctrine of our position furnished the doctrine of our duties. It was not enough for us to render his "rights" to our fellow. We were to stand to him as, in our turn, we stood to the Higher Power. As we had "freely received," beyond and apart from our desert, we were "freely to give." What we owed our brother was not what he had earned and could demand from us, but the best we had to give. It is, by the way, worth noting in this connection that Augustine, in that great compendium of his doctrine, the "Enchiridion ad Lauren-

tium," gives the widest range to the idea of "alms." He speaks of every good we offer to others, such as advice, comfort, discipline, as alms, and he regards the highest "almsgiving" as the forgiveness of sins and the love of our enemies. The whole notion, comprehending every part of life, is that we are not under law, but under grace.

To-day, as we noted in the last chapter, the world is fascinated by another conception, that of "justice." This is the watchword of the toiling classes. The cry is not for gifts, but for rights. And the reason is that the deepest sense with many of them is of wrongs. Life as they see it is a system in which they, the unprivileged, are shut out from a due share of what is going. Their religion accordingly is an effort to get that share. They see on the one side the luxury of the Park Lane millionaire, and on the other the privations of the sweated labourer in John Street, and find here a monstrosity which is to be repressed. And this is to be done by a struggle. Man is a belligerent animal, and has an inherent love of a fight. And a fight for his "rights" stirs him to the depths. The modern toilers do not, in this campaign of theirs, look for any extra-mundane

assistance. A great thinker has told them "there is no justice in the outside universe; it exists only in the human soul." But they will get their justice, and by their own efforts. The campaign shall be waged in the Press, on the platform, at the polling booth; if need be, on the stricken field. "We will win our rights, and by our own efforts secure a just world as between man and man."

And truly a great idea is that of justice as between man and man. If there is nothing better to be had this certainly is something to be striven for. That no one shall be allowed to grind his fellow; that a surcease shall be put to monopolies which appropriate the greater results of industry to the benefit of a few, leaving only a bare subsistence to the producer; that old age and helplessness shall not, in a solvent community, be allowed to spell starvation; that the goods of the world shall be so distributed as to give everyone his opportunity of joy and of development—these are results to gain which every honest man may well buckle on his armour. But the question remains, "How are they going to be gained?" It is precisely here that the modern theory of "justice," as a sort of

commercial equation between competing individuals, breaks down. It will not work any way, and that because it is contrary to the idea on which this universe is built.

To take as an illustration the burning question of the distribution of goods. In the preceding chapter we noticed one of the fallacies of the earlier socialism in the matter of labour and its reward. Thirty years ago it was argued with the utmost vehemence on the Continent, and still is argued in some circles, that the fruits of industry belonged to the manual worker because he earned them. The other classes, in taking the share they held, robbed the worker. We pointed out that, as a matter of business calculation, the enormous increase in the world's wealth of these later generations has been due, not to the efforts of the manual labourer, but to the skill, the combinations and the enterprise of the investor and the capitalist. But is this a cynical plea for things as they are; an argument which shields the monopolist in his exploitation of the suffering million?

That would be a very hasty conclusion. The figures we gave, according to which ability and combination gain eight-thirteenths of

the national income while labour gains five-thirteenths, tell their own story. But what is the story? If our social system rests on the modern notion of "right," on the payment, that is, to each man of what is due, the handing over the counter to the separate agent the net result of what his hand, brain, or resources have produced, then the stronger and the cleverer will go on getting most of what there is, and will let the feeble and the unendowed scramble for the leavings. And on the bare "justice" theory how are we to condemn him? That theory, indeed, offers no logical ground of condemnation. But there is another theory and a sounder, which puts him in his proper place.

For it is, we repeat, not upon the "justice" principle that humanity is being developed, or by which the individual, in body and soul, is to come to his own. The distribution of property, in a shape that will satisfy the moral consciousness, will not begin till the community at large recognises that the "wage due theory," the "cash-nexus theory," is not good enough. If the men who declare that "there is no justice in the outside universe" will only examine the universe a little more closely,

they may, perhaps, discover that its method is, after all, a great deal better than theirs. For it is a method of grace and not of debt. The lesson it offers on the social question is writ large, for those who look, on every page of life. The capitalist, the inventor, the strong man who produces wealth, would by this law be convicted as the grossest defaulter if he interpreted his duty to labour simply by the figures of the ready reckoner. He will only begin to do it when he discovers himself to be under another principle, not extractable from arithmetic, a law which bids him pay not according to debt but to grace.

We might get the whole proof of this without stirring from the point where we find ourselves. The very fight for human rights itself offers us all we want. For what is this battle, and how has it come about ? Did it spring out of a debtor and creditor account ? Do the Tolstois and the Ruskins appear on the scene battling for Russian serfs or Dudley nail-makers as the result of a capital calculation or distribution ? When the people get any measure of their "rights" is it not because leaders are given them whose very appearance and endowment is a reversal of the supposed

law of equality, and whose work is neither inspired nor paid by any calculable wages? Herein, surely, is a strange thing. To get our economical justice we have to wait for men who come into the world, not because the world has paid them to come; who, when here, work for a wage which the world has no means of paying; and whose leadership, while the truest factor of progress for the mass, annihilates equality by setting them so far apart from the mass!

And the law which works so manifestly in this department meets us in every other. Our best work can never be done for wages; and it can never be paid in wages. We begin by being immeasurable debtors. We come into the world with an endowment of faculty and opportunity that was all unbought. No word passed between us and the universe, but there was the gift waiting. We look back across the ages, and we see that a myriad noble souls were there before us, and we enter, without a farthing of payment, into all the heritage of their suffering and their achievement. It all spells one word, Grace. The universe is built upon free giving and free receiving. If we cannot see that, we are blind

indeed. And, seeing it, there is only one thing left us to do, and that is to follow in this glorious cosmic way of things, and to offer to our God and to our fellow the best that is in us in return.

The universe, we say, being interpreted, gives us back again our old Gospel. For a doctrine of grace is a doctrine that by the necessity of things is saturated with the Divine Personality. Law may be conceived of as without a heart, but grace never. It is the sense of a great love that enwraps humanity, that has suffered for it on a Cross, that is at the heart of all genuine reforms. It is this which will win us all our rights. They will come by no other process. Without it we might perhaps capture a world and gain the right to be supremely miserable in it. Whether I am employer, or fellow-worker, or employed, I shall do well if in these relations I am loving well, and am well beloved. The rights of man or woman are the rights secured by the grace in themselves and in their fellows. There are no others worth having. To get this spirit back into the world is the way of its redemption. At the Cross, whence we look into the heart of God, we learn that our highest

right is that of a free giving. There, we find no better battle-cry than this:

> O Lord, that I could waste my life for others,
> With no ends of my own,
> That I could pour my life into my brothers,
> And live for them alone.

VI.

Of Sacred and Secular.

AMONGST the problems besetting and bewildering our age, not the least puzzling is that which lies around the words "sacred" and "secular." The modern man comes into the world with a tradition on this subject which grips him every day, but of which he can give no satisfactory account to himself. The Church shares his dilemma, and is uneasily conscious that the boundary lines here have been badly drawn, and that a revision is necessary. "Why is this sacred and that secular, and what is the ground for the division between them?" It is not a new question. The eighteenth century asked it with a characteristic impatience. Said Rousseau: "As soon as he is born man is wrapped in swaddling clothes; when he is dead he is sewed up in a shroud. All his life long he is pinioned by laws, manners and customs, decorum and professional obligations." The reply of the Revolution was to

cut out the "sacred" and bring all to a secular level. But the experiment did not turn out well, and we shall not repeat it. To reach a solution that will satisfy us to-day two things are necessary. We need to re-explore the ground on both sides of the dividing lines, and also to study the process, the evolution by which these boundaries themselves came into being.

To begin with a definition. It will be sufficiently accurate for our purpose if we say that the "sacred" as commonly understood is that which is associated with worship and the exercise of the religious feelings, while in the "secular" is included all that falls outside this category. When, armed with these definitions, we set out on the proposed inquiry, we find the first fact meeting us is the remarkable one, that in the history of civilisation it is invariably the sacred that comes first. What we know as the secular is always a later evolution. If, for example, we take the subject of legislation, now regarded everywhere as a secular business, there is not one of the ancient systems that was not originally held to be of Divine origin. The Egyptians referred their code to the god Thoth; Minos was said to

receive his from Jove; that of Lycurgus in Sparta came from Apollo; Zoroaster in Persia was inspired by Ahura-Mazda; Numa Pompilius at Rome by the nymph Egeria; and we are all familiar with the story of the Mosaic law-giving.

But this is only one illustration out of many. Everywhere does the secular find its origin in the sacred. The Greek drama was originally a religious function; and its arts of painting and sculpture were immediately associated with worship. In Christendom the same law has obtained. The Church of the earlier ages took upon itself to organise the whole of human affairs. In documents such as the "Apostolical Constitutions" and the later Canon law we have life, from the cradle to the grave, definitely mapped out. What are now known as the secular arts and professions were all of ecclesiastical origin. The modern drama has its root in the mystery plays; architecture was first mainly concerned in the building of churches; painting and sculpture were developed for their adornment. Literature, in the early Christian period, was confined to theology and the lives of the saints. And the history of any new religious movement, we

discover, follows exactly the same process. It resembles always what geologists give us as the story of our planet. The movement is at first molten; then follows a process of cooling and hardening, until upon the solid crust there appear forms and developments which seem remote and alien from the first fiery phase. The fruits of a revival will, in the next generation, appear often as successful commerce, or as an impulse to scientific and philosophic investigation.

The question now arises, How came it that developments of civilisation which began in the sphere of the "sacred" should find, as we see, their later resting-place in the "secular"? The history of the process is the history of the Church's mistakes and shortcomings. The mistakes were of its intellect, the shortcomings of its heart. To understand what happened we need to begin with a diagnosis of religious exclusiveness. One needs a clear insight here, for nowhere have good and evil been more subtly intermixed. At the beginning of religious movements men taste a peculiar rapture. It is an intense emotion associated with a sense of intimate intercourse with the spiritual world. God is known and felt as a Person. The

dwellers in this inner circle discover that they are the recipients of unutterable things. Into the soul flow tides of energy that translate themselves into the sense of pardon, of fellowship with the Highest, of victory over the world, of immortal hope beyond the grave. It is felt, and rightly felt, that in comparison with such experiences life has nothing else that is equal to offer. And most natural is it, further, to conclude that whatever seems to interrupt the flow of such celestial intercourse is harmful, and should be placed under taboo.

We are here at the secret of the whole business. It is precisely at this point that we discover how the highest individual aspirations may fail to adjust themselves to the wholeness of things. Our religionist will at all cost keep up his fervour. Good! But he has fed it solely upon one kind of food. And he has no notion of a possibly beneficial change of diet. When for his inner development, in addition to the prayers, the exercises, the spiritual records which have appealed to him hitherto, there is offered a whole new range of ideas and activities, his instinct is to start back and refuse. There is a story of one of the early Methodists who, on being presented in the interests of the

King's English with a grammar, returned the gift with the remark that he could nowhere find Christ in it. Wiser than he, Ignatius Loyola, at a similar point in his history, came to a different conclusion. After the raptures attendant on his conversion he found he was very ignorant, and that if he was to exercise any influence in the world he must conquer learning. But to give up his spiritual communings for such pursuits seemed to be leaving Paradise for the desert. But that way, he saw, lay his duty. The pampering of religious feeling was not everything, might at times be even a harmful thing. He must "leave God for God," "*ad majorem gloriam Dei.*"

The failure to see this has, with religious men, been at the root of all the mischief. The idea that there was no other food for the soul than that they had known, for one thing, narrowed immeasurably their outlook. Imagine, for instance, the sheer waste of time, in a world with a million things to learn, that has gone on for centuries as the result of the monkish theory of the religious feelings! Think of people, as in the Eastern Church, year after year, going through the daily repetition of the

Psalms, going through the same eternal round at Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, Nones and Compline; with what good to God or man? How weary the heavens must be of this ceaseless grind of words! And there is so much to do that is useful!

But that was not the worst. Into a far more disastrous blunder did the Church fall when it identified its spiritual treasure and its religious feeling with a world-view which science was discovering to be inadequate and erroneous. What that blunder meant for civilisation Lecky has described for us. "Every mental disposition which philosophy pronounces to be essential to a legitimate research was almost uniformly branded as a sin, and a large proportion of the most deadly intellectual vices were deliberately inculcated as virtues. The theologians, by destroying every book that could generate discussion, by diffusing to every field of knowledge a spirit of boundless credulity . . . succeeded in almost arresting the action of the European mind."

In the light of these hints we discover how our two separate territories came into being, with the boundary wall between them. On the one side was religion, enamoured of its

high emotions, unwilling to admit anything that served to hinder their flow, and in their supposed interests thrusting out or stamping down all that was new and strange. On the other side a whole fresh world of sciences, arts and interests developing out of the religious consciousness, yet disowned by it; sure of themselves and of their right to exist, yet ostracised by their parents; growing away from their first home, and so, to a large extent, strange to the inspirations which that home alone could supply. So have we to-day the spectacle of a "sacred" of Sabbath, Church, Bible, ministry, worship and creed, with a "secular" of science, politics, business, art and amusement, each eyeing the other askance, unable to find their true basis of relation, or to exercise reciprocally their proper and legitimate influence.

It is time this state of things should cease. With a knowledge of the point where the first false steps were taken it is for us to strike afresh the right track. Past ages have witnessed a progress from sacred to secular. It is ours to reverse the process and find the way from secular to sacred. The early shortcoming was really moral as much as intellectual.

It lay in a want of faith. The average sense of God was so feeble, the flow so limited, that it could only keep running while in the narrowest channels. Spread over a wider surface it seemed to lose itself. We have to-day to rise above this weakness. The Christian soul has to cultivate a wider receptiveness. In every aspect of the universal life has it to find its food, recognising that at the heart of everything is God. That deeper insight by which a St. Francis saw in the natural forces, such as fire and storm, brethren to be loved, because, like himself, they were God's servants indwelt of Him, must more and more be ours. The wider world-sense which enabled a Justin Martyr, one of the earliest Christian writers, to recognise all men "who had lived according to reason as Christians, because the Logos, the Eternal Reason," had been their inspirer, must again be sought and found of the Church. It has, as a modern French writer well observes, "to beware of a religion that *substitutes* itself for everything; that makes monks; and to seek one which *penetrates* everything, for that makes Christians."

In a word, religion must found itself on a wider synthesis. Only thus can it reconquer

a world half of which it has allowed to slip out of its grasp. To science, to art, to commerce, to the drama, to amusement, it must resume the relation which it had at the beginning, and which only its own folly has dislocated. No religion is complete without a relation to every department of life. No department of life is complete without a relation to religion. There is no science, no art, no true pleasure in which a properly-adjusted nature cannot immediately find and enjoy God. We have to learn to-day the sacredness of the secular, the avenues to the very Holy of Holies which open up from the commonest duties. A great physician of the past, Dr. T. W. Latham, in a lecture to medical students, has put the gist of the matter into one memorable sentence : "Happy indeed is that man whose moral nature and whose spiritual being are all harmoniously engaged in the daily business of his life ; with whom the same act has become his own happiness, a dispensation of good to his fellows, and a worship of God."

VII.

Religion's Silences.

There is, perhaps, in the history of religion nothing more striking, nor, in a way, more pathetic, than the human hunger it reveals for a clear, undimmed mental outlook. In every age men have asked from Faith a full explanation of life, and have in succession shown every degree and form of disappointment at not getting it. The dream of a theological chart of the whole universe which haunted the Middle Ages and found its expression in the "De Divisione Naturae" of a Scotus Erigena and in the gigantic "Summa" of an Aquinas, is still with us. Men ask to-day with the same *naïveté* as of old for the clearing up of every mystery. Every prominent religious teacher is bombarded with inquiries for exact definition. Now it is a question of the person of Christ, again of miracles, again of the validity of Genesis; an explanation is wanted of the

Atonement, or the Trinity, or the state after death. Unless the special difficulty of the questioner can be met there is no Faith for him and no Christian life.

This demand for a religion of absolute and scientific precision of idea on all the subjects of human speculation is entirely natural, and one that we have all shared. But it is time now that we understood what this expectation is really worth. Studied in the light of history, it discovers itself as a will-o'-the-wisp that has steered believers and unbelievers alike into the bog. The Church led the way when, under its influence, it proceeded to define and authoritatively pronounce upon all the questions which its wiser first period had left open. The bog was reached from the opposite direction when the revolting Western mind, declaring these definitions to be unscientific and outgrown, rejected both them and revealed religion with them. It was the strange aberration of the eighteenth century to confound the Church's "Greek metaphysics," as Dr. Hatch calls them, with the essential Christian revelation, and to discard both, as though they were one. When Condorcet tells us "there is not a religious system

or a piece of supernatural extravagance that does not rest on ignorance of natural laws," and when Diderot, even more ferocious in his attack, speaks of Christianity as "Of all systems the most absurd and atrocious, in its dogmas the most unintelligible, metaphysical and intricate," they are simply confronting one ineptitude with another. It is difficult to say which party to the controversy exhibited the more stupidity—the Church which claimed to explain everything and declared its explanation infallible, or these objectors, too short-sighted to see over the poor wall of ecclesiastical pretension to the immense reality that lay behind.

In our own day the disappointment is expressing itself in another fashion not less curious. The critics of Christianity, finding it fail to reply with clearness to all the questions proposed, revenge themselves by declaring it destitute of any distinctive light at all. It brought, they say, no new ideas into the world. Its Golden Rule was anticipated ages before by Confucius. The Sermon on the Mount has its finest maxims forestalled in Hillel and Shammai, in the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," in the Indian Pan-

chatantra and Matrabharata. "Why," it is asked, "should we worry other people with our costly and dangerous missionary campaigns, when they possess in their own teachings all the really essential ideas that Christianity has to offer?"

There is in this latest position a misconception just as gross as in that earlier one of the eighteenth century. The mistake becomes evident when we pass from *à priori* ideas as to what Christianity ought to do, to what it really proposes to itself, and to what it really accomplishes. One cannot study it understandingly for five minutes without becoming certain that its *rôle* is distinctly *not* to clear up mysteries, nor to present us with an encyclopædia of the knowable. Rather does it open to us continually fresh mysteries, and when it has filled us with longing for their comprehension falls into wondrous silences concerning them. It has, for instance, no philosophy either of beginnings or of endings. Genesis is an epic and so is the Apocalypse. Neither is history. The one is a splendid chant of the dawn of life, while the other, in Milton's magnificent words, is simply "the majestic image of a high and

stately tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies." The same reticence is visible in the whole body of its teaching.

The central revelation of Christianity is, of course, Jesus Christ, but here note how little of positive knowledge the sources offer us concerning Him. The New Testament calls Christ the Son of God, and theology has ever since been dying with curiosity to know the precise scientific value of the term. It must have its theory of the Incarnation; it raises discussions as to *ousia, hypostasis, prosopon, phusis*. Consider what, with all our theological prepossessions thick upon us, we should have expected in an authoritative account of Jesus, and then turn to one of these accounts! We open the Gospel of Mark, recognised generally as our earliest history; written, tradition says, under the eye of Peter, to find that the things about which the greatest pother has been made are simply not there. As to the lineage of Jesus, the manner of His entrance into the world, the position of His mother, the metaphysics of His relation to the Father, this writer has

no word. The simple wondrous story he offers raises in us a storm of questions to which the answer is—silence. The like is true to whatever part of the New Testament we go. Marvellous facts are flung down before us ; immense issues are raised ; we are stirred to the utmost pitch at what we read ; there are a thousand things we want to discuss, but ere our mouths are open the curtain is down and the *séance* over.

The same is true of the great Christian doctrines. Enough is said to stir the soul to its depths, but not to give it clear definitions. We may quote here some pregnant words of a great German thinker. Says Lotze : " Christian theology calls Christ the Son of God, the most distinctive article of Christian belief. But it does this in a figure, the exact significance of which is by no means positively determined. The figure taken simply indicates that intimate nature of the relationship between God and Christ which is clear to feeling. There is no explanation of the mode of that relation. So, also, religious feeling meets the Christian teaching about the redeeming power of Christ's death with ready faith, but definitions do not help it."

Christianity, we repeat, does not exist for the sake of its definitions. It gives us facts enough and knowledge enough for the great feelings, for the great beliefs, and for the great life, and leaves the rest undetermined. It recognises from the beginning, what a Goethe has in these later ages put for us into words, that "the highest and most excellent thing in man is formless, and we must guard against giving it shape in anything save noble deeds." Here, too, is the answer to those who to-day complain of the paucity in the Gospel of new ideas. One might say much on this question which the vaunters of Hindoo and Buddhistic morality might find it hard to answer. But the point, after all, is not there. It is in this, that New Testament religion has made itself potent and necessary in the world, not so much by its speech as by its silence, not so much by its spoken word as by its deed, by its unseen, mysterious work on the human heart and character. The new thing which it has brought into the world, and with which we can never again dispense, is a new temper, a new life. Some of its utterances may have been known before, but a thing never before seen was the societies of men and women

gathered in the name of the Crucified, into whom had been breathed a spirit which triumphed over sin, sorrow and the grave.

Two points here suggest themselves. Christianity is a religion of silences, of reticences that at times are to us, not only mysterious, but most hard to bear.

> For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.

When, however, we are disposed to repine at this feature of our lot, let us remember that religion's mysteries are great because the life it deals with is on so vast a scale. Science, which in destroying the cheap theologic cosmogonies of an earlier time had seemed to do Faith a disservice, has in reality supplied it with a far nobler pabulum. For in opening up to us a physical universe vaster than any which our fathers conceived, it irresistibly suggests the parallel that in like manner the spiritual universe, the realm of love, joy, holiness and immortal life is a reality, vaster in height and breadth and depth than our highest thought has touched.

The other point is that religion's silences are, in another point of view, simply the limitations of our present spiritual development. Science

tells us of a world of sound perpetually rolling around us, but which is at once above and beneath our hearing capacity. Our auditory nerve answers only to a certain range of vibration. So it is in our spiritual culture. When we speak of the awful silences of the unseen world it is only another way of saying that most of us are deaf. That elect souls here and there have heard a "thus saith the Lord," which when uttered has been called "revelation," means simply that our race produces from time to time a certain number of open ears. "Religion's silence" is, after all, a relative term. When our spirits are attuned, the "silence" changes into a still, small, but always recognisable Divine voice.

VIII.

A Doctrine of Remnants.

THE cosmic scheme we live under includes plainly a Discipline of Remnants. The unseen law ordains that at a swiftly coming period of our career we shall seem but a fragment of our former selves. The athlete of thirty years ago walks with stiffened limbs to gaze at the impossible feats of his successor. Faded politicians, actors, preachers, watch from their obscurity the men who now fill the public eye. How the old stars have paled! Is this an irony of nature? Is there a sardonic humour overhead which delights in turning our poor, boastful humanity inside out and showing how ridiculous it is? If there be any jesting in the spheres we certainly lay ourselves open to it. Our modern inflation and frantic self-advertisement invite rebuff, and we get it. Do men who live solely in the breath of popular applause; who are never easy unless the limelight is on them; whose attitude is a

perpetual cry, "Behold me, good people, I am important," ever reflect on what is awaiting them? They will be taken down in good time. And yet not unkindly. For behind the remnant-discipline there looms a remnant-doctrine, and it is one that should not only console but inspire. There is, doubtless, humour in the universe, a humour which shows in the treatment we get. But it was for something other than laughter that the strokes were ordained that leave us so often only a fragment of ourselves.

Early in history did our doctrine begin to disclose itself to the finer minds. The Old Testament is full of it. As there stated, it deals with the community rather than the individual, but it has abundant suggestion for our personal fates. The pressure of moral and political calamity turned the whole Jewish mind upon the significance of the remnant. The study left them with the conviction that the remnant was the essential. In morals it was the minority that saved. Ten righteous would have preserved Sodom. A later voice declared of Israel that "had it not been for a very small remnant we had been as Sodom and even as Gomorrah." After the exile it

dawned upon the prophetic spirits that the shattering of the kingdom was the beginning of a larger destiny. It was not out of the monarchy, out of the State in its vigour and prosperity, but from this broken remnant that the religion was to arise whose later development should conquer the world. The old organism had been smashed that something imprisoned in it might be liberated for a vaster mission.

The prophetic view here has received the confirmation of history. The evidence has been ever accumulating that the remnant-doctrine represents one of the laws of life. At first sight it might seem a hard and even a senseless one. "What," we exclaim, "sacrifice the bulk for the sake of the remnant? Why this waste? Why so much blossom on the ground for this tiny fruit on the tree; thousands of blooms for our one little ounce of attar of roses; a new religious conception at the price of a nation's shattering? What use to preach economy, when the nature of things under which we live is such a reckless prodigal?" The objection would be a real one if it represented the whole truth. But it leaves half the fact unstated. We forget here

that the fabrics and organisms which, in breaking up, yield this remnant are not themselves really wasted. To be dissolved is not to be lost. The blossom on the ground is as much cared for as the fruit on the tree. The structure that has gone is yet in another sense here, precious, imperishable; destined, in other forms, to the service of the Whole.

It is to be noted also that our remnant, while representing on one side an evident loss, exhibits on another a vast accretion. When Michael Angelo had finished his "Moses," the statue was, in a sense, only a fragment of the block out of which he had hewn it. Yet, balancing every piece that had been struck off, a something had been added. Concurrently with the visible wastage was there a spiritual inflow. The stroke that severed the marble replaced it with a sentiment, with an impress of artistry, with the reflex of a soul's beauty. And so the statue ended by being immeasurably greater than the block. We should miss the whole formative idea of the doctrine of remnants did we not recognise this same process on the wider scale of world-history. Again and again do we find, both in the community and in the individual, that

the shrinkage of visibles has been simply a clearing of the road for the passage inward of incomparable invisibles. In a true evolution there is, in fact, no giving up without this answering intake. We have dropped one value to receive a greater. The rude bulk has vanished; but, could we see, we should find in its place a secret energy and a vast promise. Christianity has translated this cosmic mystery into its doctrine of renunciation, of dying to live. Giving up is simply making room. Of St. Francis it was said, "*Ante obitum mortuus, post obitum vivus*"—"dead was he before dying, and alive after death." He had hewed away at his externals till there seemed next to nothing left. But so vast was the answer from the Unseen, that this denuded life was, in its generation, the richest and most potent of all.

As, with this clue in our hand, we survey the great world-processes around us, we reach an inward assurance that fears not the most revolutionary changes. The changes are coming. The compacted system of thought and belief which our fathers bequeathed to us is in parts visibly cracking and breaking down. But as we look closer we discover a something

hidden there, an indestructible fragment of which this system has been the appointed guardian, and which, as the old framework passes, is to be the corner-stone of a new and nobler structure. We need not be afraid of the new when we have learned that it is always the old we cherished carried to a higher expression. We may melt our theology and find in the process a vast shrinkage of the original bulk. But not an ounce of its pure gold will have disappeared.

We began this theme, however, for the sake mainly of its bearing on our individual lives, and it is time we turned more definitely to that one of its aspects. On the broad scale we have seen that the remnant is the last thing we should despise or despair of. But it is precisely when we apply the doctrine to our personal fates that our faith is apt to fail. We do not like being a remnant. We are not good at fighting what seems a losing battle. "Our line is broken: then *sauve qui peut*." There are numbers of people who die simply because they have not the courage to live. Chalmers, the great missionary, reports how the natives he worked amongst, when smitten with disease sank, he was convinced in many

instances, simply because from the beginning they gave up hope. And he tells how, on the contrary, he once willed himself back to life. At death's door with fever and believing himself passing, he heard some of his native helpers bewailing their certain doom in savage New Guinea if their leader died. He realised at that moment that he could not afford to die. His will awoke, he called on his fading energies, and from that moment his face was turned from death. And we remember how Melancthon recovered because Luther's faith would not let him go.

The world is full of people whose whole happiness and inner salvation depend upon their doctrine and practice of the remnant. We have referred already to the decay and obscurity of later life. But the position is equally true of multitudes in their prime. With them also the fragment is all that seems left. They have lost the thing which made life desirable. Their fortune has gone, or their friend, or their health. Passion has wrought disillusion. The man or woman on whom they had staked their affections is not what they thought. The cup which brimmed and sparkled has turned into a

draught of bitterness. Is this then life's defeat? Not unless we choose. Some of us are old enough to recognise that the crushing blow of years gone by was the stroke that liberated our true self. It was when we were forced back from the path we craved—the entrance gate slammed in our face—that we found the road on which our destiny was to be accomplished. There is no loss of fortune, no wreck of personal affection, no disaster in the sphere of the visible, but can be turned by the soul's inner energy into some higher phase of living. Pascal, as his sister tells us, made his ill-health into a means of spiritual perfection. Wesley accepted the wreck of domestic happiness as another call to his public work.

And as the cultivation of the remnant in ourselves is often our personal salvation, so is it with that of our brother man. In the home and the more intimate relations it is here the question is decided of desert or paradise. The husband, the son, may be large part of them savage. The higher human is in them as a thin streak, a fragment. But to discover that, and work incessantly upon it, ignoring the rest, is the supreme art of wifehood and

motherhood. Here also is the ground and the hope of all evangelising. Noblest work assuredly is this to which any mortal can lend himself, to believe in and back up the hard-pressed spiritual in our brother, until it can stand of itself against the overwhelming odds, and expel the Philistine and the Canaanite from its promised land.

If we have correctly stated the facts of life as related to this theme, they point to one conclusion. Exposed as he is to such a destiny, there is for man no middle term between despair and faith. If our seeming failures and disappointments, our loppings and prunings on every side, have not their solution in a higher and infinite destiny, for which these things are a preparation, then indeed is our life a sordid mockery. The sinister advice of the gloomy Roman satirist—

> Interea, dum fata sinunt
> Jungamus amores—

"Meanwhile, as long as the fates permit, let us enjoy our lusts," would to multitudes seem natural and in place. Renan's terrible suggestion in the "Abbesse de Jouarre" that humanity without hope would deliver itself up to unbridled licentiousness has in it a

ghastly probability. Indeed, to-day where faith is weakening the tendency is all in this direction. Men revenge themselves against the cosmic cruelty by a reckless indulgence. "After a certain age there is nothing left but the pleasures of the table"—the remark at a city banquet—is the modern echo of "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Strange that the revolt of our highest instincts against such a solution should not convince men that it is false and impossible. The whole world-process is against it. If, looming out of history, we see everywhere the doctrine of the remnant; if nations and systems dying down leave ever behind a something precious that survives; if physical wasting means so constantly an inner and spiritual accretion, why should we not carry the doctrine to its legitimate conclusion, and hold, as religion's mystic voice affirms, that the break-up of our physical frame means again a survival; that this last catastrophe is for a new and greater beginning?

IX.

Our Enemy.

To have an enemy is an experience common to us all. We may be the most pacific among mortals, but we cannot escape being in opposition to somebody. Hostility fronts us somewhere, if not in our individual, at least in our corporate and communal capacity. To be, for instance, an Englishman is to stir the bile of a dozen outside nationalities. We are part of the world, whose present aspect would almost justify Hobbes' contention that warfare is man's natural condition, and that peace is a mere truce and interlude. The nations glower at each other from behind their armaments. Each people nurtures its grudge against its neighbour. We are fain to believe the cynic couplet:

> Now hatred is by far the longest pleasure,
> Men love in haste, but they detest at leisure.

And while this is the result of a world-survey,

the prospect is not dissimilar as we narrow the view. In England one-half of us is at loggerheads with the other half on account of religion. The *odium theologicum* still continues to poison the sweetest natures. It was with this in view surely that Lucretius wrote his terrible line:

> Sæpius olim
> Religio peperit scelerosa atque
> impia facta.

We do not now burn each other alive, but when a Newman, so naturally amiable, described as "like Scott able only to see the best and highest in human character, hoping ever against hope," could write, "a publisher of heresy should be treated as if he were embodied evil," we realise what an abiding and formidable source we have here of human estrangement.

In addition to these outside and public causes we find our private life, from time to time, yielding us "our enemy." In our journeying onward there falls upon us now and again the shadow of another man's dislike. Without meaning or wishing it we find ourselves standing in some one else's way. Our interests clash, and we become

the mark for a rival's hostility. Or it may be a matter, not so much of outward interests as of innate antipathies. Human nature has its unaccountable attractions and repulsions. There are temperaments which inevitably jar one upon another. The qualities which draw to us one type of mind produce revulsion elsewhere. "That man dislikes us," we say to ourselves, "and he cannot help it."

Life, then, as we know it, contains "the enemy" as a part of its usual conditions. The point now is, what place does he take in our philosophy? Where do we put him in that inner code we have framed of our daily thought and procedure? That is a Sphinx question which meets us all to-day, and demands an answer under penalties. As the average man looks round for that answer he finds himself confronted by all manner of complicated problems. Human history, cosmic history and the Sermon on the Mount appear hopelessly at issue. And if the seeming quarrel here between science and religion can be settled, is he any nearer a working code? Is the Sermon "practical politics"? What is really meant by its doctrine of forgiveness and of non-resistance? Here are matters

which it is impossible to discuss with any approach to completeness, but on which, nevertheless, we will venture some hints.

Without entering on the critical question which scholars raise as to how far Christ's teaching, here as elsewhere, took the form, constantly used and recognised in the East, of rhetorical extreme, let us ask ourselves first how the doctrine, as given us in the Gospel, relates itself to human and to cosmic history. At first sight there seems a gulf. The doctrine, we say, is a peace doctrine, yet the world as we know it appears to be organised on a fighting basis. Everywhere is there the clash of opposites, and it is by these mighty strivings the universe is kept going. Our planet is held in its orbit by the tug of war between a centripetal and a centrifugal force. Evolution is all through a gigantic struggle. Fiske is not exaggerating when he declares, "battles far more deadly than Gettysburg or Gravelotte have been incessantly waged on every square mile of earth's life-bearing surface since life first began." And man from the beginning has been a fighting animal. He has fought for his tribal and national existence, for his territory, for his religion, for his commerce.

Almost every human result hitherto has been blood-bought.

In the face of this, what is the meaning of Christ's teaching ? Is it a pronouncement against history and the cosmic scheme ? Does His "I say unto you" declare these immemorial struggles, with their blood and tears, to have been a blunder and a crime ? Such an interpretation would be an utter misunderstanding both of Christ and the past. It would be an accusation not merely of man but of God. Very different does the message appear when set in its true framework, as part of the nature of things. It then reveals to us Christ as taking His place not against evolution, but in the line of it, and unfolding to us the mystery of its higher law. The earlier fight had been for a purpose ; it was a needed fight, and it was still to go on. But henceforth with new weapons. What happened to the world in the advent and teaching of Jesus was, in the moral sphere, precisely what had been continuously witnessed in other departments of life—the supercession, namely, of a lower power by a higher. Humanity in its progress is continually evolving new forces, each more subtle than the last. In the

physical region it begins with muscle, gets by-and-by to steam and railway, until electricity promises to supersede both. The fresh instrument is at first handled awkwardly, and leads to all manner of accidents. The primitive sailor would do better steering by the coastline than by a compass he did not understand. The savage prefers his bow and arrow till he learns the mystery of the rifle. There will be a hecatomb of aeronauts before man has conquered the upper air.

In like manner, in the moral sphere, Christ, with His doctrine of forgiveness and of "non-resistance," brought, we say, into the human conflict a new weapon which, in time, will supersede the old. His "non-resistance" did not mean the discontinuance of fighting. Christ was the greatest fighter the world has seen. Alone He stood up against the mob, against the priesthood, against the empire, against almost everything there was, and with the might of His single personality fought for a new kingdom and a new style of life. The weapon He introduced is only just beginning to be understood, so slowly does human history move. But as surely as electric traction will take the place of animal haulage,

so surely will Christ's way of dealing with evil and with "our enemy" supersede the brute-force method of an earlier time. It is not so much theology as science that is to-day affirming this. Herbert Spencer has hinted as much in his "Ethics," and that ardent Spencerian John Fiske declares that the next stage of human evolution will show an enormous increase of altruism and sympathy. The Christian doctrine, he declares, was a foresight of the scientific result.

Christ's method was to oppose to the enemy the force, not of muscle, but of the soul. That force could not have been used before humanity had reached a certain level, for it was not there. But its mystic pulsations are now being felt over ever-widening areas and with ever-increasing distinctness, and there can be no doubt what the result will be. Men are timid at trying a new law. It is like mounting a bicycle for the first time. But the expert knows the new law is as sure as any of the old ones, and will never fail him. The early Christians were experts of the higher knowledge. Those of whom Athenagoras says, "When struck they do not strike again; when robbed they do not go to law; they give to those who

ask of them, and love their neighbours as themselves," were men who knew themselves as conquerors. They were in charge of a force against which swords and spears were as nought. And wherever since it has been tried the results have been equally unmistakable. In John Woolman's delightful Autobiography, we read how he went, single-handed and unarmed, to preach the Gospel to a tribe of Indians, actually on the warpath against his own countrymen, delivered his message, and returned without a hair of his head being injured. And the heroic missionary of the South Seas, John G. Paton, records how a band of native Christians visited a cannibal tribe who had threatened with death any who should approach their village. "We come," said the chief and his companions, "without weapons of war. We come only to tell you about Jesus." Spears were thrown at them, which they secured and turned aside with their bare hands. "The heathen were perfectly overawed. They manifestly looked on the Christians as protected by some Invisible One. We lived to see that chief and all his tribe sitting in the school of Christ."

The conquest of the world by this new

spirit may be accomplished sooner than present appearances would seem to indicate. What we have to judge by is not the bristling armaments so much as the new thought that is working in the minds of men. It is astonishing how quickly the world can be swept clean by a fresh idea. Never was the stage coach system so developed, so prosperous, so seemingly established as on the eve of its disappearance. A thought came into the mind of Geordie Stephenson, and stage coachism was gone. History is made not by treaties and diplomacies, but by the working towards the front of a deep, common impulse that possesses the souls of men.

And while these ideas are preparing to rule and remake the world, it is for us to gladly open our hearts to their sway upon our individual life. He is a babe indeed who has not yet learned the bliss of forgiving his enemy, the bliss of returning good for his evil. There are so many reasons for forgiving him, and all good ones. He may have a just cause of offence against us, and then, plainly, our business is not reprisals, but personal amendment. Nine times out of ten, hostility is an affair of misconception. "He threw the water

not on me, but on the man he thought I was," was the calm comment of Archelaus of Macedon on the citizen who thus behaved to him. When abused for what is really foreign to our character the reply is to exhibit our true character. "Not to do likewise is the best revenge." Our enemy is never entirely our enemy. The best part of him is our friend, and the appeal of our highest to his highest will be precisely the help he needs in his conflict against himself. However our material interests may clash, our spiritual ones are the same, and can never be furthered except in this way. And amongst all the delights tasted by the epicures of sensation there is none with a more exquisite flavour than this of gaining, in the simple Christian way, the confidence and esteem of a brother who has been divided from us. In this treatment of "the enemy," whether public or private, the New Testament ethic is the most daring experiment which the book of history records, but it is one whose soundness is revealed by every new test. Here, as elsewhere, Christ has revealed to us the ultimate law of human living.

X.

At the Front.

"At the front" is a phrase which a great war burns into our minds. It means the line of extremest exposure. It is curious to note the gradations of endurance amongst a people who are waging a campaign. At the farthest rear are the home irresponsibles, who pay no costs, incur no risks, and to whom the war is mainly a subject of gossip. Beyond these are the taxpayers, who have a stake in the matter, who lose with the war's losses, but who personally are shielded from its real horrors. Further in front are the executive government who carry a wearing strain of responsibility. In a totally different position from all these are the men in the actual field of operations. But even here there are gradations. Those on the lines of communication, occupied with the mechanism of transport, may go through the war without being in sight of the foe. But finally there is the man who, by ship, by train,

by long marchings, has in succession passed all these halting-places of his countrymen, until he is at a point where there is nothing between himself and the bullet of the enemy. He is " at the front." In the firing line each man carries the whole tragedy of the war in his own single breast. He is at exposure's utmost limit, at the very meeting of life and death. In an army this is the post of honour. The man who has stood there and stood well is a veteran. It is a place which the best men choose. In the list of British dead, after a battle, one has noted always the large proportion of officers. They fell because they understood that, for honour's sake and for the sake of the rank and file behind, they must be " at the front."

That is how matters arrange themselves in time of war. Let us look now a moment at the conditions in time of peace. There is up to a certain point a striking parallel. Up to a certain point; but here emerges an enormous difference, upon which it will be well to direct some attention. In our civil society, just as in our military operations, there is a firing line, a point of uttermost exposure, and behind it, at successive removes, the halting-places

of the sheltered and protected classes. As to the front rank, any winter's experience enables us to trace its outline with a deadly precision. In that struggle for existence which we call peace we are most of us at a farther or less remove from the firing line. Against the fierce elemental powers, against frost and snow, against cold and hunger, we are sheltered behind the walls of our homes, behind our bank balances, behind our strength and energy. But we read in the papers of men, women and children who, in this battle, have no entrenchments. They are veritably "at the front." The fortunes of our peace-war have thrust them beyond the shelter of homes. The midnight cold finds them in the open. Without employment, without clothing, without food, between them and barbaric Nature's wildest onset there is—nothing.

So far the parallel holds. In campaigning abroad, and in the social state as we have it at home, there is equally a line of utmost exposure. As the soldier faces the extremity of hardship, the full brunt of the actual and all the terrors of the unknown, so here, in full view of the rest of us, is it with the files of our unendowed. But now opens the strange and

sinister difference. In military operations the front line is furnished with leaders. Precisely where the exposure is greatest there, at a pinch, you will find the best stuff in the army. The firing line notes its officers in front, and is heartened by the sight. And the central commanding brain of the force is working at every point of that line. The advance is an organised business. The front is a post of honour and a way to power. But in the other condition all this is reversed. On this firing line we have an endurance that is without leaders and without hope. Its hardships win no battles and gain no glory. There is no presiding genius directing its operations, no gladdening sight of a leader who shares the danger and cheers with inspiring words. The ranks here are a rabble and not an army. They have not chosen the post, but have been driven there by grimmest fate. The foe is armed to the teeth, but these bear no weapons. Their one consciousness is of helplessness and despair.

Here, truly, is something for us to reflect on! We decry our militarism, but it is our civism that needs mending. Our war is far less cruel than our peace. What is the remedy?

It is when we begin to discuss this question that the vastness of our social disorganisation appears. The masses suffer because they are without a head, without a system, without a programme. An army comes to disaster when every man has his plan, and is left to carry it out, and that at present is our civic state. In crises of this kind the separate impulses of the individual are no remedy. Their very opposition adds only to the confusion. Selfishness and generosity defeat each other's ends. In the hunger time one man makes a corner in provisions, and enriches himself through the general starvation. His neighbour, driven by conscience and the sight of the suffering, proposes to strip himself of his property and become as poor as the rest. But would the self-sacrifice of the one be any more a solution than the selfishness of the other? We doubt it. In nine cases out of ten it would be to transfer resources from good and capable hands to hands that were neither good nor capable. The mere impulse to make things easy all round is not a help, but a mischief. Carried out on a general scale, it would result simply in a rush of the improvident to the centres where the good things were going, in

a swift deterioration of ability and character, followed at no distant period by social bankruptcy.

We shall not get our solution till we have more squarely faced the question, "What is it that our front line needs? What are its real foes and how may it be helped in the fight against them?" Let us understand to begin with that this enemy is not mere physical endurance, mere physical hardship. These are not enemies. In humanity's balance-sheets they can never be reckoned on the adverse side. They are part of the making of manhood. If they were out of reach we should die for the lack of them. The strenuous foremost nations have everywhere been brought up on hardship. The Spartan system drew on it as a recipe for victory. In modern life men will rush from the luxury of clubland that, in Thibet or Central Africa, they may satiate the desire within them for hunger and thirst, and weariness and danger. Where men and women give up the strenuous life, the elemental conflict with nature, and entrench themselves at the farthest remove from the front, intent only on a soft indulgence, we see speedily the pass they come to. We have the

spectacle of a fashionable society, diseased at its centre, poisoning the air with the stench of its vices. And in healthier sections the question needs assuredly to be pondered, which Professor William James pointedly asks in his Gifford lectures, "Whether the modern easy system of bringing up children is not developing *a certain trashiness of fibre?*"

Hardship is not the enemy. The foe that haunts our poor front line has a grimmer aspect. His name is Despair. And the way to fight despair is not by alms or by coddling, but by work. We need to reorganise our front line on a basis of work. Work, nothing else and nothing less, is the gospel of social salvation. It is a gospel that has to be taught. Many of the feckless ones on the line of exposure are there from the lack of will rather than of opportunity. Very well, a will must be found for them. If there is not one inside, a will outside must serve. Society must perforce add here to its benevolent compulsions. Knowing, as we now do, that neither State nor individual can prosper apart from labour, the daily task must be made compulsory, just as education or the decent covering of the body

is compulsory. Here Germany, with her labour colonies, may well instruct us. The loafer must cease out of the land. In a community where everybody is healthily at work, hopelessness and despair die a natural death.

But evidently to reach the consummation of a universal, wholesome industry is a question of something more than of the worker himself. Most of our front liners are willing, but where is the work? It is here we see the chaotic condition of our social system. It is only the rudiment of a formation, a mob rather than an army. We cannot put up much longer with this barbarism. The human family, recognising its essential solidarity, is casting about to-day for the organs of its expression, and will not be long in finding them. One of the first stages in the new evolution will unquestionably be in a municipal and State organisation of labour. Its special function as a beginning will be a supply of alternative tasks. The immense specialisation of modern industry has made our workers helpless outside of the one detail in which they are proficient. When business is slack in the Leicester shoe factory, or the composing-room of the London printer, the shoemaker and the com-

positor are straightway "unemployed." That is a condition which the State must remedy. It must have its organisation of alternative industries. There need be no lack of these. The work is waiting. It is the co-ordinating mind that is wanting. Half our cities need rebuilding; great agricultural areas wait to be developed; vast treasuries of underground wealth lie unopened. Not a fraction of the new toils need be unremunerative. Denmark has shown us how the State, stepping in as teacher and director of agricultural enterprise, converted in a few years one of the poorest countries in Europe into one of the richest. England, which spent two hundred and fifty millions in the war in South Africa, can afford to back its own people in their war against want. There is no superfluous population. Every individual can be a wealth-creator, if the community will give him his chance.

But the communal responsibility here does not destroy our own. If war's code of honour sends the officers to the firing line the Christian code in this other fight has something not less stringent to say to the religious man. The asceticism of some of the great saints was evidently their answer to this call. They

wanted to be in humanity's firing line. "Where my brothers are, at the point of utmost exposure, there must I be, to share their feeling and to hearten them by my faith," was evidently the argument that went on in their soul. And it cannot be well with us, either in this world or the next, if we skulk in our entrenchments, or seek only to penetrate nearer the centre, while on the far periphery, where the guns are booming, our brothers are left by us to fight their grim battle uncompassionated and unhelped. Says Bunyan, "Woe be to those against whom the Scriptures bend themselves." Against none do they bend with a sterner menace than those who, in the absorption of their own self-regard, have forgotten their neighbour. When we have ceased to care for and help our brother we have turned our back upon God.

XI.

Principles and Persons.

OUR moral and religious loyalties are continually posing us with difficult problems. Of these none are more confusing than the rival attractions of principles and of persons. We are here continually pulled in opposite ways. The people who most fervently utter our shibboleth are often those we least admire. "So and so," we say, "is perfectly sound on our position. But oh, if only he were a gentleman!" On the other hand, we meet somebody whose views have been a bugbear to us for years and straightway fall in love with him. "Don't introduce me to that man," said Lamb once. "I feel it my duty to hate him, and you can't hate a man when you know him!" One might, indeed, at first sight suppose there was really no connection between persons and principles, that the labels were there by chance, and had nothing to do with the essential character. Could one

imagine a greater difference between the formulated theology of General Gordon and the views of Charles Darwin! And yet these two men produced on Huxley the same moral impression. Says he of Gordon: "He and Darwin, of all the people I have known in my life, are the two in whom I have found something bigger than ordinary humanity—an unequalled simplicity and directness of purpose—a sublime unselfishness."

To conclude, however, from observations of this kind, that principles have no causal or effective relation to persons would be to take a most superficial view of the matter. The search for the truth here leads through winding and difficult ways, but the path is at every point full of interest, and it opens finally upon the widest prospects. It brings us to the old-fashioned conclusions, but with new reasons for them. Everywhere, as our fathers taught us, principles rule character and create it. The seeming anomalies clear themselves away when we look a little deeper into what we mean by principles, and into the way in which they work.

In such a quest one of the first discoveries is that people's so-called views, religious or

otherwise, are often enough not their life principles at all. A remark of Bishop Creighton, in one of his mediæval studies, illustrates what we mean. "In mediæval times," says he, "men were much more concerned to have an ideal than they were interested to realise it. They rejoiced in the possession of principles, but they were chary in applying them." The Bishop might have gone further here. In the religious wars he was depicting the opposing theological propositions of the combatants were not really their principles. They were simply watchwords, rallying points, for the concentration of opposing hosts whose real motor power was the fighting instinct. There are, of course, times when the written or spoken formulary does express the inner passion, but it is by no means always. The distinction here is simple enough, but we are continually overlooking it, and floundering in consequence.

With the mediævalists, as with ourselves, principles governed character, but the principles did not, and do not, always lie in formulated propositions. The deepest things in us are ideas, but ideas that as yet have not got into human speech. They are, in

Tennyson's words, " deep-seated in our mystic frame." They constitute what Milton speaks of as " the utterless facts." One of the axioms of M. Taine's philosophy was that every man is a theorem—a bundle of principles working out. It is a far cry from Taine to Plato. The world-views of the two men were most of them as the poles asunder. Yet in the Greek thinker's position, that all things and persons have as their essence an antecedent type, an eternal idea that is expressed in the forms we see, there is an unmistakable kinship with this latest utterance of French culture.

It is along this line, indeed, that we get within sight of the conclusion that persons, in the ultimate of their character, are, despite all surface appearances to the contrary, the creation of principles. The history, both of individuals and of generations, is the harvest of vast, Divine ideas that lie behind the visible, and that are working themselves out on the plane of human affairs. These ideas wait their appointed time, wait that they may incarnate themselves in flesh and blood, in character and action. How long many of them *have* to wait! One might almost think that at times they grow im-

patient and seek to make a premature entrance on the scene. We read, for instance, how, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the principle of universal peace was floating over Europe. Says Erasmus: "There is a project to have a Congress of Kings at Cambrai, to enter into mutual engagements to preserve peace with each other and through Europe. But certain persons, who get nothing by peace and a great deal by war, throw obstacles in the way." In this matter, alas! the "persons" and the "obstacles" are not yet out of the way. But the day will come when the human developement will have reached the point at which man and the principle will fit each other, and then the nations will learn war no more.

It is indeed a high day in the human story when a great principle reaches its hour. For ages it may have been working silently along the subterranean channels of the world's life. At times it has, for a brief moment, shown itself above the surface, only to be hunted back again, with scoff and insult. But it is already in the blood, and will, by-and-by, mount to the brain's throne. There had been Luthers before Luther, assertors of the soul's

immediacy of access to God without mediation of priests. But they were swallows before the summer. Spiritual history has its own rate of progress, as inevitable as the process of the suns. When the appointed time is come the idea creates its man, and the credential of his authority is the echo of his word in every soul.

To watch this steady, ceaseless infiltration of the Divine ideas into humanity is one of the fascinations of history. Of the great moral divisions, one is into those with whom a principle is merely a watch-word, a battle-cry, and those in whom it is a working force. There have been centuries in which Christianity has been little more than the former. Men thought they had done enough when they had baptised their passions into the Church name. The Renaissance abounded with characters like that of Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, known afterwards as Pope Pius II., who, while in his earlier years a debauchee who gloried in his shame, thought it enough, on gaining the Popedom, to bid the world "renounce Æneas but accept Pius." It would be absurd to bracket characters of this order with Christianity, as in any sense responsible

for them. One might as well try to judge the quality of an inn from the picture on its sign-board. The forces at work in such lives have their origin in quite another quarter. In distinction from them, and as illustrating the outcome of a genuinely formative principle, one may take Hazlitt's fine description of some Dissenting ministers of his day: "They were true priests. They set up an image in their own minds—it was truth. They worshipped an idol there—it was justice. They looked on man as their brother, and only bowed the knee to the Highest. Separating from the world, they walked humbly with their God, and in thought with those who had borne testimony of a good conscience, with the spirits of just men in all ages."

The principles at work in good men, which are at once fashioning them, and enabling them to fashion others, are often beyond their own comprehension. They blunder badly when they try to express them. We find strangely narrow creeds professed by the noblest characters. Yet men cleave to and reverence these teachers because of an inner persuasion that, behind their spoken words, operating as their real motor-power, are principles

greater and nobler than their own theological propositions. As we listen to the wits who make the affirmations of these men the butt of their ridicule, and who plume themselves on their own deliverance from "childish superstitions," the inmost of us laughs quietly to itself. "Ah! my fine gentlemen," it seems to say, "and are you so very sure of your own position? These humble people, with a great spiritual ideal flashing before them, and in the strength of it devoting themselves heart and soul to the service of humanity, are they the right quarter for your sneers? Their fault, if they have one, is simply a want of knowledge of the grandeur of their principle. Whereas *your* fault,—well, the heavens will perhaps have something to say to it presently."

The road we have travelled should help us to unravel the puzzle with which we began. The characters that, on opposite sides to our own in the world's controversies, yet hold us by their beauty, are not anomalies, nor contradictions of spiritual truth. Wherever nobleness appears it is the outworking of eternal principle. It could come in no other way than by conformity to the highest. A physical

or an intellectual charm has ever some truth of God for its origin. It tells of an ancestor, maybe, who, while others were chaffering about propositions, sought the fresh air, and the open spaces, or mastered some elementary lessons in God's book of right living. The grace of manner, the sweetness of temper in our opponent, work back to that primal law and ultimate gospel in which we and he are one. Its appearance in him is an invitation to us to betake ourselves, for our own improvement, to the place where that lesson was learned.

Principles and Persons. Perhaps we should have inverted the title. For, as we think the thing out, we find that in the order of being, person must ever stand first. As we cross-examine our mind we find it an unthinkable proposition that "a principle of righteousness" can exist apart from a pre-existent personality. Righteousness is a characteristic of a soul, and can be no otherwise imagined. When, therefore, we talk of Divine ideas filtering into human history, the implication is always of One in whom, finally, they inhere. The principles that are slowly evolving themselves in the human story are nothing less than the

Incarnation of God in humanity. That is how the early fathers interpreted Christianity. How noble is this utterance of Justin Martyr, writing from the edge of the Apostolic age! "He (Christ) is the Word of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who live reasonably are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists, as among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus and men like them."

There have we the world's great secret. The uttermost truth of the Gospel is the uttermost truth of life. In Christ the ultimate Divine Principle has become the ultimate Divine Person.

XII.

On Keeping Young.

DUMAS, in one of his stories, pictures a company of old men to whom magician Cagliostro administers one of his secret elixirs. It works wonders. The wrinkles disappear from the withered cheeks; the aged eyes are lit with the old fires; the thoughts, the talk are of twenty-five. The world and themselves are remade. But, alas! the change is not permanent. The glorious hour passes, and leaves the company back in its senility, with an added sense of weariness. Elderly men read the page with a sigh. Ah, to be young again! Age is coming to be regarded by the moderns as the shadow upon life. Men exclaim that Nature here drives too hard a bargain with them. What a wail is that which Béranger raises when fifty!

> En maux cuisants la vieillesse abonde
> C'est la goutte qui nous meurtrit;
> La cécité, prison profonde,
> La surdité, dont chacun rit.

And so on to the gloomy end. But even his picture is not so dismal as that of Amiel, who, at forty-seven, finds this as his outlook: "All the swarm of my juvenile hopes fled. I cannot conceal my outlook as one of increasing isolation, interior mortification, long regrets, inconsolable sadness, lugubrious old age, slow agony, death in the desert."

What a gospel! Is this, then, all that life, in its later stages, has to offer us? If so, we might honour the wisdom of those Hyperboreans, of whom Clement speaks in the "Stromata," who "took those who were sixty years old without the gates and made away with them." With Tithonus, we might pray to be delivered from those burdened years. We find ourselves, however, unable to pass any such judgment on the order of things under which we live. If there is a mistake anywhere, it is not in the cosmic system, but in our interpretation of it. For, in the way, at least, in which Amiel and other moderns picture the business, there is absolutely no need to grow old. Life may be, and was meant to be, an immortal youth.

Of course there is here a qualification. We cannot put back the clock, and no phil-

osophy can obliterate the difference between seventy and twenty-one. Of each one of us, if we live long enough, the poet's words will be true: "He heard the voice that tells men they are old." The march of the physical processes is unceasing, and goes on without our consent being asked. Our consciousness is a kind of lodger in a vast establishment whose business is carried on to a large extent outside its cognisance. The heart is a labourer to whom we pay no wages, with whom we hold no conversation, who gets his orders elsewhere, who elects to work, and at the end, to cease to work without any say of ours in the matter. And so of the other organs. In some mysterious way they run the machine. Someone has wound them up to go for a certain time. When their energies slacken we feel it, but cannot alter the situation. The body ages, as a plant or a planet ages, by a rhythmic, immutable process.

That at least is how it seems to us. It is the way a biologist would talk. And yet even here it is very easy to make a mistake. Indeed, a vast blunder would it be to conclude from such data that the body's work and growth were independent of the soul. It is,

let us remember, one thing to talk of our consciousness, and quite another to talk of the soul. The latter is as an iceberg floating in ocean, the greater part of whose bulk is beneath the surface. What we *feel* is only a tithe of what we spiritually *are*. And so it comes about that the apparent independence of the physical processes is only apparent. At every moment and at every point the soul is influencing them—nay, in a manner creating them. Every physical state has, inwoven with it, a mental one. A gloomy mood blocks every bit of work the organs are trying to do. Worry is a foe to the heart, to the digestion, the circulation, to every nerve, vesicle and brain cell, and will leave on them all its evil mark. The science of life is realising ever more clearly the exact co-ordination between the spiritual and the physical states. Our bodily weather originates, all of it, in the uppermost spheres. To the extent in which the soul is wrong every part of us, from top to toe, is out of gear. We see, then, that while the inevitable years produce their results, the inner spiritual conditions are at every point profoundly modifying them.

It is not, however, of this side of us that we are chiefly thinking in our study of the art of "keeping young." Indeed, in the process of getting old it seems often as though the body and the years had least to do with it. There are men who are young at eighty, and others who are old at thirty. One meets people in their third decade who already are disillusioned, disenchanted, aged at heart. Their world, instead of being a wonder, a temple, a mystery of delight, is banal and empty. Bagehot, in writing of Lady Wortley Montague, sketches for us the mental interior of a *blasée* woman of fashion: "Society is good, but I have seen society. What is the use of talking or of hearing *bon mots?* I have done both till I am tired of doing either. I have laughed till I have no wish to laugh again, and made others laugh till I have hated them for being such fools." What is left to such people? They have exhausted all the springs that are in sight, and have no inclination to bore for deeper ones. One encounters all varieties of character and condition, but, so far as we have seen, God's earth contains no such specimens of sheer hopelessness as your comfortably placed youth

of both sexes, whose one discovery is that life is not worth living. And *their* life certainly is not. To keep young is a secret of the soul. This great achievement, the greatest, shall we say that the earthly career presents, demands in the first place some renunciations. We have, for one thing, to weed our pleasure garden of ignoble satisfactions. We are to be resolutely human and not animal. The debauchee, in seeking his delight, destroys all chance of it. His satyr feast ends before he can get the morsel to his mouth, and he finds :

> Both table and provision vanished quite
> With sound of harpies' wings and talons heard.

The wisdom of the ages is unanimous here. Across thousands of years the Indian Bhagavad Gita warns us that "it is the enemy, lust or passion, offspring of the carnal principle, by which the world is covered, as the flame by the smoke, as the mirror by rust." And the twentieth century, still panting after the best, echoes that old Eastern testimony. Maeterlinck speaks for it in saying, "Sterile pleasures of the body must be sacrificed; all that is not in absolute harmony with a larger, more durable energy of thought."

But no man will enter a discipline of this kind till he has something more to go upon, some motive power of definite inducement. And it is at this point we come at the secret of the whole matter. The one and only prescription for perpetual youth is the life of faith. Justification by faith has to be restated in our age, and it is time it were done, for society is going to pieces for want of it. Oliver Wendell Holmes, who was a youth at eighty, puts the matter in a nutshell: "It is faith in something, an enthusiasm for something, that makes life worth living." The faith may take on manifold forms, may attach itself to various creeds, but in essence it is always the same—the soul's grasp of what is higher than itself, a conviction of a spiritual order, pure and holy, regnant in the universe, which though at present invisible, will in the end make its triumph known. And so we find people of all religions made young by faith. Tolstoi, ere he had reached middle age, was a pessimist of the deepest dye. How old and withered was that heart! To-day, at the utmost term of life, he is as a child just born. The miracle that made him young was the new hope that the Gospel brought.

Some day humanity will know more probably than now of the psychological mystery that is involved in these transformations. It will, perhaps, be found that just as waves of energy pass through earth and rock, and certain forms of light penetrate our bodies, so the spiritual forces, where our receptive conditions are favourable, pour into us from above, producing their subtle and enduring results not only upon our consciousness, but over the entire area of our being.

Here have we the daily renewing that keeps the soul young. This juvenescence does not necessarily carry with it animal health, strength, or length of days. But it means throughout life a feeling of youth, a glorious exultancy, a growing and aspiring soul. This is the art of living carried to its highest point. The examples are everywhere, and of all ages. Olympia Morata, of the sixteenth century, who before she was sixteen had written Greek and Latin dissertations on the deepest subjects, died young. As life ebbed she said smilingly to her husband: "I can scarcely see you any longer, but everywhere seems full of the most beautiful flowers." John Wesley was over eighty when he passed,

but his concluding words were: "The best of all is God is with us." These two, whom we should call young and old, were both youthful souls. They knew they had only begun.

How strange that, with the path so clearly marked for us, we of this age should still on this vital matter, be blundering along the wrongest of roads! Men waste themselves in accumulating giant fortunes. For what? To build mansions whose vastness precludes comfort, and which will be white elephants to their successors, or to multiply residences whose number abolishes for the owner the very idea of home! To build oneself into bricks and mortar, when one might be fashioning the soul for the sublimest possibilities! By-and-by men will cease this fooling. The absurdity will be too apparent. They will discover that the only wealth is life; that the only way to make the best of this world is to make the best of the other. For the two are one. The highest gleams ever through this lower. The pilgrim to the better country is the man who, living or dying, knows the bliss of a perpetual youth.

XIII.

The Rebirths of Feeling.

OUR histories, both of individuals and of nations, are at best but the clumsiest of makeshifts. They are only approximations, at a long remove from the reality. What can be expressed in words is always a husk, a body, and the body is never the same thing as the soul. The true story of the man, the story which, with our present instruments, can never be told, is that of his Feeling. The measurement of a life, whether it has been a success or a failure, is here and nowhere else. When, in your appraisement of a man, you discuss his station, his property, the figure he makes before his fellows, you are occupied with irrelevancies. The decisive point in a life's prosperity is in the quality and range of its consciousness. To talk of fortune in terms only of the money market is simply to show our limitations. How does a man front life of a morning? The whole question is there:

Can he step out at dawn from his door with an unspeakable sense of renewal; feeling every breath he draws, every movement of his limbs, every glance at the open sky, to be a new wedding of himself with the infinite, a participation in a boundless wealth of being? Is it a sense of rapture, this early greeting of his soul and the world? If so, what need to go further into his affairs?

But this view of prosperity, which to some of us appears so simple, is as yet apparently a quite neglected piece of the world's education. There is a general rush for good things, but the movement is so woefully undiscriminating. Humanity, for its next step upward, will have to learn a little psychology. It will then discover that the only world it can possess is an inner world, that the outside is only the shadow of the inside; that its material possessions are ever the reflex of its spiritual ones. It will learn further that the higher qualities of feeling which constitute life's true riches are related to an inner organism whose delicacy is proportioned to the rare results it produces. Here are we in the region of inexorable law. The finer the product the greater the complexity of the producing organ, and the greater

its liability to injury. You may run a pin into your hand and no great harm will be done. Let there be a lesion of the optic nerve and the visible world has become for ever a blank. While everybody knows this as a law of the body, it has not yet occurred to the generality that precisely the same law holds of the soul. This magnificent possession, which, properly tended, will secure to a man through life a consciousness ever ascending, both in range and quality, until it can reach angelic heights, is treated with the crassest disregard both of its possibilities and of the laws of its working. Ignorance is the true original sin. Men are bankrupts morally because they do not know the gold mine that is in them.

It is here we get a true view of the nature and function of religion. When we come to its genuine sources we find it always as a form of the highest feeling. Christianity is known to us as a church, a ceremonial, a body of doctrine, a history of deeds, a mass of controverted opinions. At its purest we have it in the reported words of Christ and the apostles. But the highest Christianity that has been in this world is, in a way, veiled from us. What we do not know, and would give worlds to

know, is the precise feeling that was in Christ's own breast, the daily consciousness with which He fronted life and the universe. That was the original Christianity. The words He uttered, the deeds He performed, the influences He rained upon others were sparks from that central glow, but not the thing itself. Christ's quality of feeling was the greatest thing that has been in the world. The next greatest was the answering consciousness created in His disciples. The organisms here were immeasurably lower than His own; the faculties all untrained to the highest exercises. But at this distance of time we catch a reflex of the thrill that went through them as they communed with that radiant soul. To transmit that feeling, to develop the organs in which it can reside, to warm the heart of humanity everywhere with this central heat—that is the business of religion to-day.

The first appearance of this highest consciousness in the race is, we have said, a mystery. For its origin we have to refer back to a cause that is ultra-planetary, to that spiritual universe which presses at every point on our visible, and out of which all our good and great has come. But when we study the

persistency of the feeling, its continual rebirth in nations and in individuals, we come upon a group of facts that it is of the highest importance to classify and to use. One of these is the extraordinary relation of the feeling to outer circumstance. What has become a scientific certainty is the essentially spiritual character of events. The roughest, the most painful of experiences, are only marks of divinest things underneath. If the true wealth of life lies in its noblest feeling where, in our world, are we most likely to find it? The answer of history is a strange one, but it offers clues which, properly followed, should lead to the solution of more than one problem. For the place and time of the rebirth of divinest feeling has been the place and time of outward stress and pain. There is no doubt of this. Says Lecky, in his history of European morals: "There has probably never existed upon earth a community whose members were bound to one another by a deeper or purer affection than the Christians in the days of the persecutions." How near this is to the fact those only who have closely followed the story of Christianity from the beginning can properly realise. As a single instance let any

one read the account of the trials of the Church in Alexandria during the Valerian persecution, as related by its Bishop, Dionysius. Says he : "Then with one impulse they all rushed upon the houses of the God-fearing, and robbed and plundered them. . . . The brethren, however, simply gave way and withdrew, and like those to whom Paul bears witness, they took the spoiling of their goods with joy." He then describes how many of his people, old and young, and of both sexes, were put to death with every imaginable torture ; how, in the midst of all this, the plague broke out in the city, and how, while the pagan population in their panic left their sick untended and the dead unburied, the Christians remained tenderly nursing both foes and friends ; how their own people died in triumph, while those who remained "rejoiced deeply in the peace of Christ, which He committed to us alone."

And that story has been repeated in every age. Here from the seventeenth century is the testimony of a humble Huguenot woman persecuted under Louis XIV. When stripped, bound with cords and whipped, she declares : "At this moment I received the greatest consolation I can ever receive in my life, since I

had the honour of being whipped for the name of Christ. Why can I not write down the inconceivable influences, consolations and peace which I felt interiorly? To understand them one must have passed through the same trial." And to take one more instance: in the eighteenth century we have Methodist John Nelson, when imprisoned in a filthy, ill-smelling hole for the crime of preaching the Gospel, exclaiming: "My soul was as a watered garden, and I could sing praises to God all day long. For He turned my captivity into joy, and gave me to rest as well on the boards as if I had been on a bed of down." Any one, indeed, who takes the trouble to study history must realise that he is in these instances dealing with no chance phenomenon, no mere freak of temperament, but with a spiritual law as certain as the movement of the planets.

Another significant fact in this group is in connection with the spread of the higher feeling. There is a law of multiple action here more wonderful than any of the contagions of the physical world. Science tells amazing stories of the propagation of germs, bearing it may be disease, or its cure, from one organism to another. But on the spiritual sphere these

activities are all transcended. It is as algebra to arithmetic. The quantities are limitless. The secret of great revivals is that a single soul filled with the Divine consciousness will communicate itself to innumerable other souls, the while suffering no diminution of its own store of energy. Have we properly studied this phenomenon, that whereas all partition in the natural world means diminution and exhaustion of the original stock, in the spiritual realm the contrary obtains? A voice for God charged with feeling, a Christian act saturated with love, spreads its mystic power over thousands of souls, and while each recipient gets his fill, he has thereby lowered no whit the original stock. Carried out to its legitimate deductions, the experience here is another evidence that while the body has to do with the finite and the measurable, the soul's transactions are, by right of its inherent nature, with the imperishable and the infinite.

The Churches are just now inquiring anxiously how they may regain their lost hold over the masses. They will regain their hold of the masses when they have regained their hold of the laws and forces of the spiritual life. If they want a revival, they must understand the

psychology of a revival. The laws here are as sure as those of electricity. Men ought not at this time of day to be groping about for the right way of winning souls. It is as old as the hills. What is the meaning of the statement that the great spiritual renewals have been always preceded by earnest prayer? It is the formula of the soul's dynamic. It means, in other words, that in a few disciplined spirits the inner organs, developed and purified by these exercises, have become recipients and reservoirs of the higher forces, and come in the end to a condition in which these forces pass out with resistless power upon their fellows. We are here at the science of the soul's evolution and of the generation and transmission of spiritual energy. People talk of the Church's obscurantism. They may well do so. When, in all its sections, the Church has begun to learn the real science of its department, men will become religious as naturally and as universally as they have become human.

Meanwhile, it is for those who know, to exhibit to their fellows the joy of the right living. Their experience must be a reaffirmation of religion's ultimate truths. They must make it evident that no music is comparable

to that which the universe sings through a soul in tune. Who can deny damnation when he sees men around him losing the capacity for all the higher notes? Who can deny heaven when he knows of souls that live there to-day? Our poor human race! Prodigal son that has wandered into the far country and fed on the husks that the swine eat! But it will come back again. The *Heimweh* is already upon it. It is already sated with its ignoble feast and straining its ears to the Father's voice. A rebirth of spiritual feeling is ahead. It will be the greatest the world has known since Christ.

XIV.

Imagination in Ethics.

ERASMUS tells a merry story of a company riding to Richmond, when a jocose member of the party stopped suddenly, staring into the sky, "God avert this prodigy!" "What?" "Can you not see that large dragon there with horns of flame and tail looped into a circle?" "No." But finally one said he saw it. Then the others in quick succession. In three days the report ran through the land of a great portent. The jest might be taken as an experiment in the force of imagination. And the faculty is as potent in the twentieth as in the sixteenth century, but it is for us to make a more profitable use of it than did the Richmond pilgrims. Now that we are beginning to see how life's upward movement depends on the better and saner development of our inner powers, the cult of the imagination will become more and more a feature of education. It is perhaps the

greatest of character-builders. Out of it man makes his world; it creates his happiness or his woe. Pascal's *mot* that "If an artisan were sure of dreaming every night that he was king, he would be almost as happy as a king who should dream every night he was an artisan," would apply here. For man dreams almost as much awake as when asleep. What he imagines is a great part of what he is.

It would be a mere repetition of the obvious to point out the place imagination occupies in what we may call the decorative side of life. That the painter, the poet, the dramatist, the romancer find here their chief material is what we all know. The exact sciences, even as much as the arts, depend on it for aliment and furtherance. George Henry Lewes is strictly within bounds when he says, "No man ever made a discovery (he may have stumbled on one) without the exercise of as much imagination as, employed in another direction and in alliance with other faculties, would have gone to the creation of a poem. To imagine a good experiment is as difficult as to invent a good fable." All this has become a truism. What, however, is not so fully recognised is the part played by imagination

in our working, every-day ethics. The moral teacher of the future, instead of generalising on the subject of sin and reclamation, will specialise on the laws of action of the different inner powers, and on their training and co-operation for the best results.

When, with this object, we study the imaginative faculty, we find an admittedly enormous power, whose relation to morals seems at first quite undefined. In the battle of good and evil it would appear to resemble those mercenary troops of the mediæval time who were ready with equal alacrity to fight on either side. Human nature is still in the making, probably at a very early stage of the making, and the action of its visualising power has hitherto been of a correspondingly crude and unregulated kind. Over vast tracts of history its influence would seem as often evil as good. What infernal cruelties have had imagination for their source! People dreamed of gods that lusted for blood, and slaughtered old and young to satisfy them. Arnobius, one of the early Christian apologists, devotes whole chapters of his principal work to disprove the view universally held amongst the pagans, and which was

one of the main causes of persecution, that the famines, earthquakes, plagues, and other calamities of the times had as their reason the anger of the gods against the Christians.

It is undeniable also that an unregulated imagination is one of the most powerful auxiliaries of private vice. In that interior region of the mind where we are beyond the reach of public opinion, beyond the judgment even of our most intimate friends, the real tussle comes, and there is it that imagination often plays its most sinister part. Moving outwardly amid the primmest of conventions, paying ostentatious respect to the proprieties, a man may in the secret chamber of his imagery, be feasting his vision with every kind of lubricity. It is here, indeed, that the impressionable temperament which makes poet and artist finds often its sorest trial, its most frequent stone of stumbling. To how many, in this way, has genius proved a *damnosa hereditas!* The strongest have barely escaped with their lives. Bunyan in his "Grace Abounding," tells how, long after his profession as a Christian, the old thought-springs of his earlier life at times burst upward from beneath, and poured their black floods over

the inner realm ; and what mighty wrestlings and acts of faith were needed ere he had secured a clean interior.

Yet none the less true is it that this same imagination, so disastrous in its unregulated activities, will, in a true scheme of life, rank as one of the chief redeeming and cleansing forces. Was it not by the imagination, indeed, that man became first of all a moral being? It was the vision of something higher than himself that made him at once moral and immoral, which gave him at the same moment the sense of sin and the promise of saintship. It is worthy of note, also, that the early legislators who, in different parts of the world, gave to mankind in their codes the first great ethical disciplines, were unanimous in their call on the imagination as their chief auxiliary. It was to visions and voices and mystic rites they appealed as props to their authority. And this with entire sincerity. When the great lawgivers of Egypt, of Greece, of Persia, of Rome, and of Palestine declared their Codes to have originated with the deities of the land they were simply expressing in their own way the truth, which one of the early fathers so

finely sums up in the remark that "the different human laws were all fed from one Divine law."

It is, however, when we come to the practical business of our own daily living that we see most clearly the part a cultivated imagination can play in ethics. We shall, for instance, only be able to do justice to our neighbour in proportion as we are able to visualise him. By justice here we mean far more than what is demanded by law or by public opinion. Our greatest crimes against him may be committed in a sphere where these powers never reach. As we advance in spiritual culture those sins of calumny and of scandal which make so much of the misery of human life will become less and less possible to us, and the power which keeps us from them will be that of imagination. We have only, in discussing an absent acquaintance, to picture him to ourselves as of the company, and the base spirit of disparagement is exorcised. So, too, where the tendency is to *Schadenfreude*, to use the expressive German phrase, the base exultancy over a rival's discomfiture; the moment a man can visualise for himself this other's interior he will recoil

from the thought of taking pleasure in view of that inner sadness. The misunderstandings, the jealousies, the ignoble satisfactions of triumphant rivalry will die out of men when they have gained the faculty of seeing their brother not, as now, from without, but from within. When we have constructed his life from his own standpoint, and seen its struggle and its sorrow, it will be so easy to forgive, so easy to help, so impossible to hate! That is why Christ, the great seer, was the great forgiver. "Put yourself in his place," was the dictum of a great novelist. It is one of the necessities of the higher ethic, and it is by vision power the miracle is wrought.

To a more cultured imagination, also, is it we shall have to look for an improvement in what we may call negative morality, the abstention, that is, from vicious or criminal acts. Half the follies and badness of the world will be done with when men have brain enough, ere the deed is done, to project themselves mentally into "the moment after." When people can present to themselves the exact feeling which follows upon a debauch or an infamy, they will repent of it beforehand, instead of after, when it is too late.

What vastly greater sweetness would come into many a home circle were there only a little more vision in it! Ah! could the man at his fireside realise what the homely face before him, which he has so often smitten into grief by his hard words, will mean to him when—so soon it may be!—it has gone for ever from his sight! It is a good word, one for us all to remember, that of Siebenkas in Richter's "Flower, Fruit, and Thorn Pieces": "Every morning, every evening, he said to himself: How much ought I not to forgive, for we shall remain so short a time together!"

The visualising faculty is also the great feeder of our sympathies. It is when we "see together" that we "feel together." The cool complacency of the well-to-do, who nurse their own comfortable sensations, while ignoring the wretchedness beyond their boundary wall, would break up the moment they saw clearly into those other interiors. The tortures which in barbarous ages men inflicted on each other had been impossible could the oppressor have had a clear view of the inner actuality of his victim. We are beyond that stage, but still are woefully dim sighted. The world's habitations of

cruelty will be dealt with in drastic fashion when the civilised peoples have had their vision. When, in the seventies, the tidings of the Turkish massacres in Bulgaria were flashed to Europe, the present writer found himself one summer day walking through a lovely English village. He had been reading of what the Bashi-Bazouks had been doing at Batak and elsewhere. Suddenly the account was visualised before him in the scene where he found himself. He saw the village church in flames, the street startled from its quietness by the inrush of armed savages, the rural quiet changed in a moment to a pandemonium, the little girls and boys, who before had been playing in the streets, spitted on the ends of bayonets, the air filled with shrieks and groans, the gutters red with blood. As he saw it all, "This," he said to himself, "is precisely what has happened in a few days' journey of where I am standing now." That flash of vision gave him a feeling for oppressed peoples, such as he had never before experienced, and which all the following years have never dimmed.

What has been here said is only the fringe of a great subject. Indeed, so much has been left unsaid that, as it stands, the theme thus

handled might easily lead to misconceptions. So we end with a warning hint or two. It must not, for instance, be supposed that the mere culture of the imagination is of itself going to bring about great ethical reforms. The great imaginers have not by any means been all great moralists. Else the musicians and the painters were all saints—which they are not. It is only in alliance, at every point, with the will that our visualising can be morally helpful. Could Coleridge have linked that imagination which, as Hazlitt says, " had angelic wings and fed on manna," with a healthy volition, what a sublime career would England have seen!

And here we come upon something deeper yet. Behind the imagination the will, but behind the will——! Science is beginning to discover that our separate faculties are not themselves originators. They are but the organs of a deeper life, fed from sources that are otherwhere. Man is constructed so as not to be complete in himself. He is a planet that moves round a sun. He can never know the true harmony or the healthy development of his being till his earthly is consciously linked with a heavenly.

XV.

Our Links with Lowliness.

Man is unquestionably the aristocrat of this planet. His thought-world is a royalty than which nothing can be imagined more supreme, more august. Let one side of him speak, and you are in contact with infinitudes. We compare him with what else lives and moves in the world, only to realise the remoteness, the lonely grandeur of his position. As Professor Fiske has it: "While for zoological man you can hardly erect a distinct family from that of the chimpanzee and orang, for psychological man you must erect a distinct kingdom; nay, you must dichotomize the universe, putting man on one side and all things else on the other." And it is, on the whole, a healthy tendency of our modern culture to put the stress on this loftier side of humanity. Our question is, and rightly, not so much what we have come from, as what we can grow to. Aspiration we recog-

nise as one of our greatest faculties. Forgetting the things that are behind we press toward the prize in front. A sense of boundless human possibility is the note of the twentieth century. We feel that victory will be to the race that believes in itself, in the greatness of its destiny.

But we are not permitted to talk in this vein without checks and reminders of other things. There is another side of life that can never, for long, be kept out of sight. The cosmic arrangement under which we live has wedded our ambitions to the strangest of circumstances. We must needs study the soil in which we are rooted as well as the heavens to which we aspire. Science traces our origin to the dust. The proofs stare us in the face. Every child born into the world has, in its pre-natal, embryo period, recapitulated the whole humbling story of man's ascent to his present stature. What, perhaps, is even more striking is that the child's mind, from babyhood on, reproduces the successive mental developments of the human race on its way upward from the primitive savage beginnings.

But our links with lowliness do not end here. The career of each one of us shows

another element than that which soars and triumphs. The most favoured, the most fortunate of mortals do not escape this under side. It is the successful, the high-soaring man, indeed, that has the keenest sense of the human limitations. Strange that his mind, "that wanders through eternity," should be partnered with a bodily life, with functions, that seem so coarse and degrading! And then, as surely as a man goes up, he comes down. He reaches his culminating point, and decline begins. His strength decays; he has, men say, "seen his best days," he falls to the rear, and takes some lowlier post. By-and-by he fades out of life, dies, and is forgotten of his fellows. This is the human story which each one of us, with variations that make no difference to the main result, will in his turn repeat. What a vast and intimate relationship have we to the lowly, the sordid, the perishable!

There are moments, indeed, when the link with lowliness seems the one overshadowing feature of life. It is on this feature that modern pessimism has planted itself. Numbers of first-class minds have been permanently gloomed by their inability to get away from

this obsession. We have Taine as a young man, telling us how "the sight of mutilated human nature. . . . of man, who, wounded in his innermost being, drags his incurable hurt along the roads which Time opens to him, moved him like the sight of ships in danger on the sea." To Nietzsche the human existence appears at times, not always, as an absurdity, "a side show on some ridiculous star." Schopenhauer thinks we should all commit suicide were the business a purely negative one, simply "a sudden stoppage of existence." Our own Watson, reviewing the limitations of life, asks if man is not "some random throw of heedless nature's die?" The modern pessimists are unanimous also in rejecting the argument of a future perfection as counterpoise to present ills. "How," they cry, "can a supposed future good make any alteration in the fact that the present is bad? What has your as yet unexistent millennium to do with our now existent and too evident slum?" Thus our pessimist, who refuses to be comforted.

But while the writers of this school are, many of them, our contemporaries, they have almost ceased to be modern. Their

day is already over. Before long the world will wonder that able men could be so parochial, could build themselves on so short-sighted a philosophy. It can hardly be called a "view," for there is no insight in it. What, at this time of day, is to be said for a system which begins with the vulgar error of taking appearances for the ultimate reality? The later metaphysic is already constructing a new standpoint for these studies. When astronomy, discovering the real position and relations of our planet in space, destroyed the old notion of "upper" and "under," showing that what was "above" with us was "below" at Melbourne, that "going up" and "going down" were, in a cosmic view, merely relative and local terms, it opened a wider range of inferences than were contained in matter and space. And it shattered for ever our trust in appearances as representing the ultimate truth. So, when our pessimist compels our attention upon the present fact, and will have the whole of life judged from it, we will admit his claim provided he will, for himself and us, gauge the fact in its entirety.

As a simple test of his capacity here, suppose we were to take, what has been in all time a

stock material of pessimism, the condition of bodily limitation and weakness, and ask for a complete analysis ? What *is* our bodily weakness ? Shall we say that the particles which make up our physical frame are weak ? That evidently is only a bit of the truth. In themselves they are just as strong as the everlasting hills. They are one with the same cosmic system as the hills. They have flowed into us out of that eternal complex of matter and force which makes the outside world, and perpetually go out to reunite with it—that complex which is never weary, never weak, never dies. There is no weakness even in a dead body. All its constituents are entering into the eternal play of the universe, and are mighty with its might. The weakness we know and talk of is at most only a fraction of the reality, a passing phase of our consciousness ; the limitations it imposes are an equation between ourselves and the sum of things, whose results it would require an infinite mind to work out. And our pessimist's mind is plainly not of that dimension.

Our links with lowliness will take a quite other than pessimistic interpretation when, further, we consider how, in the scheme

of things, what we call highest and lowest are ever inextricably blended. Here again "upper" and "under," we find, are only relative and local terms. It is precisely the shadow upon life that ought to inspire us with the greatest hopes about it. It is when we peer into that darkness that the divinest things seem, in the dimness, to be shaping themselves. When a man is stricken with his mortal illness, when his income falls off, when the world's pleasure and applause are done with him, when all the supports have given way and he falls back helpless upon the void, what does he find? The instructed soul finds that as the seemingly solid earth on which he built his house rests upon nothing, and yet is upheld, so he, launched upon the abyss, is also miraculously upstayed. What a wonderful word is that which Socrates uttered to his judges after being condemned to death! He had spoken to them of the Daimon or guardian spirit which, warning him throughout his career against all evils, did not, he said, warn him against his trial and death. "What, then," he continues, "do I suppose to be the reason thereof? I will tell you. I think it is that what has happened to me has been a

good thing; and we must have been mistaken when we supposed that death was an evil."

That limitation, poverty, weakness, death itself have behind them a reality quite other than what seems—that they are, in short, veiled forms of the highest, is a conception that grows upon us the more closely we study them. The spiritual gifts which crown man's being come all in this dress. Are we to imagine it a mere chance that the purest religion began this way? The new philosophy of the cosmos, which finds highest in lowest, life's choicest treasures lurking in humblest disguises, will have things of its own to say about the doctrines both of Incarnation and of the Cross. The translation into modern thought of the apostolic utterances on these themes will tell substantially the same story as that which has inspired the heart of Christendom through all the centuries. The universe's spiritual highest, humbling itself to human birth, clothing itself with poverty, walking in lowliest ways, and enduring pain to its last extremity in the service of good—this will be accepted as the centre of philosophy, as it is the heart of religion.

By no chance coincidence is it either that

the wedding of highest and lowest, which received such illustration at the beginning of Christianity, has been perpetually repeating itself in religion's history since. Earthen vessels carry the heavenly treasure. When Arnobius reports what paganism said of the Christians of his time, that "they were unlearned, rude, unpolished, rustic, barbarous, madmen, nondescripts—of trivial and sordid speech," we are reminded curiously of Cowley's gibe at the Puritans, of Sydney Smith's criticism of cobbler William Carey, and of the opinion entertained of the early Methodists amongst polite society of the eighteenth century. And the gibes had point, for who can deny the rudeness and the rusticity of these professors? And yet who to-day will deny that these humble peoples were the bearers to their fellows and to after generations of some of the most precious gifts of life?

The man who has mastered his philosophy of lowliness will be free of many things. He will not be disappointed at his limitations or his weakness; and that not because he is in love with limitations or littleness, but because he discerns behind all this an infinite greatness looming. It is here also he will

find his strength to be honest and fearless as a truth-seeker and a truth-utterer. Your true independents are the men who are at their ease in lowliness. One of the greatest weaknesses of public life to-day, in politics as in religion, is the slavery of men to outward position and to popular applause. We shall not get a revival of moral and spiritual force till leaders and public teachers, renewing themselves at the sources of highest life, have won their emancipation from the false high in its every form, and speak and act in absolute loyalty to the true high, though it be linked with a manger or a cross. Here find we, indeed, our emancipation from all that is called evil. When we have reached this deeper view—have realised for ourselves that what, in its inner aspect, is a limit, opens on its other side to infinite freedom; that experiences which, in our present appeal to our consciousness, are gloomy and painful, have behind them immeasurable other aspects, vastest transformations; that death itself is an appearance with a quite other reality behind—the day of our freedom will have dawned. We shall accept life in its totality as a Divine gift. In its highest and lowest we shall alike touch God.

XVI.

By-Roads to Faith.

"It is faith in something, an enthusiasm for something, that makes life worth living." So spoke the veteran, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and his words find echo in all healthy minds. It is the everlasting "Yea," and not some miserable, croaking "No," that creates great history and great character. An affirmation of ultimate good is creation's ground-tone. The soul carries in itself an inextinguishable belief in a final, triumphant answer to its problems, in the satisfaction of its highest longing. We are in an age of criticism, of the dissolution of belief, of the apparent triumph of the negative. But a survey of the past should do away with our panics. It reveals to us, in a thousand iterations, that roads that seemed to lead to the abyss have turned out to be the by-ways of faith; that agencies which, in their terror, men denounced as the enemies of the kingdom, have done some of the best work for its spread and establishment.

The most interesting thing this planet could show would be a universal experience-meeting, in which the world should be summoned to witness how, collectively and individually, it had come by its faith. The answer, supposing the inquiry to be pursued with thoroughness and accuracy, would be full of surprises. It would be seen, for one thing, how many so-called aids to faith have been no aids; how in his endeavours to rear this particular plant, the professional religious horticulturist has proved to be the most clumsy and bungling of workers. The history of his attempts has so often been a history of how not to do it! So often has he been putting in the wrong seed, and producing a crop of superstitions, in place of the tree of healing. Plutarch, himself one of the most devout of men, in his "De Superstitione," argues that even disbelief in God is less mischievous than a base perversion of belief concerning Him. "For," says he, "the atheist does not see God at all, but the superstitious sees Him malevolent instead of benign." What kind of a faith was likely to be grown in Catholic Europe by those "theologasters," whom Erasmus scathes as being "endowed with the most rotten

brains, the most barbarous tongues, the most unfruitful learning, the coarsest manners, the spitefullest tongues, the blackest hearts!" It was these people, the professional agents and monopolists of faith, who, could faith have been destroyed from the earth, would have had to be named as its destroyers.

But it is not to be destroyed, and we see this just as clearly when, on the other hand, we survey the efforts of those who in pious circles have been regarded as the enemy. When our religious communities have reached a further enlargement of view, they will regard with quite another aspect the results of what is often called destructive criticism. We are learning something to-day of the real nature of these "destructions." We know that every living organism has, going on perpetually within it, a destructive process, which is one of the most essential functions of its life. Within our bodies is an elaborate apparatus occupied incessantly in the breaking down and removal of the decaying tissues, in the perpetual replacement of material that has done its work. Were that process to be stopped in us, *we* should stop. And we are discovering now that the organic life of the Christian

community is under a precisely similar law, and that what faint hearts were imagining to be the deadliest assaults on the religious principle were really parts of faith's great vital process.

We need here, indeed, to be continually discriminating between the apparent and the real. Our talk about the direction of given movements needs to be a very cautious one. When a man appears to be walking westward he is really being carried eastward by the earth's rotation at the rate of a thousand miles an hour. There are vast under-motions that are so much greater than the surface ones. So it is emphatically in the human movements in their relation to the spiritual kingdom. Our man shall be walking furiously westward and be travelling eastward all the time. The path he starts on takes, by-and-by, such unexpected turnings. Our Saul of Tarsus sets out to imprison Christians, and is on his road to his own conversion. When Strauss wrote that Life of Christ which, while it contains so much, omits Jesus, he started scholars on the track of that genuine historical investigation which has done so much to give us back the Master. That was an excellent thing which the Empress Eugénie said of Renan's "Vie

de Jésus" : "It will do no harm to those who believe in Christ, and to those who do not it will do good." Assuredly. The book, with its prodigious defects, both in fact and sentiment, made Jesus interesting to multitudes who cared nothing for Him before. And when men become interested in Jesus, they are on a good road.

The age-long knowledge of the human soul and its motions which history secures to us, should indeed, by this time, have made us tolerably sure of it, in all its relations to religious doubt and to religious certainty. We see, as we glance over the long record, how the denial of one generation has led in the next to a new grand affirmation, including in its sweep the truth that lay in the denial; how, underneath the seeming spiritual death of a given period, as in the age before the Reformation, and the years that preceded the eighteenth-century evangelical revival, lay working forces that, when things seemed at the worst, burst forth into glorious spiritual manifestation.

That world's experience-meeting we have suggested, in its quest for the sources of faith, would indeed have to go far down. It would have to acquaint itself with the law of transmutations. It would discover how the finest

issues are woven out of the strangest raw material. We are, for instance, accustomed to trace revivals of faith to the influence of the great spiritual leaders ; but nobody troubles himself to inquire as to the genesis of these leaders. Yet this is of the essence of the matter. The natural history of a prophet opens up the most curious questions as to the interplay of matter and spirit. We think of the doctrine he preaches, of his fervour and height of soul, of his evangelic gifts, his saving power. But there would have been none of this, and our evangelist's name had never emerged, but for long previous processes, which seemed at the time to have no connection with faith at all. The inquiry here would have to concern itself with the fresh air breathed by generations of long-gone ancestors, with that eager wrestling of theirs with the world that built up our prophet's vigour, his combativeness ; that gave him his red blood, his trumpet voice, his eye of fire. As we trace back these winding tracks we discover how the roads to faith start from the very roots of the world.

One of the strangest of these byways has been that of illusion. There is a mission of illusion which we are only just beginning to

understand. Theology has suffered grievously from its failure to realise that we are treated in this world with a certain humour. If only our dogmatists could have recognised that the celestial powers have laughed at us a little! We have been dealt with in these matters exactly as we deal with our children. We give them the oddest answers to some of their questions, and smile meantime up our sleeves. And we are nowise ashamed of this, for the exact truth is not for them as yet. They will know it when they are ready for it. And Nature, we say, has dealt with us so. She had the truth within her bosom, but was in no hurry to impart it. She allowed uncounted generations to believe that the sun went round the earth. The belief was good enough for these child races. It would be time enough to learn more when they had grown up. So has it been with religious faith. It does not shock us now to discover that the Christian Church itself was, as to a multitude of subjects, cradled in illusions. Its view both of the past and of the future was largely imaginative. Wise men to-day are satisfied to recognise that these views in no way interfered with, rather indeed contributed to, its distinctive spiritual

power; that they in no way turned it from the redemptive road which God had set it to travel.

But there is another of the hidden roads to faith which we of the present day especially need to take account of. In the region of physical research nothing more wonderful has been discovered than the capacity which living bodies possess of creating the organs of which they stand in need. We know now that the eye is developed out of a hair. From touch we have mounted to sight. And in life's highest regions the same process is going on. Here, as in the physical realm, humanity will develop the organs which its ever-mounting aspiration calls for. Not for ever will the soul walk blindly in its world. Already it sees men as trees walking. An Edison declares his conviction that we are on the edge of a new revelation of God along the road of science. Maybe; but the road of science, the road of weighing and measuring, is not the only or the highest path the soul traverses. That spiritual sense whose potency Schleiermacher revealed to his age, is yet, we may well believe, only in the dawn of its powers. When it reaches its next stage of faculty we shall have revelations indeed.

The personal applications of this theme are innumerable, and can only be hinted at here. Few earnest souls reach faith by a plain or easy road. Oftenest there is a plunge through morasses and a fight with dragons. A man who has never doubted can hardly know what conviction really means. And the road is so often not one of logic at all. The heart, as Pascal says, "has reasons which the reason knows not of." It is life that convinces us more than syllogisms. Have we not bowed to the mystical influence of a good man, without being able to give account of his power over us? There is, indeed, no arguing against the saintliness of a saint. When the Church has absorbed the Sermon on the Mount it will not need to publish Apologias.

And for final word. The road to faith for some is the longest in the world. At present there are souls which have to make so vast a circuit on their way thither that they do not complete the round in the present life. To us they seem at the end still going westward. But at some point, beyond our mortal ken, there will be a bend in the road, and they also shall see God.

XVII.

Religion and the Child.

In the art galleries of Europe what perhaps oftenest strikes the eye is the subject, incessantly repeated, and by the world's greatest artists, of a Mother and a Child. Genius, with its fine intuition, offers us here the highest religion as centred in a birth. It is strange that, with such an object-lesson before it, the world, and especially the religious world, should have failed so signally in recognising the spiritual significance of childhood. The Churches have wrangled prodigiously over baptism, and have had much to say of infancy in its relation to original sin. But of the deepest, most central, and withal most inspiring teaching that is here offered us, one may turn over many theological tomes and find no word. Men to-day, concerned for the prospects of religion, take anxious note of its visible resources. They count up churches, revenues, adherents. They take

note of prevailing mental tendencies, and also of those spiritual reinforcements which their doctrinal systems admit. What really, when properly understood, will be found to bulk greatest in any such calculation, is the least thought of. It is that of the birth into the world of children, the perpetual renewal in humanity of the child-nature.

The modern world is vastly concerned as to what is the proper teaching it should offer to childhood. It is time it began to understand the teaching which childhood offers to it. Has it occurred to us yet that the greatest religious force in the world is not the pulpit, but the cradle? Man has two points of immediate contact with the Unseen—that of birth and that of death. With the latter, especially as he grows older, he becomes more and more preoccupied; the link between religion and death is always visible. But this other contact-point of birth, in its whole significance for the spiritual life of men, offers a region of thought where the footprints are few and uncertain. Yet do we but explore it for ourselves over never so small a portion of its surface, and we shall discover how extraordinary is its richness. It sends us back at least with

this conviction, that of all the reinforcements of religion there is none more potent; that of all the guarantees for the progress of the world's spiritual evolution there is none more certain than what is furnished by the constantly renewed appearance in it of the child.

What these guarantees amount to will perhaps appear most clearly when we discuss the child's own relation to the Unseen. But its religious work does not commence there. Science is beginning to instruct us as to the wonderful way in which infancy, considered simply as helpless and dependent, has worked towards the evolution of the human soul. It was through the child that altruism first came into the world. It was in the care of their helpless offspring that our primitive ancestors got their first dim apprehensions of unselfish regard for others; it was here that motherhood and fatherhood, in the high senses which now attach to the words, were born; here were wrought out the ideas that made possible the religious teaching about a Father in heaven; here also was it that man, as he nursed his offspring, nursed also the first glimmerings of that conception of self-sacrifice which was to form its culmination in the cross.

This in itself, it will be admitted, forms a not inconsiderable contribution to the world's spiritual life. But another aspect of the matter opens when we begin to study the nature of childhood and its immediate relations with the Unseen. On the point as to what birth actually signifies in its spiritual relations, it is remarkable that two great English poets have lighted upon the same thought. Wordsworth in his magnificent "Ode on Immortality" tells us

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar;
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God who is our home.

To him, on the same theme, answers Mrs. Browning in "Aurora Leigh":

> I, writing thus, am still what men call young;
> I have not so far left the coasts of life
> As not to hear the murmur of that outer Infinite
> Which unweaned babies smile at in their sleep
> When wondered at for smiling.

The thought of both here is, of course, pure Platonism, and Platonism, in its doctrine of souls and of birth, is again the echo of a mystic

teaching that seems to have haunted mankind from the beginning. The teaching is that birth is the entrance into this life of a being that has come from the realm of pure spirit, and that is, in its earliest years, vaguely yet deeply conscious of this, its celestial origin. A bold and inspiring affirmation if only it were true! Well, there is evidence, which to the finer natures at least carries far, though its voice be low and indistinct. Such natures can certainly affirm that in those earliest years there was a sense of this world as a Temple, the sense of a Divine nearness, of celestial meanings in earth and sky, of strange mystic stirrings of the soul, such as have not been realised since. Who can fathom the religion of a child? Who has not recognised himself in that young correspondent of Goethe, who felt the world to be *alive* and struggling to express its meaning? While men and women are absorbed in the vulgar rush for wealth and place, in the nursery there are little ones who stand in the ways of Paradise, who hear the ripple of its rivers of water, who see its white-winged angels, and who recognise the voice of the Lord God as He walks therein. Away from the arid dust of the arena, these

little ones dwell at the sources of life and touch the Infinite at every point.

Marvellous is it to note, also, that what transpires in the life of a child is precisely the history over again that is written for us in the early chapters of Genesis. The history of humanity, as Pascal pointed out, is the history of the individual writ large. The drama of Paradise and of the Fall is re-enacted in each living soul. Evolution and the Bible may be read here together without any sense of discord. The slow ascent of life which the former teaches brings us first to the threshold of the moral life, to the state of inferior, unconscious moral innocence where sin was unknown, because the higher, inner law had not yet dawned on the soul. A step yet further in the human development and sin has become possible because moral choice between higher and lower has become possible. Humanity falls as one of the incidents of its way upwards, and one of the signs of its progress. That is the drama of humanity as told by evolution. But this is precisely what, told in its own mystic language, is given us in the Scriptures, and the child who comes into the world to greet the twentieth century will be

the latest stage on which the drama is repeated. Born into the paradise of the lower innocence, it will leave it, driven by a Destiny that is stern but kindly, to fare through a wilderness of toil and of failure, that nevertheless is the way to a nobler paradise that lies in front.

We have said earlier that the child is the guarantee of religion in the world. We here repeat it, with the addition that the child thus signified is not simply the new-born infant, but also that element of our grown-up manhood which, despite all our years and experiences, remains as the survival of our childhood. It is this part of a man, not the disputer in him, not the logician, but the child, the wonderer, the mystic, the bit of him that from the beginning has felt secret ineffable yearnings for something his eye hath not seen but his soul hath wotted of; it is at this side of him the preacher and religious teacher should chiefly aim. When Guthrie, as he lay a-dying, asked the watchers to "sing a bairn's hymn," he was revealing the whole secret. The child in us is our doorway to the Infinite. It is so with the good, and just as much so with the bad. In presence of his child the worst man has a moral longing. He conceals his vices

from him. That his boy should imitate him there is a thought he cannot endure. If the Church knew only how to touch this instinct! It has worried itself about infant baptism; it has split itself in twain on the subject of infant communion. Had it eyes it would see that its vital question lies not in such things, but in adequately meeting that child yearning of each human soul which, mightier in it than logic, mightier in it than science, is the evidence of the Paradise Lost which it seeks to regain.

In a chapter on "Religion and the Child" most readers would expect some observations on religious training, and of this there has been, so far, no word. One could indeed say much, but we content ourselves with a hint. Men and women should begin to train their children long years before they are born. It sounds a paradox, but there is nothing truer. In what we are doing now, as young men and women, with our own souls we are training the children that are yet to be. We begin generations even before they are born. The ancestors of John Wesley—the fine old non-juring clergyman on the one side, and the Puritans who suffered for conscience' sake on the other—were shaping, all unwittingly

to themselves, the spiritual fibre and sinew of the great evangelist that was to come. When the children are actually with us, a curse will surely rest on the man or woman of us who obstructs their view of the heavenly kingdom. Religion is the basis of child-life, and when it is not also the basis of parent-life Nature in her holiest part has been outraged. The best dowry for a child, more in value than all the world can offer, is the memory of a mother who prays. To be chosen by our child as its ideal is, perhaps, the highest honour that we could receive. But even that is not enough. We have failed unless, in embracing us as his ideal, our child is thereby set on the direct route to the Highest.

XVIII.

Our Wilderness Side.

A LARGE part of our planet will always be a wilderness. When the last cultivable acre has been reached, there will stretch beyond it the wild moorland and the eternal hills. To the end of time the mountains will be a solitude; so will the wastes of sandy desert, and the interminable stretches of the lonely ocean. We are all of us glad that it is so. For the wilderness side of our world answers so perfectly to the wilderness side in ourselves. You may case a man in all the conventionalities and all the proprieties, but there is a bit of "Chaos and old night" inside him, a fragment of the original formless infinite, that refuses to be cabined or confined. The best drilled of us cannot forget his relation to the original immensity. The city clerk on thirty shillings a week looks up to the shining stars at night and finds in himself some kinship with them.

The more civilisation presses us the more insistent becomes our instinct for the wilderness. It shows in all classes. West-end exquisites will take the train at Waterloo and disappear for a year or more. They are next heard of as hunting big game in Central Africa, or finding new pathways across the Himalayas. The rush in the holiday season means not so much a search for health as the desire to mate the wilderness within us to the wilderness without. It is Mother Nature that calls, and there is no resisting her appeal. By her rivers or on her moorlands we lie in her bosom, taking our

> Fill of deep and liquid rest,
> Forgetful of all ill.

The men who in their regular life are the most entombed in routine are often the most trancèd listeners to the mystic voice. In the published letters of T. E. Brown, of Clifton College, we see how the learned, conscientious schoolmaster of term time was, in the holidays, and, indeed, inwardly all the year through, the Manxman, the poet, whose soul was by the sea and the mountains, and in the land of dreams. Jerome became a monk largely because he loved the wilderness

and hated cities. We get a touch of his feeling where in one of his commentaries he speaks of Elijah and Elisha as monks, and praises the condition as one of solitude and liberty. Speaking of himself and his friends he says that after the freedom of their lonely life they found confinement in cities as bad as imprisonment. Indeed, most leaders have been wilderness men. It is in solitude they have found themselves and their mission.

This instinct for the wilderness outside answers, we have said, to a related realm of the soul. There are, indeed, two sorts of desert within us—one like that of the mountains and the sea—primitive eternal, beyond the touch of plough and harrow; the other a waste that cries for cultivation. The first is one of our most precious possessions. Has it ever occurred to us to appraise the value to life of that vast inner region whose dim boundaries impinge at a hundred points on our consciousness, without ever becoming fully recognisable in it? Outside the narrow area of our definite knowing looms the vast realm of that Formless which inscrutably creates our knowing. There, in a way that is hidden

from us, is manufactured the light of our seeing. How the soul exults in this inner infinite! It is the open air of thought. From out of our creeds and our definite knowledge we emerge, as from time to time we escape from our crowded cities, to exult in the sense of these vaster horizons beyond.

But there is a wilderness side in man of which very different things are to be said. It is that part of him which was meant to be cultivated, and that still lies waste. In this respect we are as settlers in a new country. The centre of the estate has been cleared, the trees cut down, roads made here and there, and a goodly acreage put under crops. But there is no sense of finish. The stumps of oak and elm are still in the ground; outside the middle area are bog and uncultivated bush, and here and there are neglected points where the primeval forest, pushed back for a space, is again asserting itself.

We are so accustomed to ourselves as we are, that most of us pass through life without realising the amount of waste ground there is lying about within us. The crop we raise out of our mere physical capacity might be quadrupled by a better farming. What is

the difference in value between a trained and an untrained finger? A Paderewski might instruct us on the point. And the eye, the ear, the foot, every limb, organ and physical power can be lifted to almost incredible capacities by the sheer power of drill. A new stage of the human evolution will be in sight when a system of thorough physical culture, beginning from infancy, has been universally recognised as an essential condition of securing to our race the full wealth of its inheritance of life.

It is, however, when we reach the sphere of moral dispositions and actions that we become most conscious of our wilderness condition. We may have reformed our actions and brought our speech under control, but what of our thoughts? In his "Grace Abounding," that marvellous portraiture of a struggling soul, Bunyan sketches for us the stages of his moral progress under the influence of religion. There was the start, in the open avowal of himself as a Christian disciple, and then the breaking of old habits and associations. But long after the taking of these steps there was inward chaos. Rebel thoughts, inspired as it seemed by demons, chased

through the back chambers of his brain and made hideous turmoil. To gain the mastery there was the last and hardest fight. Bagehot says somewhere that mediæval Christianity was occupied largely in fighting and even dying for principles which it was utterly careless about carrying into practice. There are people to-day who disbelieve altogether in the practice. The present writer once found himself in an argument in France with a cultivated sceptic, whose position was that Christianity was impossible as a religion because it demanded purity even in a man's thoughts! He preferred the motto of the Renaissance humanists: "*Intus ut libet, foris ut moris est:* In private do what you like, in public follow the custom." And the modern man, in some sections at least, has not got much further than this.

Yet certain is it that no one has come to his inheritance, has tasted the fulness and sweetness of life, who has not brought this part of himself into order. That has been seen plainly enough outside of Christianity. What a word is that of Plato which speaks of the true man, "the kingly man," as "a living law"! It was here that the great

melancholy emperor-stoic, Marcus Aurelius, placed the real worth of life. "The one thing worth living for," says he, "is to keep one's soul pure." Seneca, with his *Si vis tibi omnia subjicere, te subjice rationi*—"If thou wouldest bring all things into subjection subject thyself to reason"—is on the same track. He would cultivate the ground by a rigorous self-examination. "I blink no unpleasant part. I pass nothing over. For why should I fear to face any one of my faults when it lies in my power to say, 'For to-day I pardon thee, but sin no more'?"

But while heathenism made brave incursions into this ground it is in the school of Christ that the true farming of it has been learned. There is no truer refreshment than to come upon those "pastures of great souls," where the green verdure, the laden trees, the waving grain, and the scented air are all the fruit of this incomparable culture. How these husbandmen of the spirit know each other across the ages! They each drop their pregnant word of experience as they pass. It is a Clement of Alexandria who says that "fastings signify abstinence from all evils whatsoever, both in action and in word,

and in thought itself," or yet more powerfully, where he insists that our inner goodness must infect our neighbour: "If the neighbours of an elect man sin, the elect man has sinned. For had he conducted himself as the Word prescribes, his neighbour also would have been filled with such reverence for the life as not to sin." Or it is Friar Laurence with his "practice of the presence of God," or that sweet saint of the Middle Ages the Anchoress Julian: "As long as we be meddling with any part of sin we shall never see clearly the Blissful Cheer of our Lord." As we glance across fields like these there is no doubt about the farming or the results.

But finished husbandry of that kind is exceptional. Man is at an early stage of his evolution, and has only just begun to be spiritual. His farm is on the edge of the wilderness, and the savage growths are perpetually reasserting themselves. How bewildering are these intrusions! Every section of our life has its new kind of weed. We struggle through youth to find in manhood that we have to begin again. Further on the discovery is made that old age has its special vices. The weeds come up in our best flower-

beds. An Indian mystic said that one of the most ineffaceable things was the vanity of a saint. Our very religion is full of wilderness. Pious people are as eager to-day as were the Pharisees of old for the chief seats in the synagogue. At meetings for spiritual edification a speaker will declaim with seraphic fervour, while robbing the man who comes after him of his time allowance in the spirit of a highwayman. We are moral along the beaten tracks, and outside make the strangest exhibitions of ourselves. A little success and our head is turned. The enriched Christian has lost the charm of his poorer day. All the time the swamp and morass are so close outside. Every now and then comes from them a poisonous breath which brings fever to the blood, and we are no longer ourselves. Men remember with a shudder the barbaric "possessions" that for a time have held them. They wonder what would have happened had favouring circumstances been allied with certain moods.

Nevertheless man, so raw a settler in this higher realm, will yet conquer it, and make it his home. The surrounding swamps will be drained and the air made wholesome.

The high dreams of his uppermost part will all be fulfilled. His aspiration for inner perfection is a prophecy, a dawn of the coming day. This always is the method of life. It never comes unannounced. Before the main body, often far in advance, are the *avant-couriers*, the flying messengers that tell of what is to follow. Herein is the supreme significance for us of the character of Christ. The significance is that in this He is "the first-born of many brethren." In that sinless career, in which the whole inner life moves with absolute harmony, in which imagination, thought, feeling, will and desire, in a continued perfect co-operation make one celestial music, we perceive, as though it were written on the sky, the glorious promise for our race. For the height on which Christ moved is a human height. The destiny of this Divine Son, "made perfect," is for ever mingled with our own.

XIX.

The Quality of Belief.

"DIFFERENCES of belief" is a familiar phrase, but its real significance is only imperfectly realised. With the mass of people, including a good many moral and religious teachers, the emphasis is placed almost entirely on the something believed. And assuredly that is of prime importance. In some directions it is everything. If an engine driver believes that a signal shows white when it is red, or a pilot that a sunken reef on to which he is steering is a mile away, it will not in these cases matter greatly how the conviction was reached. The whole result will follow from the conviction itself. Indeed, in every department of life, the "what" we believe in, whether it be true or false, is of such enormous import that we may easily reach the notion that the whole content of faith lies there. Whether, in the trade we are engaged in, we believe in this method or that; whether in science we accept

evolution or reject it; whether in finance we hold by the soundness or otherwise of this investment; in religion whether we believe in a God or not;—throughout the whole circle of affairs the thing we believe in, its actual rightness or wrongness, seems so to fill the whole view, as to leave room for nothing else.

Yet, when we examine more closely we discover that, in one sphere at least, the thing believed in is not nearly the whole of belief. In the region of morals and religion the "what" we believe is, to a degree not nearly enough understood, conditioned by the "how." The study of religious history, both in the gross and in individual careers, shows us that the body of a creed, its doctrinal content, as an influence upon character, has been often subordinate to this other question, *how* the belief has been come at, and the way in which it has been held. In other words, what has to be ever taken into account in the estimate is not only the quantity but the quality of the belief. The question is a practical one, and there are some present-day applications of it that are urgent.

What we have to realise is that the sublimest belief may be held nobly—or ignobly; and

on the other hand that a belief, poor and meagre in itself, may be so worthily held as to be an instrument of genuine progress. M. Taine, in one of his earlier letters, puts well one aspect of this theme when he says: "Religion, though one, differs with different minds. Some interpret it well, and on it feed generous feelings, exalted hopes, great thoughts. Others falsify it, and make it a matter of kneeling, processions, penances, bows, ridiculous practices, tending to destroy health, to injure the intelligence, and to banish peace of mind." With the same creed, that is, one man is growing to nobleness, and another to a despicable meanness. It is a question of use.

As we survey our credal furniture of to-day and compare it with that of some of the past Christian times, we find that, great as is the divergence on some matters of knowledge, the real difference lies quite outside the intellectual sphere. If we want convincing of this, we have only to compare the average twentieth-century holding of Christianity with that, say, of the ages of persecution. The creed of the Church to-day, in its general statements, is very much that of Tertullian's time. The views of the great African as to the person of

Christ, the Salvation by Him, the Christian community, the resurrection, the future state, are reflected in the formularies that are now in use. But let anyone turn to the literature of that time and he will understand what we mean by the quality of belief. As we look from one period to the other we are inclined to ask: "Is there anything in common between the easy-going life-system of our British Churchman, with a creed which he inherits as part of his position in society, and that second-century fellowship lived within view of the flames?" It were worth while for our good citizen, as a change in his reading, to substitute one morning for the money article of *The Times* such a document, say, as Tertullian's "*Ad Martyras*," a letter which it would be difficult for the hardest of us to read without emotion. Fancy something of this sort, addressed to us in view of what might be our lot to-morrow! "The flesh, perhaps, will dread the merciless sword and the lofty cross, and the rage of wild beasts, and that punishment of the flames, of all most terrible, and all the skill of the executioner in torture." Or this from his exhortation on Patience: "We who carry about our very soul, our very body, exposed in this world

to injury from all, and exhibit patience under that injury, shall we be hurt at the loss of less important things ? " To call our citizen's correct recital of his creed at Sunday morning service by the same name as the faith of these men and women, held in view of the torture chamber and under the very heat and smoke of the pyre, is surely to invoke our sense of the ludicrous.

It seems, then, that the conditions under which we obtain and hold our belief, as well as the content of it, have to be weighed in any estimation of its real value. A man has signed his thirty-nine articles, and his neighbour finds himself unable to put his name to a single one, and often enough heaven has more hopes of this last than of the other. What the first holds may be in itself the most important truth, but he holds it in such a way that it is practically of no good to himself or to anyone else. Our creedless man, on the other hand, may be in his present condition on his way from a formalism which meant nothing to a faith which, agonised and fought for, shall be a power to reform the world. Its articles will probably be less in number than thirty-nine, but they will be enough for life and victory. It is

convictions of this order and parentage that make history. Robertson of Brighton, after the first shaking of his traditional creed, tumbled from negation to negation, until the only thing left him was the eternal difference between right and wrong. But from that one certitude he climbed step by step to others, proved each to his inmost soul, until he found again a Christian Gospel which was a message of life to multitudes.

Religious belief is for the sake of the religious life. The moment we realise that, we recognise how much more must enter into it than the definitions which the intellect furnishes. Its roots lie so much deeper than the intellect. Flourishing in the midst of gross superstitions we find sweet natures, that select instinctively from their system all that is morally helpful and live on that. And there are natures that touch the highest truths only to degrade them. In lowliest things some find suggestions of the noblest; in the noblest others see nothing but the sordid. A book has just been issued which finds the ultimate origins of Christianity in the lowest obscenities of Paganism. "It grew originally out of Phallic worship!" Put a hog into a palace and it will make of it a sty.

Amongst simple races the moral quality of belief shows almost exclusively in the way it is used. There is hardly a question here as to how it has been come by. It is like the elements around them, a primitive fact, into the midst of which they were born, which they accept and live in, as they accept and live in the air and the sunshine. With the educated man of to-day the quality of belief is a question of much farther reach. For a creed to be acceptable he must recognise in its texture the elements of knowledge and of veracity. He realises with Pascal, that "the first of all Christian truths is that truth shall be loved above all." And as to what constitutes truth some fine old crusted formulas no longer attract him. A certain order of mind will doubtless for a long while to come bow down to ecclesiastically manufactured authority, and accept as religion a sentiment of this sort, uttered not long ago by a Jesuit professor at Maynooth: "The principle of liberty of conscience is one which is not, and never has been and never will be, approved by the Church of Christ." But Rome, with the best will for the work, no longer creates the beliefs of the world. Before resuming that *rôle* she

will have to purge herself of her sins against truth; she must renounce her bogus infallibilities, her habit of persecution, her veto upon research, her fostering of superstition, and other deadly intellectual vices. A religious belief that can show no better credentials than this will not survive in the future. What survives must ring true to the intellect. It will be nothing more nor less than the spiritual interpretation of proved facts.

And how will that interpretation be gained? Always in one way—by a personal experience. The experience not, perhaps, so much of the multitude, as of the leaders whom God from time to time vouchsafes to the world. As long as humanity endures there will probably be this difference in faith; the difference between the simple human devotion of earnest men with their eyes fixed upon the teacher who guides and inspires them, and the faith of the leader himself who, in advance of the crowd, his eyes lifted to the heavens, guided not by authority, but by inner voices, and by the breaking dawn far in front, goes "sounding on his dim and perilous way." It is a Luther with his *Ich kann nicht anders*, a Jesus who, with face set towards Jerusalem, walks solitary while the

disciples behind are amazed and afraid. The great teacher of each age is one who, on the one side, gathers up into himself all the life of his time, and through that sees God: who, on the other, having found God for himself, makes the atmosphere of his day the medium through which he brings God afresh to the experience of his fellows. Thus is it that the eternal Christ is reborn in each true teacher, and found afresh in each true disciple.

The final moral test of a religious belief is that "it works." A genuine conviction is a spring of inculcable power. There is no force in the world to compare with it. That was the argument which struck Darwin at Tahiti. Said he: "The lesson of the missionaries is the enchanter's wand; the march of improvement consequent on the introduction of Christianity through the South Seas probably stands by itself in the records of history." The apostolic word that "faith without works is dead," is a fragment of natural history. A creed that is doing nothing is not faith. It is its grinning skeleton from which the life is departed. A Church whose members recite formularies that have no relation to their active life is rotting at the core. It breathes

putrescence and is a danger to the moral health of the community. Than continue thus, it were better it should dissolve and refound itself upon a single affirmation, if only it can be sure that the affirmation is true. Happily, there is no need for extremities of this kind. Our moral world is full of the materials for great convictions. Humanity can never lose again the revelations that have been made to it. But the treasure is hid in the field, and each soul of us must dig until he find it.

XX.

The Moment After.

A MODERN writer asks, " What moment should we choose as the one from which we could pass our surest verdict upon life ? " A tantalising question, to which, however, there is no satisfying answer. For there is no one moment whose verdict, taken by itself, is entirely trustworthy. The scene changes so utterly as we view our life from the standpoints, now of expectation, now of fruition, and again of memory. From no one of these do we get the whole. But we could spare no one of them in the final summing. Of a quite peculiar significance is the view-point we now propose to examine. A thoughtful man will the more eagerly, the longer he lives, look for the answers which come to him from " the moment after." Every experience we go through yields this particular product, and it has always a quality entirely its own. Nowhere else do we find so immense a rebound, so intense an energy of

self-realisation. The results consequently are of the first importance, both for our personal guidance as individuals, as well as for the data they offer for a philosophy of life.

We have just said that every experience has "its moment after." As we study these moments, we find that, while varying immensely in their contents, they have a significant unanimity in the lesson they point. They all turn us in one direction—towards the relation of the soul to our animal life. We take, for instance, "the moment after" of our sensuous pleasures. One of those many things, the commonness of which hides from us their intrinsic strangeness, is the way in which, in the cosmic constitution, our so-called "pleasures" are organised for us. They are in every case the pursuit of something we never reach. Whatever the pleasure may be, whether the gratification of an appetite, the rush of the chase, or the listening to a thrilling story, the experience is, in essence, the same—the eager movement towards a consummation, which, when gained, is a vacuity, a throwing us back on an empty self. Goethe, an epicure in sensation, has registered for us this result in the memorable words: "We are never so

far removed from the object of our desires as when we imagine we possess that which we desire." To the pleasure-seeker "the moment after" is generally a moment of pessimism. Every one of us to a more or less degree has tasted the bitterness of this disgust. But it is strange that more of us do not inquire *why* it should be so. Why is it that such a result, issuing evidently from the inmost nature of things, should invariably, at these moments confront us? If the scheme under which we live offered us no other considerations, we might, surely, find in this one alone the evidence that, for man, the satisfaction of the animal nature offers no key to the real solution of his life.

But "the moment after" opens other problems not less baffling. Its position in the natural history of passion, for instance, confronts us with mysteries which go beyond the measure of our sounding lines. We are appalled at the vindictive cruelty, or if not that, the cynical mockery, with which some men's careers seem mapped out. They are the victims of a delusion which first blinds and then cheats them. No man follows evil as such. He follows always what seems to him

a good, and so often the pursuit of his good becomes his ruin. There comes a time when between him and a fancied gain—the acquisition of wealth, the winning of a position, the gratifying of an imperious desire—lies a deed which, in his hurry, he will not stop to analyse. The blow is struck, and he leaps forward for the reward. It is then that the universe plays on him its deathly trick. The very objects which drew him on to his deed undergo a ghastly transformation. He realises, all too late, the baleful energy of "the moment after." The anticipated pleasure has disappeared in this tremendous unforeseen preoccupation. It is not the crown to be worn but the blood that is shed that in his "moment after" fills the soul of Macbeth, making the world for him "one red." And this human tragedy, with every variety of detail, is being every day repeated.

The spectacle here offered is one on which men have pondered, doubtingly, despairingly, cynically, according to their mood, from the beginning. "Why," it is asked, "should so cruel a comedy be played upon mortal man? We pity the victim in a great crime, but ought we not to pity the criminal more? He has

been such a plaything for the unseen powers! Why cheat him so utterly? Why could not the revelation of "the moment after" have been given him the moment before? Why reserve the knowledge of the true character of his deed to the hour when it is irremediably done? The old Greek dramatists were full of this problem. For them the solution was in a remorseless fate. Continually in Æschylus and Sophocles do we get this note of a pitiless Necessity, which first blinds the eyes of men to the real nature of their projected deed, and then for ever pursues them with its fell results. A grim solution, and a curious commentary, surely, on that modern teaching which bids us forsake our present religious abiding-places for "the happier life-outlook of that old Greek world"!

There is a later exposition of guilt's "moment after" which, differing from the Greek, is yet hardly an improvement. Nietzsche has devoted some of his most caustic pages to what he calls an analysis of "bad conscience." In his view man has no business with a "bad conscience" at all. It is a result of the wrong turn in the road which he took when he "internalised himself"—when, that is, he turned

inwards on his own nature the instincts which had been accustomed to discharge themselves outwardly. Man now attacks himself, turns the war upon his own instincts, his own pleasures, instead of, as in the good old days, upon the world and upon his enemy. He tells us the time has come to reverse this action of conscience, to turn its force "against all unnatural bents, against all those aspirations for another life, for all that is hostile to the senses, the instincts, animality—in a word, against all the old ideals."

One would hardly notice such utterances were it not that they are having their vogue in certain circles, with a sinister result both upon ideals and upon morals. Sensualists love to hear of a philosophy which is an apologia for their vices; they will accept it, even when it dates from Bedlam. The Nietzsche theory here serves only to illustrate what Cicero had already learned in his day—that "*Nihil tam absurde dici potest, quod non dicatur ab aliquo philosophorum.*" (There is no utterable absurdity which has not been uttered by some philosopher.) When a man brings an indictment against the world's sanity it is time for his friends to look after his own. We may be

sure the slow, universal development of the human moral consciousness has been something else than a blunder. And the deepest difficulties connected with it, including this age-long puzzle of passion's blinding till "the moment after," has, we may be certain, a significance better than that of the Greek fatalism, and better than that of our latest philosophic cynicism. The cosmic scheme, as it unfolds before us, is so healthy and so large-minded as a whole that we may trust it for its mysteries. Could the history of the soul's ascent be fully opened to us, it would be seen that, for some at least, there was no way up except by this one tremendous path of tragic disillusion. As Lessing has said, in spiritual matters it is not always the straightest road that is the nearest. *Reculer peur mieux sauter* is again and again the rule. How serene in its faith, as against the despairs and denials outside, is that word of Clement of Alexandria, who, dealing with these mysteries of evil, affirms on the one hand that "nothing exists the cause of whose existence is not supplied by God; nothing, then, is hated by God nor yet by the Word"; and, on the other hand, declares of those whose career has seemed nought but catastrophe,

"Some are ill to cure, and, like iron, are wrought into shape with fire and hammer and anvil." To him the universe meant not faith and not mockery, but uttermost redemption.

But the verdict on our pleasures and on our lapses is not the only one delivered by "the moment after." It has others, whose significance as related to the cosmic order is not less arresting. There is that, for instance, which follows upon misfortune and calamity. After our pleasures we have seen that the soul laughs with a certain scorn. "Is this, then," it seems to say, "the thing you were after?" In the other case, that of disaster, it also has its laugh, but it is this time one of gaiety and assurance. "Your catastrophe, about whose oncoming you shivered so pitifully, has it turned out so bad an affair after all?" One of the most wonderful things in life is this note of our inmost nature in face of some crash of the outward. Often and often has a man had to wait till then for his most ecstatic moment. With his world gone to pieces below, his soul is singing high up in the empyrean. Granted that the experience may be transient, yet that the soul should give out such a note at such a time is a fact which no explorer in this

field may overlook. Ally it on one side with the truth which we found at the threshold of our study, that the sphere of animal sensation gives no real satisfaction, and on the other with this further truth (which would take an essay of itself properly to develop), that an act of goodness yields always for its "moment after" a consciousness not only wondrous sweet, but celestial and supernal in the character of its sweetness, and we have here a cosensus of inner testimony, the united blend of voices from life's "moment after," which compels the belief that the one solution of our existence in this world is in its link with an order of things invisible, spiritual and holy.

And such a result leads inevitably to one other. To study "the moment after" is to be fronted ultimately with the greatest of the world-enigmas. What of death's "moment after"? Aristotle spoke of death as "a limit," and Horace, in a well-know line, echoes the word. But our knowledge of to-day is abolishing limits and destroying finalities. Nature's every end is only a new beginning. Were all the suns and systems to clash together in universal ruin the sum of things and of forces would be there just the same, ready to begin

afresh. And the sum of mind assuredly not less than of matter. The testimony of science to-day is to a hidden world possessing "the power of an endless life." Blended with religion, it proclaims for every hurt a healing, for every sin a cleansing, for every catastrophe a reparation, for death the renewal of life. It is the exacter expression of what for ages has been the cry of the human heart. Ancient Egypt buried its dead crowned with the emblems of immortality. Greece in its sacred drama asked:

> Who knows if life be death—and death life?

The Indian oracle declared "the end of death is birth." These mingled voices were a *Preparatio Evangelica*, the *avant-couriers* of that final Gospel which has crowned humanity with "glory, honour and immortality."

XXI.

The Interplay of Ideas.

In that weird book by Balzac, the "*Peau de Chagrin*," one of the characters thus expresses himself on the subject of ideas: "Our ideas are complete, organised beings, which live in an invisible world, and have power on our destinies." The speaker is in a vein of rhetorical exaggeration, but in what he says here he skirts the edge of some deep truths. It would be absurdly incorrect to speak in such terms of every notion that surges in our own or our neighbour's brain. Yet there is a kingdom of ideas about which these words express hardly more than the sober fact. Certainly our world is ruled by ideas, and could we see the machinery at work it would be the most wonderful of spectacles. We should look upon tidal movements of thought, sweeping from land to land and from century to century, movements that are rhythmical, whose every pulsation is according to law, working out

a pre-destined result. We should see how ideas, apparently the most opposed, obey a law of mutual attraction, so that their seeming clash and collision turn out to be a marriage, having for offspring a new thought-series enriched from both sides. We should see great idea-systems rising, developing, decaying, dissolving, and in their dissolution setting free new forces that work towards fresh combinations. Behind the uproar of the outside world, without noise, without visible appearance, lives and energises this mighty inner universe, that silently shapes our life and destiny.

It will not, we imagine, be an unprofitable study if we show how, in some different directions, this interplay of ideas has revealed itself in history. The examples, taken by themselves, are sufficiently significant, but far more so when viewed as a whole. The subject, seen in its entire length and breadth, gives a wondrous insight into the way our universe is governed, and as to what, ultimately, we may expect from it.

Beginning at the centre, in the sphere of our most vital interests, we may notice, first, how the organised movement of ideas has worked in humanity's religious life. To-day,

as since the dawn of history, the world offers the spectacle of a number of rival and competing religions. Up to a period well within the lifetime of many of us, each of these religions was regarded by its adherents as the one truth, outside of which there was neither goodness, happiness, nor salvation. To-day the Western nations at least are learning better. They are beginning at last to understand their own religion and its true relation to the others. Unique in the Person of its Founder, in the character it moulds, and in the moral and spiritual forces which it wields, Christianity is seen, nevertheless, not to be alien from the other faiths, but closely and lovingly akin. For at its background is a system of ideas which are not of one land or nation, but are universal in humanity. Tindal, with his "Christianity as Old as the Creation," made a prodigious flutter amongst the orthodox of the eighteenth century, and there is a great deal in that singular work to which we should be sorry to subscribe. But there was truth in his idea all the same, and it was one which Augustine, centuries before, had recognised and was not afraid to enunciate. That surely is a memorable passage where, in the "Retracta-

tiones," the work of his later years, in which he revised his earlier judgments, he writes these words: "*Res ipsa, quae nunc religio Christiana nuncupatur, erat apud antiquos, nec defuit ab initio generis humani.*" (The thing itself which is now known as the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and in fact was with the human race from the beginning.)

We understand that now, in a wider sense even than did Augustine. We have come to recognise Christianity, not as an isolated phenomenon, but as the culmination in history of a set of Divine, redemptive ideas that have been working amongst men everywhere from the first. With the advent of comparative religion has come a great knocking down of barriers. The common element it reveals is the scientific affirmation of the faith of the nobler souls in every age. Zinzendorf declared the good men of every nation to be his brethren in Christ. Erasmus proposed to canonise Socrates. The Greek fathers were never tired of affirming that the struggle towards virtue of the pagan races was the sign of the indwelling Word. Even Tertullian, so fierce at times in his exclusiveness, has his hours of illumination, when he can pen noble utterances such as this:

"Man is the one name belonging to every nation upon earth; there is one soul and many tongues, one spirit and various sounds; every country has its own speech, but the subjects of speech are common to all. God is everywhere, and the goodness of God is everywhere."

And not the least, surely, of the evidences of the common origin of these ideas is the way they have worked. The resemblance of the main features of the religious life in widely-separated races and cults is too wonderful to be ignored. All the great religions have doctrines of incarnation, of sacrifice and sacraments, of renunciation, of resurrection and of judgment. The following statement from M. Cumont of the followers of Mithras is not only sufficiently accurate in itself, but might be quoted with little variation of many another faith outside our own: "Like the Christians, the followers of Mithras lived in closely united societies, calling one another father and brother. Like the Christians, they practised baptism, communion and confirmation; they taught an authoritative morality, preached continence, chastity, self-denial and self-control; like the Christians they spoke of a deluge, and believed in the immortality of the soul

and resurrection of the dead, in a heaven for the blessed and hell as the abode of evil spirits." There was a time, not so long ago, when facts of this kind would have been staggering and confusing to the evangelic consciousness. We accept them now as a confirmation of faith. They show the Gospel as Divine because so intimately and universally human. They show it to be the reaffirmation, under highest auspices, of that great charter of spiritual deliverance which is the common heritage of our race.

We may now come to another phase of that great interplay of ideas by which the world is at once governed and inspired. We spoke at the beginning of the law of alliances by which seeming opposites in the thought-world come ultimately together, producing by their union fresh, fruitful syntheses which combine in themselves the older and once hostile elements. The erstwhile enemies, by a mysterious inner law which they cannot resist, become first friends and then the parents of a new line of spiritual descendants. This is what has been happening in our own day in the supposed conflict between science and religion. One might almost fancy, studying the two great lines of ideas, bred respectively in the regions

of science and of Christian theology, that they were alive. They peer out at each other from their opposite sides, at first with suspicion and aversion. More and more closely do they scan each other's lineaments, and begin finally to recognise a mysterious affinity. A mutual, irresistible attraction draws them, till at length they embrace, and discover themselves to us as one. Evolution, forty years ago, seemed to spell the ruin of evangelical doctrine. To-day, with religion's most thoughtful exponents, it forms one of its strongest bases, as well as one of its most fruitful illustrations.

The attraction of ideas is stronger than any human devices for keeping them apart. The more exclusive communions have endlessly multiplied these devices. They have built high walls, carrying heavy artillery of anathema and persecution to keep off aliens and intruders from without. Romanism is the conspicuous example of this method, and its present position is an object-lesson on our theme. Its embattled fortifications tower to the heavens, but they cannot keep out the atmosphere, nor the ideas with which it is charged. A French bishop was a while ago lamenting in one of the Ultramontane journals that the seminar-

ists, the students for the priesthood, in his diocese, instead of studying Thomas Aquinas and the orthodox exponents of the Vatican creed, were actually reading Wellhausen and the other leaders of the new Biblical criticism. Alas for the bishop and his cause! They are on the losing side. Their weapons are carnal and out of date. Of no avail are they against the powers of the Spirit, against the Divine ideas of truth and freedom which sweep to-day across continents and across systems, and are mighty for the pulling down of strongholds.

There is a side of the theme that demands at least a word—that of the interplay between ideas and character. There is a whole world of spiritual truth here which waits to be investigated. Suffice it now to say that we get no real religious solutions apart from inner purification. The progressive elevation of our spiritual life brings us, at each step of the progress, to new springs of noble thought. When a man loves nobly, and acts and suffers nobly, there come from such experiences legions of ideas that are as winged angels out of heaven. In Dante's feeling for Beatrice we see how a human affection, free from every trace of ignoble passion, becomes the etherealising and

the eternising of love ; in his long exile, endured for the love of justice and of his country, we find the seed plot of that Poem for all time "on which both heaven and earth had laid their hands."

Here, indeed, do we come to the pith and heart of the whole matter. We have discussed the interplay between systems of thinking and of believing. But the whole significance of this lies in what is behind. It would be nothing to us to watch the flow of ideas from continent to continent and from century to century did we not discern here the evidence of a flow that is deeper and mightier. The key to it all is in the interplay between heaven and earth. The significance of religion lies in this—that here man has been thinking a greater thought than his own. His history is the working out, towards an ever-clearer expression, of Divine ideas that in their complete expansion offer to us the vision of immortal beauty and of final perfectness. They suggest our great poet's question—

> What if earth
> Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein
> Each to the other like ?

And they leave us in no doubt as to the answer.

XXII.

Religion's Vocabulary.

In his "Chips from a German Workshop" Max Müller describes the way in which, from the study of the primitive Aryan language, we may obtain an idea of the height to which the earliest common civilisation had risen, before the separate branches of the family broke off. His method is to find the words which, in the languages of all the Asiatic and European peoples descended from the Aryan stock, are traceable to a common root. That part of a nation's vocabulary which cannot be shown to derive from the same source represents experiences of life that had been encountered after the great separation. It is an ingenious and most valuable method of research, which yields all manner of striking results. But the suggestions it opens go farther than the great philologist's immediate application of it. For language, properly investigated, tells more than the story of a given group of peoples. Its

history and development lay bare at every stage the deepest truths about man's central life. In religion's vocabulary, in particular, we have new and fascinating ways opened to us into the heart of the soul's mysteries.

Religion, it is true, existed before its vocabulary. It had a language probably of signs before it had one of words. There is suggestiveness in that view of a modern writer who regards the attitude of kneeling and of clasping the uplifted hands in prayer as originating in the attitude of suppliant captives, who offered their hands to be bound by the victor. And religious experience comes before both the sign and the word. Tertullian touches this in his fine saying, "Unquestionably, the soul existed before letters, and speech before books, and ideas before the writing of them, and man himself before the poets and philosophers." Always, too, in its onward march, does religious experience transcend its old word-tools and find itself compelled to forge new ones. Newman, in a well-known passage, speaks of all the truths of the later creeds and confessions as hid from the beginning in the bosom of the Church, waiting, till time and necessity should bring them to verbal expression. And advanced

minds know also what it is to prepare homes in what seem void places of the soul, for truths that have not yet appeared, but which, they know, are on the way, and will require, by and by, their own special vehicle of utterance.

When, however, we turn to the language which religion has already forged for itself we shall, if we are at the proper standpoint, obtain as nowhere else a sense of the height to which man has climbed, and of the extraordinary richness and complexity of his inner life. In the words he has coined man gives the register of the growth of his soul. Language is the clothing of the new inner organs which it is perpetually putting forth. And here, in particular, we have one of the tests, singularly little noticed by the average apologist, of the place of Christianity in the human movement. The religious public, including its teachers, freely using, as they do, the ordinary Christian vocabulary, have not, surely, paid sufficient attention to the wonder of that vocabulary in itself? To get a proper sense of it one needs to have a course of reading in the classic literature of the old pagan world. When, after a study of its poets, philosophers and moralists, and the garnering of its highest

thought, we come to the Christian ages, we find ourselves arrested, for the first thing, by something quite new in the sphere of words. Something startlingly fresh has been added to the human vocabulary.

We say this in full view of the reservations that have to be made. Much of what the average Bible reader regards as special to the Gospel the scholar knows to be otherwise. Judaism had created a vocabulary on which the New Testament writers freely drew. The great words applied to Christ, for instance, are mainly borrowed. Philo Judæus speaks of the Logos as "His first-begotten Son," and as "the Image of God and First-Born of all intelligent creatures." He describes God as "appointing a Price and Ransom for the soul," and declares it "necessary for a person performing his duty to the All Father to apply to His Son as an Advocate." From the Book of Enoch we get also the "Day of Judgment" with the "Son of Man" as Judge; the titles of Messiah as the "Christ or Anointed One," the "Righteous One," the "Elect or Chosen One," and "Michael" and "Gabriel" as names of archangels. Comparative religion shows us the idea of the Trinity as a

common possession of the old-world faiths, as well as a familiar formulary of the ancient philosophies. To recognise all this is, indeed, for the Christian believer not so much an admission as a further basis for his faith. Have we not here the culmination of a universal movement centring on the "Desire of All Nations" as its ultimate end?

But when this is said we are left with an undiminished marvel in the Christian speech. For it contains a whole range of new words that have had to be created in order to express the new facts. And the common phrases needed to be put into fresh combinations and to bear the weight of wholly fresh meanings. The apostles, and the saints who have followed them, when they talk of regeneration, of conversion, of the baptism and fruits of the Spirit, of sanctification, of oneness with Christ, of Divine assurance, of the heavenly rest, have had, as it were, to remake a language that it might carry the new life-treasures of which they were conscious. Whatever these words may mean to us, they assuredly meant something to them. If we are living beneath their true significance, not less do they represent a height to which humanity, in

its choicer spirits, has, under the Christian inspiration, at one time risen. Evolution teaches us that expanding life aims ever at creating organs adequate to its range, and these words are nothing less than the organs by which the soul at its loftiest has expressed itself.

It is almost impossible for us properly to estimate the addition to the wealth of the human spirit when this great religious vocabulary first filtered down to the minds of the common people. We have no calculating apparatus that will give as the total of benediction that came to men when a Wiclif and a Luther threw the Scriptures open to the general speech. In them the aspiration of Erasmus was fulfilled. "I wish," says he of the Epistles and Gospels, "they were translated into all languages of the people. I wish that the husbandman might sing parts of them at his plough, and the weaver at his shuttle, and that the traveller might beguile with their narration the weariness of his way." And the people when these riches came in sight, were not slow to grasp them. Says Foxe, "After Wiclif's time some gave a load of hay for a few chapters of St. James or of St. Paul." We

have in these days grown careless, almost oblivious of our wealth, from its very redundance and ease of acquirement. Yet the easy estimate of a surfeited and indifferent age will not blind the instructed spirit to the magnificence of the inheritance to which it has here succeeded.

But while all this is true we are, alas! not allowed to forget that there is a contrary account. Religion's vocabulary is an affair not only of living words but also of dead ones. And the range of human vision contains few things more unsightly than these withered symbols out of which the life has gone. The human loathing of cant is its healthy horror of skeletons, of carcases, of decayed things generally. Men shrink more and more from religious functions that are stuffed with defunct phrases. They hear in them the rattle of gibbets. When the Church has these things mainly to offer, men will keep outside. Within, they scent the odour of putrefaction, and they prefer the fresh air.

And in this sphere we encounter not only words out of which the life has gone, but debased specimens, alive, indeed, but with an inferior vitality which is wholly mischievous.

In the periods representing religion's upward movement words, as we have said, are created as the organs and expressions of its abounding life. But there is also a word coinage of its decadent periods, when men indulge in the manufacture of vocables, because they have nothing better to do. It is then we get theological logomachies in which people fight to the death about a syllable. It is of this kind of manufacture that Edmond Scherer says: "*Le mot c'est l'artisan des idols.*" Gregory of Nyssa gives us a vivid account of this phase in the Eastern Church, when, as he describes, "knots of people gathered at the street corners of Constantinople discussing incomprehensibilities. When a tradesman was asked how many oboli a thing cost, he started a discussion upon generated and ungenerated existence. Inquiries of a baker were answered by the assertion that the Father was greater than the Son." We could have forgiven the speculations if people had been good-humoured over them. But these were the times when bloody battles were fought over single words, which nobody really understood. Well may Dr. Hatch declare the darkest ages of the Church "those which record the story of its

endeavouring to force its transformed Greek metaphysics upon men or upon races to whom they were alien."

The evil of these word-wrangles is happily abated to-day, though far from extinct. Our personal concern with religion's vocabulary lies elsewhere. It is commonly a twofold concern. It is our urgent business, for one thing, to know whether we can claim a share in those great New Testament words which stand for the soul's central truth and highest life. Aloft in the spiritual firmament they shine, beckoning us perpetually to their own sphere. No man is rich apart from these riches ; no life is blessed to which these words have not opened themselves and shed the fulness of their mighty meaning.

Our other concern will be with the religious use of the common vocabulary. The old Quaker's " thee " and " thou " have fallen into desuetude, but his fine measurement of words is a grand rule. To speak the simple truth without fear, and to speak it in love, is one of the greatest of human deeds. The common words take on a new meaning when a disciplined soul speaks them. The language, as a dictionary product, is the same for this man, and

that; but the one's "Yes" and "No" are a feather-weight; the other's carry a world. Christ's "Sermon" was the simplest of utterances, with not a theological phrase in it. Yet it runs through the world and through the ages as a fountain of living water. It is the pattern of a religious vocabulary: the homely human utterance, with love and heaven shining through.

XXIII.

The Discipline of Joy.

The human story so far has been largely that of a discipline of pain. On this point science and religion are for once in agreement. Man has won his present position at the sword's point, and with sweat of blood. Nature has been a rigid disciplinarian, a stern taskmistress. It is impossible to think without a certain emotion of that pre-historic ancestor of ours, unsheltered, ill-clad, feebly equipped, carrying on his fight against the elements, against monstrous beasts, against disease and death, and all for our sakes. We know nothing of him as an individual; we pay him no respect as a separate personality. And yet, in that dim past, our destiny was in his single hand. Had he not kept his feet in the bitter strife, sheltered against every gust the torch of existence until he could hand it on, we had not been. Evolution tells us of the terrific cost, in endurances, in wholesale destructions, at

which every advance in physical ability and in mental quality has been gained. And religion, as we have said, brings a similar evidence. Christianity has been called "the religion of sorrow." Assuredly it has fathomed, as no other faith, the depths of suffering, wrung from pain its deepest secret, set over against it the Divinest consolations. Its centre is a cross, and the human soul, whatever its future fortunes, will carry that mark on it for ever.

But it is easy to misinterpret this history, and strange mistakes have been made about it. The pain element in human education has been exaggerated, and the wrong inferences been drawn. It is natural that more should be made on this side of the account than the other, for man calls out when he is hurt, but gives little record of himself when at ease. Thirty years of peace will produce no such history as one year of war. From the very beginning, notwithstanding its hardships, life has been sweet to the race. Our ancestor was happy in his own way. Despite the costs, it was a good thing for him to be alive. A false perspective here has been the creator, amongst both heathen and Christian, of much bad theology. The

sorrow element in man, exaggerated by his imagination, has cast its shadow upon the heavens, and created the religion of fear. Paganism trembled as it snatched its joy. It hardly dared to be prosperous, lest some god, or malignant power, should be provoked to jealousy. The saying in the "Agamemnon":

> And man's prosperous state
> Moves on its course and strikes
> Upon an unseen rock,

is typical of the entire attitude of the pre-Christian world. The idea was abroad that man was at the mercy of Powers who, at any opportunity, would take it out of him — to satisfy their spite or for the pleasure the spectacle afforded them. A remarkable passage in Athenagoras, the early Christian Father, testifies to this feeling in the second century. In his *Ad Gentes* he says :—"Who else than demons could have persuaded the priests of Diana to wound themselves in a thousand ways, and others to tear themselves with whips? Whereas the true God would never lead us to what was contrary to nature; as He is goodness itself, He is ever benevolent."

But, unfortunately for Christian theology, the noble and clear-sighted views of the early

Greek Fathers, of an Athenagoras, an Origen, an Alexandrian Clement, were superseded by a darker system, which once more shadowed the heavens and made religion a thing of fear. Asceticism founded itself on the notion that human suffering and privation were in themselves pleasing to God. Men deprived themselves of every comfort, constructed beds on which it was impossible to get an hour's real repose, wore instruments of torture next the skin which drew blood at every movement, with the idea that they were thus perfecting themselves spiritually and gaining merit with heaven. On this whole business Sir Thomas More, a devout Christian and a Catholic to boot, has an admirable passage in the "Utopia." He argues that if the ascetic principle were the true one our endeavours as Christians to promote the happiness and good estate of our fellows must be a mistake. "For a joyful life, that is a pleasant life, is either evil; and if it be so then thou shouldest not only help no man thereto, but rather as much as in thee lieth withdraw all men from it as noisome and hurtful, or else, if thou not only mayest, but are also of duty bound to procure it to others, why not chiefly to thyself?"

Far be it from us to say that the ascetic cult was a wasted effort. That can be said of no sincere moral experiment; certainly not of this. It was part of the movement upward. And its revelation of the soul's capacity of endurance, of winning even a secret, mighty joy out of the heart of privation, has been a lesson of inexpressible value in the science of life.

But asceticism, the cult of many a noble soul, carried in it no finality. It was a phase, and not a whole. It was no key to the world-system, no ultimate revelation of God, no ultimate goal of human development. More and more is it becoming evident that the ministry of pain, mighty factor as it has been in the making of man, will, in the future, play a diminishing *rôle*. The race, tutored so long in the school of hardness and adversity, is, for a further stage, to be taken in hand by a new educator—prosperity. One of the great ethical tasks of a swiftly-coming period will be to adjust the human character to a vast increment of enjoyment. Look where we will, the signs of this are evident. On the negative side we are parting with half the old world pains. Science is on the track of disease,

with full belief in its power ultimately to master every ailment. Anæsthetics have already substituted a pleasant sleep for many a racking torture. And on the positive side, in the more advanced communities, we see an enormous increase, amongst all classes, of the apparatus of pleasurable sensation. The railway train, the bicycle, the free library, the great organisations of sport, spectacle and entertainment, the shortened hours of labour, are all movements in one direction—towards a promised land of larger privilege. The whole art of great living is coming in.

The question is, and it is a vital one—What does this amount to for the moral and inner life? Can man afford to enjoy himself more than he has done? Is gladness, as well as sorrow, to be trusted as a spiritual educator? The average Christian is, on this matter, in a curious jumble of thinking. Logically he should be all on the side of joy as supreme moraliser, for is not his heaven at once the place of vastest delight, and yet of highest perfection? But with the other side of his head he distrusts this doctrine. He tells you he has seen so many characters rotting in the sunshine that he is afraid of it. And the

entrance of a nation at large into a greater sum of pleasures will, to his thinking, be the sure herald of a moral decline.

His fears are not without foundation, but it is doubtful whether he has sufficiently studied the grounds of them. There are probably few of us, indeed, who have accurately diagnosed the new conditions. Is the frequently witnessed moral deterioration in presence of new-found delights an argument against joy, or is it not rather an argument, loud and clamant, for a new discipline of joy? Is what we witness and mourn over, after all, anything more than man's stumble in a new situation? He is an old scholar in that earlier school of privation. He is raw and untrained in the new academy. It will take time to habituate him to its ways. But this is his next stage, and he will learn the laws of it and grow to the possibilities it opens, not less certainly than he learned and grew in that older pupilage.

Religion has been wavering and uncertain in its doctrine of enjoyment, and philosophy not less. There have been, and still are, vast differences in the schools as to the place which pleasure takes in ethics. Bentham's doctrine that the *summum bonum* is happiness,

and that happiness is the sum of pleasures, had a long and extensive reign, but there are few now who would accept its naked Hedonism without qualification. With an influential and ever-growing school of thinkers religion and philosophy meet in the affirmation that an essential element in our judgment of pleasure is the question of its quality. The drunkard over his cups and the martyr witnessing for his faith both taste a pleasure, but the difference in quality covers the whole range of ethics. Between this qualitative conception and the views, such as those of Professor Sidgwick and others, who regard the self-realisation and perfection of the moral being as the highest end, and find the sense of duty, of "ought," to be irreducible to any other term, there is hardly any difference in fact; for the highest self-realisation can scarcely be separated from the highest quality of joy.

What religion and morals have then to provide for in the coming time is an education in the qualitative value of the human joys. That pleasure is one at least of the "cosmic intentions" no man can doubt who takes the trouble to look around him. The material for it is so varied and so immense. We strike the

rock nowhere, but this spring bursts forth. In a normal, healthy condition, enjoyment is connected with our every movement, our every phase of living. When we open our eyes, or move our limbs, or breathe the air, or talk to our friend ;—in society or solitude, working or resting, we find in every attitude and activity its waiting joy. And ever as we get deeper into life the springs become more numerous and more copious in their flow. In a world so rich we can only account for the pessimist on the Horatian principle that "unless the vessel is sweet whatever we pour into it turns sour."

But more and more, as we have said, the choice and use of our joys will constitute for us the discipline of life. The world has for some ages now been a taster of the different kinds, and its judgment of qualities and results is one that by this time can be considered as final. It has shown us which kinds lead downward and which upward. Our spiritual destiny forbids us to be sensualists. We turn as by instinct from the "Sirenum voces et Circæa pocula." And we will have nothing to do with the softnesses and indulgence that breed flabbiness of character. To-day, as in Seneca's time, "Avida est periculi virtus" (Virtue is

eager for danger). The great races keep the finest edge of their quality by hardihood and exposure, by mighty wrestlings with nature's toughest problems for the body and the soul. Also, if we listen to the best guides, we shall turn with equal decision from the subtler allurements that beset success. We shall enjoy excellence, but not the vulgarity of excelling; find delight in our work rather than in the applause it may bring; a satisfaction in the quiet things—in the beauty of a spring morning, in the humble service of our neighbour, in our communion with the spiritual in us and beyond us—far surpassing that of any external and noisily-extolled performances. We shall develop a taste even for certain "bitter sweets," and say, with Christina Rossetti:

> When I was young I deemed that sweets are sweet;
> But now I deem some certain bitters are
> Sweeter than sweets, and more refreshing far.

As this education, this discipline of joy reaches its higher stages, the mind chooses its delights as by instinct, and with a certain infallibility. And in these upper ranges what exquisite distillations and essences of noblest consciousness await the developed soul! What a heaven of intercourse is that which

Gregory Thaumaturgus pictures as enjoyed by himself and fellow disciples with the saintly Origen, when their society was "a sacred fatherland in which was perpetual sunlight, and where . . . the inspiration of Divine thought prevailed over all continually"! And another Christian Father, Irenæus, has expressed for us in unsurpassable words the consummation of this "discipline of joy": "For our face shall see the face of the Lord, and shall rejoice with joy unspeakable, that is to say when it shall behold its own Delight."

XXIV.

Religion and Physique.

On the great ecclesiastical festivals the Church has its doors open, and attracts not inconsiderable numbers of people. But the great crowds are outside. High days and holy days, including the fifty-two Sundays of our year, are now marked by an ever-increasing rush to the open. The spectacle is suggestive of much. It is doubtful, however, whether most of us, including the average ecclesiastic, have caught the really vital point in the situation. What is happening around us will bring by-and-by into the common view some hitherto unnoted factors of the religious position. It will then be recognised that the things the theologians have been wrangling over are not the essentials at all. The really determining elements have all the time been lying outside, waiting for a name. One of these elements, neglected hitherto, but about to enter its claim with an irresistible

cogency, may be stated as a proposition. The Church's future, the whole question of its teaching, services and organisation, will be conditioned by its relation to life's physical basis. The various communions—Roman, Anglican, Nonconformist—seem separated by immense gulfs of doctrine and practice, but they are really reducible to one common denominator. The *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ* of the future is something that stands away from all their controversies.

An illustration will best explain what we mean; and it shall be a homely one. Let us imagine two congregations, a Romanist and a Methodist, listening, each in their separate building, to their respective pastors. The one proclaims salvation by Church and sacrament, the other by faith and free grace. Great are the apparent oppositions of theological opinion and religious feeling. The camps seem hostile. But now at the same moment, in the two buildings, a new physical factor is introduced. The atmosphere, let us say, is denuded of its oxygen, and its place taken by carbonic acid gas. A point will speedily be reached when, with Romanist and Methodist alike, the theological difference, the theological

interest as such, will vanish. The one supreme interest will be to get fresh air.

The illustration may seem far-fetched, but, in fact, it is absolutely pertinent to the situation of to-day. The Church of every denomination has to deal with a population that is gasping for air. Here is a new factor that will dominate the whole position. Our present religious interests, our outlooks, regulations, theologies have been developed under conditions when this feature was not even dreamed of. Nonconformity, for instance, lives on its Puritan tradition, but the fact it has to awake to is that this tradition was fitted to a world that has passed away. The Puritan was of an England whose whole population was smaller than that of London to-day. He was an Englishman who lived in the country. He breathed a clear air, ate wholesome food, found material conditions easy and without strain. He was of the mould that Shakespeare had in view when he speaks of the

> Good yeomen
> Whose limbs were made in England.

And it was these strong, sturdy men, with their health and their leisure, who framed the religious ordinances and services which the

Church in our age has inherited, and which it is astonished to find the present generation is rejecting.

Is it not time we realised what is actually happening? The congregation, in other words, the nation, is being denuded of its oxygen and is rushing out in search of air. The Church, we repeat, has now to take up as its most imminent and urgent problem the relation of religion to life's physical basis. The Puritan never thought of this. He had no need. The conditions were there, and they made him what he was without his knowing it. Do we imagine that his strength of conviction and fervour of feeling could have been produced out of the stuffy air of crowded factories, out of the unwholesome conditions, continued through three or four generations, of our swarming towns? No. The inner power of a Cromwell, of a Howe, was an affair, on one side at least, of leisure and the open. It was the vital force of the countryside, accumulated through generations of sturdy forbears, stored up in nerve and tissue and brain cell, as the sun's force is stored up in the coal, that in these men translated itself into the highest phases of the spiritual life. For of religion we may,

with another application, use Virgil's words: "Ingreditur solo, et caput inter nubila condit." Hiding its head in the clouds, it begins, nevertheless, upon the ground. Its supreme spiritual significance will never, if we are wise, cause us to ignore its constant and intimate relation to the physical.

But when this elementary fact has been fairly recognised it is bound to alter our whole view of the Church's mission to the people. Beneath and beyond all doctrines will be seen to loom the fundamental doctrine that the Church's *raison d'être* lies in developing the best type of man. The true religion is the religion that is truly virile. With that for a foundation we may begin to revise at once our outlook and our programme. Many features of the existing situation take on in this light a new aspect. The fact, for instance, that such multitudes in the present day are spending their Sundays in the open will not have to be put aside by a reference to original sin or to the spread of religious indifference. Is it not rather that the congregation cannot listen because it is being stifled? Is not the Sunday rush to the country Nature's effort to keep her pent-up devitalised children alive? Have

we sufficiently taken it into account that our Sunday services and schools under the existing programme are largely a repetition of the confinement, the constraint, the stuffy atmosphere, which throughout all the other days are robbing our citizens of the very essence of life?

At present our physical and our moral seem all at odds with each other. At the margin of civilisation we find a race of rough and reckless pioneers, cowboys, miners, prospectors, frontiersmen, with little or no religious observance and the crudest morality. The highest spiritual laws are scarcely at all in view. Yet on another side the life they are leading contains the very making of manhood. This existence of hardy enterprise, of simple fare, of keen winds, of wide, open spaces is storing up in these men incalculable riches, the powers out of which nations are made. With this at the frontier, we have at the centre our highly-organised religions, with services, teaching, discipline arranged to tell with a constant, urgent impact on conscience and feeling. We have here devotees with an immense sense of duty and the feeblest vitality; people who are mighty in prayer, but who are refused

at every life insurance office; great souls, and bodies not big enough to decently cover them. The Church, meanwhile, goes on with this monstrous anomaly, and sees nothing wrong in it. A revival of religion is for it still a revival of services, of more stuffy meetings, of more emotional expenditure. Thread paper Christians, who have toiled in shops all day, under this persuasion, spend their nights in gas-poisoned rooms and become still more attenuated. If it were not for our barbarians outside, the whole race would be on its way to extinction. Assuredly we are not to be saved, for either this world or the next, by a deoxygenated Christianity. Nature has given her verdict in these matters in the campaign of Goth and Vandal against the effeminate later-Roman. The polished denizen of cities goes down before the man from the open.

The Church must wake up to the new conditions, or drop behind. Its immediate business is to bring these two opposites together. Each possesses what a healthy nation cannot do without. These halves were made to fit into each other. The spiritual must re-root itself in the physical. With a population in this country, between seventy and eighty per

cent. of which is crowded into the towns, and engaged mostly in devitalising occupations, organised religion has a problem such as never in all its previous history has been offered it. In such circumstances it cannot go on as though nothing had happened. Many of its arrangements must be revised and many of its prejudices must go. The question will be, not how many meetings can be crowded into a week, but what can be done to restore to us a virile humanity? Believing with Ruskin that "the only real wealth consists in noble and happy human beings," the Church will lay itself out in all ways to gain that high end. It will henceforth know, and never again forget, that the highest is rooted in the lowest, and that either at its peril may ignore the other.

The view of true religion as essentially virile will, when fully accepted, lead to a decisive verdict on many disputed questions. The doctrine of fasting, which, during Lent, leads numbers of anæmic priests and people to keep themselves at starvation point in the supposed interests of religion, will give way to a wholesomer view. The "fast" of the future will be the barring of the perpetual

feasting with which the well-to-do are to-day cramming their bodies with diseases, and the return to an eating and drinking that are healthful because they are simple. A virile religion will be one that makes for a strong character inside a strong physique. It will cultivate not only limb-power but will-power. It will, therefore, have nothing to do with systems that put a man's intellect and conscience in the keeping of another. Religious hypnotism of this kind may be soothing to weak nerves, but it is inner paralysis all the same. Protestantism, despite its limitations, has thrived and become the religion of the foremost races, because, in its doctrine of a man's own responsibility before God, it allies itself with the central laws of inward power.

To sum up in a word. The loftiest spiritual emotions are related to inexorable physical conditions. The Church's greatest achievement will be the securing for humanity the physique of the athlete with the consciousness of the saint.

XXV.

Religion's Higher Energies.

In the previous chapter, dealing with the Church's deficiencies in view of present-day problems, we discussed the position arising from the changed physical conditions of the time. To meet these conditions we urged a readjustment of machinery and arrangement. The new world we are in demands a revised programme. But, on such a theme, to stop in the sphere of the outward would be to offer a miserably inadequate idea of the Church's requirement. It leaves the chief thing untouched. It is, indeed, the puzzle of the world we live in that its physical and its spiritual are perpetually obscuring each other. We cannot do justice to both at the same time. The physicist studies his side and forgets there is a spiritual religion, living in its own sublime conception, which in turn ignores the material. Every now and then they wake up to each other's existence, and

then there is collision and deadlock. Nearly all the difficulties of faith in this generation have origin in our failure to unite the two in one act of vision. We shall learn better some day. Meanwhile, after our study of the Church's external relations, we may now adjust the balance somewhat by a consideration of its inner and higher energies. For, after all, it is from these, from its resources in the invisible, that to-day, as of old, its victories must come. In each age the religious position has been fixed, not by method and machinery, but by what has been going on in the secret recesses of some inspired, deep-communing soul.

We say of some soul, for it is there, in the realm behind the mere perceptive and reasoning faculties, that the higher energies reside and show themselves. Only now, after centuries of floundering in a false psychology, are we coming to see this. It was necessary, we suppose, to pass through the theological ages, with their fierce word combats, in order to obtain final demonstration that the real spiritual power and value lay not in them at all. Who goes to the fourth century for inspiration? That age, when men staked every-

thing on definitions and metaphysical concepts, has rendered us one service. The arid Soudan of Christian history, it has shown us how utterly barren is theology, in itself, of religious result. Huxley was at least half right when, in that pathetic letter of his to Kingsley, after the death of his firstborn, he says: ' "Sartor Resartus" led me to know that a deep sense of religion was compatible with an entire absence of theology." Certain is it that not out of the formula-grinding faculty does man ever quench the thirst of his soul.

The springs of history are more secret than this. They are beneath our definitions. That is why religion, fed from its inner fountains, is continually baffling the average ecclesiasticism. Again and again the channels duly dug for it, along which all the authorised toll-houses are erected, seem suddenly to dry up, and there is consternation in the official mind. But there is no real shortage of supply. The stream has simply broken out on a new line. Shortage there cannot be, for religion is man's relation to the Infinite, and escape can be never from that supreme environment. Elected spirits, specially endowed, stationed near the

outer edge of the visible, are ever bringing fresh news of the Unseen which bounds it, and acting as channels of its mystic power. *Capax Dei*, the religious man stands in the world sure of his highest relationships, his soul a perpetual absorbent, drinking inspirations as the flower drinks sunshine, and exhaling subtle fragrances of that summer land he knows.

Souls of this order are the true fountains of religious energy. At the head and summit of them stands the Christ. The Gospel shows itself psychologically true, notwithstanding the aberrations of its interpreters, by giving as the source of its power, not a theological system, but a Personality wholly absorbent of, and saturated through and through with the Divine. It was not mere mentality that made the Christ. It was soul. What a remove from the thing we call "cleverness," the element which made Jesus supreme in the hearts of His followers! Was it by "cleverness" that, in Ullmann's striking words, "His mere presence passed a silent but irresistible sentence upon those by whom He was surrounded?" Was it a mere trick of the intellect that His look could break a strong man's heart? In this highest example

we have demonstration of the fact that the crowning endowment of humanity is beyond and behind the intellect, using that only as a tool.

As with Master so with disciples. The higher energies by which they have swayed men are always their own secret. Possessed with their mystery of power they go about as healers of souls, yea, also of bodies. Have we reached any understanding yet of the means by which men of religion have wrought cures? When Bernard preached the second crusade things passed of this order of which he himself could give no account, except that, in his own words, "I have read of nothing more wonderful even in Scripture." We remember Matthew Arnold's saying anent Christ's healings: "Medical science has never gauged—never, perhaps, set itself to gauge—the intimate connection between moral fault and disease. . . . The bringer of light and happiness, the calmer and pacifier, the invigorator and stimulator is one of the chiefest of doctors." True words, but, as an explanation of all that has happened in this sphere, only a faint gleam upon the surface of unfathomable deeps. From those

same depths comes also the charm which holds men in the thrall of the greater souls. What an illustration we have of this in Old Thorpe's account of Wycliffe! "Master John Wycliffe was considered by many to be the most holy of all the men in his age. . . . Wherefore very many of the chief men of this kingdom who frequently held counsel with him, were devotedly attached to him, and kept a record of what he said, and guided themselves after his manner of life."

From the same source comes that prophetic element which belongs to the highest kind of religious speech. No true teacher but in his greater moments finds himself yielding to a kind of inspiration in his words. There emerges a tense and awful consciousness that he is then but an instrument of a higher Power; that the word is far more than his own; that his very limitations, his weakness and defect, his sense of personal nothingness, are but factors of a movement in which he, indeed, is taking part, but not as originator. This was the note of the marvellous daily preachings of Père Vianney, the apostle of France in the last century, preachings which produced their mighty effects with no other

preparation than his "constant occupation with God." It was this which Madame Guyon meant when, detailing her Grenoble experiences, she speaks of being "invested with the Apostolic state," and of revealing the inmost condition of the souls of those who spoke to her. The priests who crowded round for her exhortations had themselves heard Rome's "Accipe potestatem," but whatever that did for them, it conveyed no such power as this. What a striking hint, too, of this truth of the soul is that given in Plutarch's account of the *daimon* of Socrates, where he speaks of the influence of a superior Being upon the mind of the sage, "whose holy temper fitted him to hear this spiritual speech which, though filling all the air around, is heard only by those whose souls are freed from passion and its perturbing influence." In such utterances have we the dim adumbrations of the great truth of the Divine Spirit, the Paraclete, and his ministration among men, which shines in its full splendour in the Christian Scriptures.

This region of the soul's locked-up energies is, alas! an unknown world to most of us. Only most faintly realised is it by the mass of the accredited teachers of religion. Yet

nothing is more certain than that the Church will wait for the resumption of its influence among men till it has reconquered these inner realms. We are in an age of culture and of general knowledge-grinding. More than ever necessary is that for every teacher, but it is only a beginning. In the higher natures mind is only servant of the soul. Our qualification for any grade of spiritual office is in the incessant cultivation of our central and innermost. It is when we find our higher self, our greater Ego, the infinite Ground of our being to be more and more filling us and making our life, that we can speak of progress. To reach these states is by a discipline, the lines of which we can only here in the barest manner suggest.

Our first need is the recovery of the almost lost art of prayer. That the newer concepts of the universe and of the uniformity of law have affected in any way the reasons for prayer is one of those modern superstitions which every self-respecting thinker should by this time have seen through. Prayer is one of the laws of the spiritual nature as surely as gravitation is of the physical. It is indeed of itself a gravitation. It is the soul's inevitable impulse towards its Centre and Source. The

author of "Exploratio Evangelica," who discusses the religious problem in a spirit of the severest science, finds prayer irremovably grounded in the structure of the moral nature. Its practice is its own vindication, for, beginning as a kind of egotism, it ends, if truly followed, ever in a self-surrender. "Man learns that the higher the tone of his request the more sure it is to be granted, and thus there slowly dawns upon him the perception of a Divine will which wills what is best. . . . He seeks inner changes rather than mere outward interpositions." It is in this Divine air, in this "practice of the presence of God," as "brother Lawrence" finely calls it, that the soul grows. If we set our unaccustomed feet upon this path we can hardly do better for a beginning than to study the books, the inspired legacies, of souls that have been great in prayer. A Church in earnest will turn afresh to the great devotional literature of the past, in whose pages religion's higher energies still live, exhaling heaven's own perfume, throbbing with heaven's own force. As we read we are borne upward on these wings of brother spirits till we find our own, and are free ourselves of the upper airs.

Following this line we gain that habit of leaning on the invisible which is faith in its essence. As true to-day is it as in the time of Heraclitus "that much knowledge of things Divine escapes us through want of faith." As we become experts in this line we shall assuredly touch also the force which the nature of things has wedded to sacrifice and renunciation. Astronomers can calculate the power of gravitation. Who shall measure for us the sheer moral energy of a self-offering, of a suffering for the good? As Westcott has truly said, "A life of absolute and calculated sacrifice is a spring of immeasurable power"; and St. Columba, who knew whereof he spoke, "Whoever overcomes himself treads the world under foot."

To sum up. We have spoken before of the Church's outwardness. Here have we something of its inwardness. Vastly important, and to-day imminently urgent, as we have contended, are the claims of the outward. But when all is said it is by the inner condition that religion triumphs. For in the twentieth century, as in the first, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual."

XXVI.

The Soul's Secret.

MODERN society seems trying to persuade itself that life is, after all, a very simple business. Civilisation polishes off its rough surfaces and makes all as trim as a suburban grass plot. We are putting everything into figures. Even morality is statistical. There will be so many crimes to so many public-houses. Our social value is a matter of rank and of a banking account. Can any kind of life be conceived of in Camberwell which would not elicit the pitying condescension of Mayfair? Everything has been analysed and made clear to us. A school of investigators has arisen that measures even our sensations, and gives you the range and rapidity of mental reactions in terms of arithmetic. It all seems so plain, till we take a step or two aside. We alter for a moment our point of view, and it is as when, leaving the saloon of an ocean liner, we walk out upon

the deck. Away below, within a few feet of us, in that gilded scene, is society's latest fashionable phase. But here, where we now stand, all this is blotted from us as we watch the infinitudes of space, immensities of starry heavens, the sweep of tempests, ocean's devouring depths. Our neighbour offers to us day by day his saloon side, and we know it to weariness. But behind is a world of his own, full of strangest scenery, of which he renders us no proper account, and that because he cannot.

There is need to emphasize this side of things just now, because the world seems bent on ignoring it. It will do that at its peril. To be careless of surface facts is bad enough; to take no heed of the central ones is certain destruction. We are all now for cultivating the surface. We are to ameliorate life by clearing the slums, by creating garden cities, by cheaper transit, by model public-houses, by old-age pensions. And we are all keen on these things, for we can all see their value. Yet when our politicians and our religious teachers are filling up their whole time with social programmes of this order, our ear is caught by what seems a

laugh from the innermost soul of things. "What then," it seems to say, "is this your pill for the earthquake? And will your fool be any less a fool if you take him sixty miles an hour instead of twenty? And your latest electric system, which flashes news of the last murder round the globe in a few minutes, will it work anything for the moral interior of your murderer?" And truly the laugh against us is justified. A blindness more than Egyptian must be upon us if we can see no further into our problem than this.

For this, after all, is the saloon side, and the moment we get away to the deck we note how all the aspects and problems have changed. We see then that a man's life means just what from day to day is going on inside him. It is the secret of his soul. He can never tell us what that is, because the greatest part of it is far beyond the power of words. If we regard, for instance, his mere thinking, we find that, always behind the ideas which seem clear to him, there is a formative process going on of far greater import, but dim and unknown, for which he has no language at all. Have we ever carefully studied that insensible turning of the mind

towards a new conviction? Some morning we discover that an old portion of our creed has lost its power, and can never again be to us what once it was. Yet has our mind rendered to us any exact account of the process which brought this about? No. The history here is an illustration of Joubert's remark that "in the mind there is going on perpetually a circulation of unconscious arguments." In like manner, before a new conception dawns, there come glimmering from the deeps behind mysterious flashes of intimation; we realise that room is being prepared within us for a new truth, and that a large part of the process is beyond our will—is, in fact, a part of that evolution of our personality which is the secret of the soul.

But another process is daily going on within of larger moment even than our thinking. We are brought continually into the arena of moral decision, and our interior is here the strangest, most tragic of battle-grounds. Outside there is nothing for our neighbour to suspect. Our best and worst are alike hidden from him. The surface is like the exterior of a seemingly extinct volcano. The ground for a long while has been given up

to cultivation, and year by year smiles with its fruits and flowers. No hint is there to the casual observer of the chaotic forces that storm below, and may perchance some day cover the ground again with lava and ashes. But down in this boiling cauldron is our life perpetually in the making. The mystery is that in the crises of our inner history we most often do not know there is a crisis. Confused fermentations are going on which we do not stay to analyse. After all, does it amount to much how it all turns out? Of the higher or lower choice presented to us is there any spectator but ourselves? It would be something if, after what is called "a moral victory," we received a sensational acclaim. But there will be no illuminations, no huzzas. The thing begins and ends inside us, and we, too, shall end soon enough. So long as we keep the surface swept for our neighbour's eye, what need for further trouble?

It is precisely at this point in our secret history that all the materialistic philosophies, all theories of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" as a sufficing moral support, reach their Sedan. It is here, down deep in the centre, we perceive the utter futility

of any schemes of human betterment that ignore the basal spiritual facts. Let any man who has made progress in inward development ask himself what has really happened in the struggles through which he has come. Why did we fight down that imperious lower instinct? What led us the other day to sacrifice our personal ease in a service where we knew there would be no glory, no pecuniary gain, and very likely entire misconstruction of motive? Again, as we wait for answer, we seem to hear the soul laughing quietly to itself. Good-humouredly this time, as though it were hugging its own secret. For here it is so sure of itself. It knows there is no other explanation than the transcendental one. We did these things because of an Onlooker, an Inspirer, because we know ourselves as belonging to a spiritual order whose command is upon us and in us. An order which tells us that we are here to add to the sum of good; that the unselfish deed, the choice for purity, work out of ourselves into results that are permanent, and vaster than we can perceive.

We said a moment ago that there are no trumpetings, no thunderclaps over these unseen battlefields. Yet assuredly are they

not without witnesses. The results tell us that. The results themselves indeed seem alive. Is it not they that have at last raised those invisible barriers that now shut us off from the lower life that was once so near? But they would not work thus without direction. Says Amiel, whose testimony is the more valuable that it is wrung from the depths of a sceptical temperament: " J'eprouve avec intensité que l'homme dans tout ce qu' il fait de beau, de grand, n'est que l'organe, véhicule de quelque chose, ou de quelqu'un de plus haut que lui." (" Intensely do I realise that man in everything great and noble he accomplishes is but the organ, the vehicle of something or some one higher than himself.") Here do we see how the mere facts of the soul, as interpreted by a sufficiently clear introspection, carry us straight to the New Testament. Amiel finds out for himself what Augustine had discovered before. *Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis.* (Give what Thou commandest and then command what Thou wilt.) In other words, man lives inwardly by One greater than himself. As Barclay, the Quaker apologist, puts it, " Christians now are led inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God, even in the same manner,

though it befall not many to be led in the same measure, as the saints were of old." There is no way of right living in our soul's innermost centre except by the overbrooding of a greater Personality. We accomplish our secret good and vanquish our secret evil by the law and power which led Christ to die on Calvary.

But do not let us suppose that this secret of the soul, while finding its grandest expression in the Christian Gospel, has been shut up there, has been confined only to organised Christianity. The early Fathers, better informed than their successors, never dreamed of such a limitation. They knew that it was fundamentally in the soul, by virtue of its own existence and quality of being. India knew it, and so did Egypt, and so did Greece. What but a Divine leading brought the Hindu mind to such a perception as this of a man's true happiness? We quote from the Bhagavad Gita: "He becometh acquainted with that boundless pleasure which is far more worthy of the understanding than that which ariseth from the sense depending upon which, the mind moveth not from its principles; which, having obtained,

he respecteth no other acquisition, so great is it; in which depending, he is not moved by the severest pain."

Indeed, ringing through both the Eastern and Western world is heard the soul's laugh of derision against the scheme which confounds the highest good with a mere comfort-philosophy. When we have brought Whitechapel to Belgravia's standard of luxury, do we imagine that we have solved our world-problem? It does not lie there at all. When our hog has got both foot and mouth in the trough, it is enough, doubtless, for his hoghood. But the soul will not rest content in the best furnished of styes. What is such fare to a St. Teresa, who cries, "When persecuted my soul is then so mistress of itself that it seems that it is in its kingdom and has everything under its feet"? This hog philosophy makes also our pity to be often so ludicrously misplaced. Do we, from our snug citizen ease, pity the warrior who is lying out there in the wind and the rain, dying neglected on the battlefield? What business have we with our pity? Do we know his soul's secret? May it not be with him, as with the young officer who, as has been recently related,

wrote on his tablets before the cancer choked him, "These have been the happiest months I ever spent in my life!"

What has been here urged will not, let us hope, be misinterpreted. We are all social reformers to-day, and the Church must be the chief of them. No college curriculum will henceforth dare to omit the laws of social and economical well-being. They are part of the constitution of the city of God. But while we clamour for better legislation, for purer air, for healthier physical conditions, let us never forget that these at best are only a scratching of the surface. Man himself can never be effectively dealt with except where his central mystery resides. The weapons of this inner warfare are not carnal, but spiritual. There is perhaps no country where social organisation is being carried to a higher perfection than Germany. But it was a profound appreciation of the real conditions of the problem which led the Kaiser in a recent memorable address to exclaim, "The man whose life is not founded on religion is lost."

XXVII.

The Higher Lawlessness.

THERE are few more fascinating studies than that of man's relation to law. His whole story is here—the story of his soul. The puzzles in this story, its amazing inconsistencies, baffle, yet entice us. We ponder them with the feeling that behind lies the clue to everything. But their mystery is great. It mocks seemingly at all our pre-conceived opinions. One of our most cherished convictions is as to the sanctity of law, and the disgrace attached to the transgression of it. To speak of a people as "law abiding" is to pay it the highest of compliments, while "a lawless rabble" represents to us the zero of character. And yet, striking full upon our feeling here is the fact that the noblest characters in history, and the most decisive of its upward movements, are identified with an apparent lawlessness. The prison which in one cell holds thief or murderer may, in the next,

contain a prophet of the new time, an apostle of the higher living. The same authority which crucified two robbers at Golgotha stretched Jesus Christ on the middle cross between. The law breakers, in age after age, have included the best and worst of the race.

It is of the highest consequence, both to our knowledge of life and for our personal conduct, that we resolve this puzzle. And to do this we must, it is evident, inquire first as to the nature and origin of law. There are two roads of investigation. We may study man and his laws from the outside, or we may study them from within. On the one side, evolution has taught us much of the natural history of law making and keeping. The tribal system—which is older than humanity, for it exists in full vigour amongst the herds and flocks of the animal kingdom—is a combination which, by its very nature, places a certain restriction and discipline upon the individual. It is, we are told by one school, in this tribal association that we have the whole origin of law and of conscience. The tribe was the individual's larger self. Its approbation or disapprobation, its vengeance or reward, rubbed into his mind a set of interests, of desires, hopes and fears,

wider than those of his private personality. A breach of his tribal compact, even when undetected and unpunished, brought reverberations to his interior soul from the larger consciousness outside and oppressed him with a guilty fear. Here, it is said, is the whole story of man's law, and conscience, and sense of sin.

But to anyone who looks beneath the surface this attempt to give the tribal system as the whole truth will be absurdly superficial. At the most the tribal system has been but an instrument, one of the tools used in a vast process. When we change our standpoint, and look at this process from within, we get an entirely new perspective. We see then law, both in the individual and in society, appearing as the register of moral progress. It is the perpetual shaping of that Formless which is at the background of the soul into new act and new thought —the mystic breath which, touching at first the highest natures, is felt at last over the whole human surface, and crystallises finally into constitutions, into canons, into legal codes. The new thought thus becomes a common standard of living, to which society, in the general interest, demands adherence under penalties.

But what we next observe is that this process is for ever going on, and that consequently man's codified law is at no time in a condition of finality. The Formless behind and in him is always at work, pushing him on from high to higher. In his ascent man is continually discovering that what he thought was universal is only provincial, and what he thought final was only provisional. Even in physical science he is continually breaking through what once seemed fixed and eternal boundaries. Darwinism, to take one instance, is already being superseded. Natural selection, which a few years ago was regarded as the one key to development, is now regarded as only one amongst many. Even the law of gravitation is becoming suspect, at least in its earlier claim for a universal application. It explains the motions of the solar system, but nothing beyond.

But man himself is the great example of non-finality. In him all the kingdoms of Nature meet; he is a general exhibition of their systems of laws and of their transcendence in succession by something higher. His bodily life, by its vitality, walks clean away from the whole law region of the inorganic world. He

tosses his stone gaily into the air, as though his act were not an outrage upon all the old-established and highly respectable laws of statics. And higher yet, in the mystery of his volitional freedom, he has the whole reticulation of cosmic law, in all its gradations, at his service, and plays with it at his will.

When we have studied in this way the working of law, both in the outer regions of man's nature and in his inner consciousness, we find some glimmering of light on the puzzle which met us at the beginning. We begin to understand why it comes about that man is ever under a system of law, which, on the whole, it is good for him to obey ; and why, also, there arrive periods in his history when it becomes natural, and even necessary, for him to disobey. But even here the seeming lawlessness is only apparent. The act of a higher nature, in what appears a disobedience, is always according to a law. The difference is that it is a higher one, invisible at present to those who are lower down. The stone flung into the air is obeying a law in its ascent just as certainly as when, feeling the tug of gravitation, it falls again to the earth ; and the parallel holds strictly in the moral world.

In that sphere the revelation of the new law comes, we say, first to the higher natures, and it is their recognition of it, and of its transcendence of the life-rules that have been current hitherto, that puts them so frequently in the category of transgressors. Here we find Jesus Himself as the most outstanding example. The saying concerning Him, that "He was numbered with the transgressors," contains more than is generally allowed to it. He was indeed a transgressor, and that of set purpose. He deliberately trampled underfoot whole schools of laws, enactments, regulations which had obtained amongst His countrymen for generations, some of them for ages, and which had been invested by them with the most solemn religious sanctions. His "It hath been said by them of old time; . . . but I say unto you" was a buffet, crushing and deadly, struck in the very face of law. It was entirely in the nature of things that its paid custodians should prosecute Him to the death. The old order has no notion of being unceremoniously kicked out by the new. It always makes a fight for it, and generally contrives to land some ugly blows. The prophet makes his account with that.

The road upwards is so often across his body, but he is glad, even at that price, to be a step on in the glorious movement.

As with the Master, so it fared with His followers. Christianity for three centuries was, from the imperial standpoint, "a lawless movement." It would be a wholesome change for modern Christians, in search of something new in their reading, to find it in a study of those three centuries. There is a wide and varied literature of them still extant. Much of it is strange and even repellant to our ways of thinking, but oh! that note of quiet heroism, of utmost scorn of consequence; the calm unblenching gaze into the face of hideous torture! Our emasculated generation, surfeited with comforts, would do well to think itself back into that time, and then, may be, it would appreciate a little better the inheritance that was won for it at this price.

These were the transgressors of a lower law for the sake of a new and higher. To us now it seems amazing that men should be persecuted for trying to be good. That is the thought which occurred at times to the sufferers themselves. What a touching, and at the same time revealing word, is that which

Arnobius utters, in his astonishment at their treatment: "For why, indeed, have our writings deserved to be given to the flames, our meetings to be cruelly broken up, in which prayer is made to the supreme God; peace and pardon are asked for all in authority, for soldiers, kings, friends, enemies, for those still in life, and those freed from the bondage of the flesh; in which all that is said is such as to make men humane, gentle, modest, virtuous, chaste, generous in dealing with their substance, and inseparably united to all embraced in our brotherhood!"

But the story here has been continually repeated since. Man's ascent is always in spite of himself. His deepest grudge is against the disturber who wakes him from his sleep and bids him resume the march onward. Those times of awaking are ever the crucial points of history. We watch what is going on with breathless interest. It is like the moment in the life of a butterfly when the grub state is exchanged for the new form and sphere of a winged creature. It is the grandest sight this world affords, the spectacle of some man of destiny, to whom the new law has been committed, revealing this mystery of life to his

astonished contemporaries. And these men are all law-breakers. Luther, with his justification by faith, is the iconoclast of a thousand venerable traditions; George Fox, with his freedom of the spirit and sufficient priesthood of the individual, shocks Protestantism almost as much as Luther had shocked Catholicism. Wesley, with his bold Gospel-campaigning, tramples under foot at every step the orthodox conventions of his time. To-day we know that their law breaking was a law making, and that the world's highest interests could not spare one of the strokes they struck.

The process is not over yet. Those who imagine that religion is a manufactured article, produced once for all in one given form, which we are all to subscribe and keep to, need to learn the first lessons both of history and psychology. The human soul was not built that way. If the English Free Churches stood to-day for nothing else than the assertion of the rights of the human spirit to follow its own line of development, and to recast its thought in accordance with every new Divine unveiling, they would more than justify their existence.

And further. When, in the sphere of public

life, laws enacted in opposition to clearly revealed principles of equity are thrust in the face of religious men, and their submission demanded under penalties, their education alike in history and in the things of the spirit will teach them very clearly how to act. There are times when the highest law that such men know imperiously demands a seeming lawlessness. In obeying this they tread a path their Master trod before them. The people who propose to coerce them may well think twice before entering on the conflict. The question might even occur to the coercionist which came to Meissner, one of the examiners at the prosecution of Jacob Boehme, "Who knows what stands behind this man?"

XXVIII.

The Logic of Life.

HOLT HUTTON records that Bagehot and he, when lads, wandered once for two hours up and down Regent Street, in the heat of an argument as to whether the so-called logical principle of identity (A is A) were a law of thought or only a postulate of language. It is safe to say the number of Englishmen is strictly limited who would care to spend two hours in Regent Street, or elsewhere, on any such discussion. Formal logic is not our forte. Most of us, in framing our arguments, are blissfully unconscious of the "*Barbara, Celarent*" of the ancient schools. The Hegelian doctrine, which reduces the universe to a syllogism, and makes all life to consist in the strictly logical development of a fontal Idea, is one that, if comprehended at all, would sound strangely unreal to the average inhabitant of these isles.

Nevertheless, ours is a logical world, and

life only becomes intelligible in proportion as we recognise the fact. The universe, when we look more deeply into it, becomes to us actually a mass of petrified thoughts. Out of every particle of its matter peeps a mind. You cannot pick up a stone on the road and begin to describe it without, at every phrase, referring yourself to the cosmic logic-book. What is your talk of the stone—its relation to unity and plurality, to genus and species, to time and space, to qualities, to similarity or dissimilarity, and a thousand other things —but a recognition of the fact that this stone, here in its world, is, as its first characteristic, fitted into a system of thought-forms, that it is part of a rational scheme, that its very substance is penetrated with a mind that answers to our own and works on similar lines!

But the point where ardent thinkers have been most apt to get astray, and to create confusion for themselves and their fellows, is in failing to recognise that the cosmic logic is, while similar to, yet so much deeper and subtler than their own. The legislators and the theologians have been alike in their zeal for boundary lines. They have drawn these

lines with the assurance that they ran parallel at all points with the universal scheme of things, and have imposed them as such upon their fellows. An Abbé Sièyes at the French Revolution draws up what he conceives to be a perfect political constitution; an Œcumenical Council defines infallibly the nature of the Godhead and its relation to man. But, alas! the perfect constitution of our Sièyes fails somehow to work; and the lines of our theological scheme are being obliterated by that very nature of things which they were supposed to exactly determine. Divinity! Humanity! What is Divine? What is Human? The boundaries were so clear, so precise. But to-day we are not so sure. The material of our thinking on these points has outgrown all our formulæ. We know there is a logic here, but it is beyond us;

> Draw if thou can'st the mystic line
> Which human, which Divine!

In this field, indeed, we begin to discover that the poets have done better than the theologians. The singers, happy men, have been able to express the power, the mystery, the transcendent beauty of the universal, while

realising that its ultimate facts went beyond the range of our definitions.

For while, as we have said, any intelligible view of the Cosmos supposes a logic behind it, yet are we perpetually being reminded of the marvellous subtlety, of the fineness beyond all our discernment, of its processes. Men find a deeper thing in themselves than their own logic. Of their greatest actions they can give no proper account. The final inner movement that determines a man upon some decisive course is beyond any theory he can frame. When the Puritans of the seventeenth century rose against Charles and Laud, it would have puzzled them to explain to themselves or to others why they should have borne so much, and then have elected to bear no more. Why endurance thus far, and defiance after? A Luther can give some of the reasons which impel him at Worms to defy Pope and Emperor, but not all. The secret inner compulsion, the "Ich kann nicht anders" ("I can no other"), while supremely imperative, is yet a mystery to himself. He is, in fact, the result and expression of a deeper logic than his own. And it is just that deeper logic which is making the history of the world.

One of the greatest results of history is the spectacle it affords us of the way in which the world grinds out its own logic, and places it in contrast with the productions, in this line, of the theorists and formula makers. We take, for instance, the story of Christianity. From the time of its birth into the world, two sets of dogmatists have been busy about it. There have been, on the one side, its official interpreters and defenders, on the other its professed opponents. The Church theologians have defined its beliefs, erected within its boundaries the immense edifice of the creeds, and denounced, with tremendous imprecations, all departures from their view of its meaning. Meanwhile the Opposition, from Celsus and Lucian to Voltaire and Bradlaugh, has been labouring diligently to exhibit its inaccuracies of science and history, and to show "the absurdity, the impossibility, the turpitude" of its doctrinal system. It has been a pretty quarrel. Shrewd have been the blows of the doughty combatants, and terrible the havoc they have made of each other.

But while this wordy war has been going on, another judge, working on quite other materials, has been quietly formulating a decision on the

matter. There seems a certain humour in his aspect, as he regards the opposing camps. "Go to, now," he seems to say, "stop your stone-throwing. You are both right and both wrong. But wrong chiefly. Has it not occurred to you that you may here be tilting at windmills and missing the essence of the matter?" Who is this judge? It is the logic of life; in other words, the Cosmos itself, to which the Gospel, as a fact of human history and as a theory and practice of life, has committed its record for judgment. We observe how that judgment is gradually unrolling itself. The nature of things, which at the beginning took this new material into its laboratory, exposed it to all the tests, stretched it upon the apparatus of an age-long, thousand-fold experience, is giving us now sentence after sentence of its leisurely verdict. It is pronouncing Christianity to be at once deeper than its successive theologies and deeper than the refutations of them. Clear enough is its pronouncement on the Gospel as a life value. Its summing-up on this point might, indeed, be put in Lowell's memorable words: "When scepticism has turned its attention to human society, and has found a place on this planet

ten miles square where a decent man can live in decency, comfort and security . . . a place where age is reverenced, infancy protected, manhood respected, womanhood honoured, and human life held in due regard; when sceptics can find such a place ten miles square on this globe where the Gospel of Christ has not gone and cleared the way and laid the foundation, it will then be in order for the sceptical literati to move thither and there to ventilate their views."

But the logic of life, saying this with immense emphasis for the Gospel as a fact in history and a practice of living, will have nothing to do with our parochialisms of religious thought. It admits much of the opposition argument against the theologies, and may admit more yet. It is creating in us a faith in universals rather than in this or that particular. It compels us to reverence the work of human uplifting done by other forms of religion as well as our own. It is revealing to us hidden affinities in cults that seemed at first so alien; it is showing us that faith, love, sacrifice, purity, forgiveness, brotherhood, are the same in human souls the world over, the inbreathing there of the life of the one Father; it is opening

the immense prospect of a universal faith resting upon indisputable facts, upon common aspirations, upon the participation of the same spiritual heritage. From every quarter hands are being stretched out for such a consummation. The best men everywhere see this coming day. Is it not something to get a word like this from India? It is P. C. Mozoomdar who speaks: "We look forward to a day when Christian missionaries and Hindu reformers will form a brotherhood, different indeed in theology, but one in spirit, in aim, in the inspired humanity of Jesus Christ and the Fatherhood of God." One of the greatest things, we imagine, that is at present being done on the mission field is the education of the missionaries themselves in the principles of this universal faith.

It is, indeed, not to the theologies, or the camps of rival disputants, but to this logic of life, producing its results from age to age, that we shall look for the settlement of all our controversies. Its pronouncements are final. Our theory, however fine-spun, however based in tradition or authority, if it conform not to those findings, will fail to hold its ground. Here, indeed, is our Vatican. Exasperatingly

slow is it in its processes, but sure as it is slow, and certain in the end to win humanity to its decisions.

The subject has immense personal applications. The leader of men is he who understands the logic of life. Certain data, he realises, will without fail yield certain results. His view of things includes sight, insight and foresight; not only does he see the thing before his eyes, but deeper, into the principles underlying it, and further into its future unfoldings. He knows that facts are full of logic, and that their developments will follow the spiritual laws with which he has made himself familiar.

And our own individual experience will be a constant education in the logic of life. We take our theory of living and offer it as an equation to that "nature of things" which encloses us. It will yield back the answer to the equation with an unerring accuracy. There seems a certain grimness, indeed, in this relation. Our personal contribution is often so fitful, so stupid, and the answer that comes back is so terrifically scientific! We have forgotten a given duty. The Cosmos refuses to forget that we have forgotten. It remembers our lapse and fails not to produce

it to our confusion. We should be utterly beaten in this business were it not for another revelation that life brings us—namely, that there is something deeper in it even than its logic, and that is a Grace that is infinite and exhaustless.

XXIX.

The Soul's Remaking.

OUR word "poet," which signifies originally "the maker," plainly fits other heads than that of the polisher of verses. It belongs to us all, for, as Hazlitt says, "poetry is the stuff of which life is made." We are perpetually weaving our epic, our comedy, our tragedy. The maker, that is man's true title. He is ever making his world, and ever making himself. His record on the planet itself is truly a marvellous one. Within certain limits, he is the greatest cosmic force we know. With his tool in hand and brain behind it, he transforms in a few years the laborious handiwork of countless æons. He carves continents and alters the set of ocean currents. A river bed which it has taken Nature ten million years to construct is rearranged by this bantling in a given number of months. As world-maker he is indeed only now beginning to feel his power.

But we have just said he is maker, not only

of his world, but also of himself. And even more wonderful business is this latter, and one which we have not yet sufficiently studied. It was a great word of Heraclitus "that man is a perpetual becoming." He is not, that is, a thing, a finished product, but rather a passage from something to something more. The modern doctrine of evolution has put that old truth into a new light. But with multitudes a misconception has crept in as to the way in which the evolution is accomplished. The word has carried them over to a kind of fatalism. They imagine themselves as simply the resultant of the forces that are playing upon them—a something that is being shaped and fashioned, the outcome of an irresistible process. They are what they are made, and are spectators of what is going on, rather than active participants. Phrases of this kind form one of those half-truths the use of which is like rowing with one oar. There is no progress that way.

Perhaps the greatest problem of life is here before us: Can we to any extent remake our minds? Are we simply a product, or can we be creators of ourselves? Man, as we have seen, is a revolutionist in his outside world.

There he levels mountains, turns deserts into gardens, uses Niagaras to grind his corn. Can he, as well, be a revolutionist within, and there also make his desert into a garden? Let us try and examine this question with as close a reference as possible to the facts of the case.

If we study our present inward condition we shall find there two sets of phenomena, or, we may say, two phases of feeling. The first, and the one perhaps most carefully to be noted, is that of our immediate and involuntary response to each fresh appeal of the outside world. By observing that response, we may get to a nicety the measure of our present selves. When, for instance, a new difficulty or affliction confronts us, when a needy man asks our help, when our rival secures a success greater than our own, the feeling that first leaps into consciousness is the thing for us, with a rigorous and scientific exactness, to investigate. For here have we the precise summing of our progress or non-progress thus far. In that first flash of feeling there working in us, before we have had time to think of its quality, we see the point we have reached. Variations of quality in these first impressions there

may be, but we shall be safe in taking their average.

The survey, if we make it searchingly and thoroughly, will to most of us yield curious revelations, often far from gratifying. What uglinesses gleam out from that troubled surface! A photographic impression of it all, taken in the raw, and before there has been any time for trimming, will often show as much paganism as an early chapter of Gibbon. Those instinctive judgments of our fellows, those forecastings of our future, those suggestions for action, dragged now to the cold daylight and examined there, are not an ideal picture! Poor indeed and all unlovely should we be if this were all.

But it is not all. For immediately behind this surface impression we discern another; dimmer, in the background, but there—and profoundly modifying the picture. All of us who are in any degree ethically alive know that "something behind," which checks the first impulse, questions it, turns it round, asks whether it is worthy of us. Here, in this second line of inner movement, have we that secret of Heraclitus, that man is primarily a becoming. For this is our better self in the making. What goes on here in the region of

the soul is precisely what we find occurring in our bodily exercises. There we know two kinds of action, the automatic, which comes first ; and behind that, the voluntary. Our walking, our dressing, our ordinary speaking are mainly automatic ;—the activities come of themselves. But a time was when every one of them was a laboured effort, demanding at each point a distinct exercise of will. We are learning other things now, may be—skating, riding, a foreign language—and the actions here are still in the voluntary, effortful stage. If we persevere they will in turn join our automatic activities, and be part of our instinctive selves. The passage of the conscious into the instinctive is ever the sign of advance.

But what is true here of our physical evolution is equally true of the mental. The active striving, behind our surface involuntary, of something that judges, corrects and seeks to supplant it, is our march upward. Here, again, the voluntary is preparing to become in its turn the involuntary. Wonderful, when we come to think of it, that power in man—unknown, so far as we can discover, to all the animal races—of projecting, from out of his interior, ideals that are ever ahead of his actual

character, and that ever tempt and entice him towards their realisation! Wonderful, also, that, ever as the straining actual mounts, does the ideal in its turn mount, and give no sign of stopping short till it reach the Infinite Perfection! It is in contemplation of this faculty in man that Plato in the "Symposium" bursts into that wonderful description of the Eternal Beauty and of the human quest for it. "Could man's life in that vision of beatitude be poor and low? Or deemest thou not that then alone it will be possible for this man, discerning spiritual beauty with those eyes by which it is spiritually discerned, to beget no shadow of virtue, since that is no shadow to which he clings, but virtue in very truth, since he hath the very truth in his embrace? . . . . And rearing virtue as his child he must needs become the friend of God; and if there be any man who is immortal that man is he."

This projection of ideals is the first element in the mind's remaking. We find the next in the enormous elasticity and adaptability of the material itself. No substance in nature gives us any adequate illustration of the boundless spring, the formativeness and reformativeness of the human soul. It can apparently

take on any shape and be educated to any degree. This is, perhaps, best seen in the lower ranges of its activity. You can train yourself into and out of all kinds of tastes. There is no original taste for port or champagne. The hardened smoker endured agonies as a boy over his first cigar. The medical student, with whom dissecting has become a passion, fainted at his first operation. We can place no limit, indeed, to this adaptability of the human consciousness, and that fact gives us another ground for faith in the mind's remaking.

But an immeasurable adaptability, and an inborn instinct towards its own betterment, do not represent all that, along this line, is at work in the soul. For, to reconstruct, we need new material, and what we next discern in our process is the continuous reception by the mind of new spiritual elements. It is here with our interior nature as with the planet we inhabit. Everywhere within and without we find a vast receptivity. The world would not exist an hour but for its communications from outside. We know something of what the sun sends us. The stars also contribute their quota. As a modern writer finely says: "The solid earth, the ocean's floor, are covered

with meteoric dust, the dust of the cosmic wayside which we have gathered in our rush through the constellations." And quite as certain and as constant as this rain of sunlight and star dust upon our world is the impact upon the inner spirit of influences and powers that move upon it from above. There is no ethical consciousness of any degree of development but is sure of this. At times, upon specially sensitised natures, the inrush is almost overwhelming. How many have had an experience such as that which James Russell Lowell once recounted of himself! "I never before so clearly felt the Spirit of God in me and around me. The whole room seemed to me full of God. The air seemed to hover to and fro with the presence of Something, I know not what."

The co-operation, on the under side, with this celestial incoming is what we know as prayer. In his "Heart of Midlothian" Sir Walter Scott has a fine passage which gives half the truth about prayer: "Without entering into an abstruse point of Divinity one thing is plain—namely, that the person who lays open his doubts and distresses in prayer, with feeling and sincerity, must necessarily in the

act purify his mind from the dross of worldly passions and interests, and bring it into that state when the resolutions adopted are likely to be selected rather from a sense of duty than from any inferior motive." But Sir Walter gives us here only the under side of the truth. In its higher aspect prayer is the soul's receptivity; the spreading out of its upper surface to the rain upon it of that light and heat whose source is beyond the stars.

The Church's view of the mind's remaking lies in its doctrine of conversion, a doctrine which has to be reconstructed for our generation, and urged upon it as a veritable science of the soul. The best thinkers are all coming back to this, each in his own way. Professor James, of Harvard, speaks of the process as a voluntary union of a man's higher part of himself "with a More of the same quality which is operative in the universe outside him, and which he can keep in touch with, and in a fashion get on board of." What this union can effect for man's remaking, and that over every department of his nature, is writ large in the history of religious experience, the history which, of all literature, ancient or modern, is the best worth reading.

The story is a glorious one, and no man who studies it need ever despair of himself. What miraculous cures it contains of minds diseased; what renovations, what remakings of the inner world, what liftings from hell to heaven! And all that has been done can still be done in you and me. "Die Geisterwelt ist nicht verschlossen." It is treason to the highest in us ever to stop where we are. To be weaving our nobler self is to be our chief occupation in this world. It is the one that here and hereafter will yield an endlessly satisfying result.

XXX.

The Cosmic Accuracy.

THE saying of Epicharmus that "we live by arithmetic and by logic" has for us a wider extension than the old Greek philosopher himself imagined. The early world, it is true, had a very vivid sense of the element of calculation in the world's order. Pythagoras, who discovered the relation of number to the harmonic system, made it the central feature of his philosophy and theology. And one can dip nowhere into those old cosmic schemes without being constantly met with the idea of number as in itself full of mystical significance. But modern research has brought us some new ideas on this subject. Astronomy has revealed the exactness of the cosmic bookkeeping. It gives us, for instance, our planet, doing its million and a-half miles or so per day, with slackenings and accelerations of speed at different points of its elliptical orbit, and yet accomplishing its little

run of between five and six hundred million miles during the year, and coming in to time to the minutest fraction of a second.

And as we ascend in the scale of life, we find in the higher ranges the same story of minute and errorless accuracy. Chemistry has been one of the great revealers here. Its law of combining proportions is a wonderful exposition of the arithmetic of matter. Nature's bookkeeping takes account of every fraction, of every atom. She allows no waste. We burn up the fuel in our grate, and there is an end of it for us. Not for her. Dissolved into the primitive elements, or caught up into new, invisible combinations, the burnt-up material, to its last atom, is there, ready to answer her call, holding its place in the sum of her working forces. And in the yet higher complex which physiology offers, in the living organism, the same thing meets us. Our bodily life has its place in the ledger where an absolutely true account of it is kept. The air we breathe, the exercise we take, the food we eat, our whole habitudes of work and rest, of sleeping and of pleasuring, will be figured out with a perfect exactitude into their equivalent of vitality, of output and of

longevity. We can ourselves make a rough kind of calculation in these matters, and it is of the greatest importance we should; but our attempt at the best is only a guess. It offers no parallel to the cosmic account-keeping, which tots up the total to the last decimal.

But now comes a question. When, in our ascent, we cross the "Great Divide" from matter into spirit; when we reach that mind's kingdom, where the freedom of the will seems to transcend all the lower laws, and to introduce a new and untrackable factor into the world's activities, can we still speak of a "cosmic accuracy"? Are the results in this sphere as certain and as calculable as in the others? We need not enter here on the problem of Determinism. Our line of investigation lies outside. The point is not as to how the results are produced, but as to the results themselves. And in this region, the wider and the more intelligent our outlook, the deeper, we believe, will be our sense of a bookkeeping, patient, detailed and entirely accurate that is going on, and whose figures are at times vividly discernible. The world, we know, is full of the cry of in-

justice and of the feeling of it. As the scheme of things grinds out its results, and presents our appointed share to each of us, we fume and revolt against the "glaring inequalities." "So much," we say, "to this man and so little to me!" And it would be quite useless to try and square this account to the satisfaction of all the creditors. We, at least, shall not attempt it. What can be said is that amid the seeming confusions here, there is discernible a working towards moral accuracy, a broad law of treatment, a system of balancings and compensations, of hidden payments and rewards, of a deep working justice that, while leisurely in operation, never relaxes the pursuit of its end, that gives, to some of us at least, a great hope and a great faith to live by.

After all, how sane and sure is the world's final judgment of men and things! *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.* In the long run it fits every man into his proper place. The charlatan, the pretender may for a while hold a position which does not belong to him; but, by-and-by, he will be found out and reduced to his real proportions. Abraham Lincoln has put the matter for us in his unforgettable way: "You may fool all the

people part of the time; you may fool some of the people all the time; but you cannot fool all the people all the time." It takes us a very long while to discover the essential justice of the world's verdict about ourselves. The personal equation here is the iron near the compass, which deflects the needle and totally vitiates the reckoning. "How amazing, how exasperating, that this purblind, asinine public fails so utterly to recognise my merit!" "No, sir. The public is fully as sane as you are, and the cosmos behind is even saner. You will get your place. Your niche, the height of it, and the dimensions of it, will be arranged and wrought with a hairbreadth accuracy." Our world, which rolls us to and fro in such amazing fashion, which batters us this side and that with such seeming remorseless strokes, is, we eventually discover, an artist, skilled yet kindly. Even humorous withal. We find out that the rogue positively pokes fun at us! He makes sly use even of our poor little vanity! It is an element in his calculations, part of the working force by which he gets the most out of us. When this dawns upon us, how can we do other than laughingly acquiesce?

But the moral accuracy of the cosmos is by no means all a laughing matter. In that dim and awful region of the soul where volition's battle incessantly goes on, and where alternate victories and defeats shape the character and life, we discover an arbiter, a judge who with a marvellous precision fits the results to the acts. The Eastern doctrine of Karma is a rough expression of this cosmic truth. Plutarch in his "De Sera Numinis Vindicta" is on the same lines in his fine argument that punishment does not so much follow upon injustice, but, as he finds in Hesiod, that the two are contemporaneous, and spring up from one and the same root. So is it that, in external oppressions and injustices, there is discernible in an interior circle the working of forces that readjust, in a wonderful way, the balance between the wronger and the wronged. The tyrant who oppresses is, in that subtler and yet most accurate calculation, always worse off than the victim of his oppression. The most clear-sighted of the victims have ever recognised this. "Beat on," said Anaxarchus to his executioners, "beat on at the case of Anaxarchus; no stroke falls on Anaxarchus himself."

And Justin Martyr is of the same mind when he declares in the first Apology, "We reckon that no evil can be done us, unless we be convicted as evil-doers; you can kill, but not hurt us." The men who are fighting or suffering for a good cause, even though, like Plato's "just man," they be "stretched on the rack and their eyes dug out," have always the consciousness that they have the upper hand in the conflict, and so have an inner triumph in the midst of their pains.

This feeling that, in the most central regions of the moral sphere, there is an absolute accuracy of reckoning, is discernible throughout the whole history of man's religious thinking. It comes out at times in the strangest ways. We see it, for instance, in those doctrines of Atonement, of substitution, which in their cruder form have been so repellent to modern thought. When the earlier Calvinists spoke of Christ's sufferings as being, in their quantity and intensity, an exact equivalent for the sins of the elect, they were exhibiting, in a manner congenial to the thought of the time, their sense of the cosmic accuracy. It was their way of saying that the moral world possessed an arithmetic

which reckoned to the last farthing. The earlier fathers had a better, a more Christian way of expressing the same truth. What a fine sense, for example, of moral equivalence, of a Divine humiliation and suffering for a corresponding human uplifting, have we in that passage of Methodius in which, speaking of the cross, he says: "For the Word suffered, being in the flesh affixed to the cross, that he might bring man, who had been deceived by error, to His supreme and Godlike majesty, restoring him to that Divine life from which he had become alienated."

The cosmic accuracy in these highest realms is indeed our surest guarantee, and our best incentive for the religious life. That the spiritual laws can be trusted, that we can commit ourselves fearlessly to them, as a strong swimmer gives himself to the waves, feeling himself at home there, and knowing that they will bear him, here is the genuine groundwork of a life of faith. Man's failure with the higher laws is never the fault of the laws. It is an affair of his unfitness and ignorance. Once he has mastered their secret he realises their utter fidelity; they fail him never. And we grow here according to our

faith and our works. We are building now the spiritual house in which we shall dwell. The structure will reveal the strictest arithmetic. Its size, proportions, materials, will be according to what we put into it. And yet behind will appear a larger arithmetic than our own—the reckoning of that calculus whose terms are the Infinite Grace and the Eternal love.

It is when we think along these lines, and come upon conclusions of this order that there grows upon us the argument, whose cumulative effect becomes at last irresistible, for a life beyond the present. It is, indeed, only on this supposition that the doctrine of cosmic accuracy vindicates itself. For the results which work out with such completeness in life's lower spheres break off in the upper and really important ones with so startling an abruptness, that we are driven to the supposition of a further ledger account to which they are transferred, and where they are completed. An apostolic word gives us some hint of the features of that final summing: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

XXXI.

History's Secret Springs.

Nothing perhaps expresses more strikingly the bewilderment which has overtaken the modern man than his interpretations of history. Schopenhauer finds it the most unsatisfactory of studies. It deals, he says, not like philosophy and science, with ideas and conceptions, but only with endless particulars, with things that happened once and then ceased to exist. "It does not rise to a universal law; it is always crawling on the ground of individual experience." Buckle, on the other hand, was sure about his law of history. He found it in material conditions. Given the climate, the food, and the physical geography of a country, and its fortunes might be predicted. Fontenelle also thought history a comparatively simple affair. "A man of great skill," he says, "simply by considering human nature, might guess all past and future history without ever having heard of a single event." Mill, too,

it will be remembered, at one period of his career, dreamed of constructing an "Ethology," a science of conduct which should give us the laws of past events, and enable us in some degree to predict the future.

Other writers have been overborne with a sense of the fortuitous in history. Condorcet observed that had Xerxes been victorious at Salamis we might still be barbarians. The saying is akin to that of Gibbon, that, but for Charles Martel's victory, Mohammedan doctors might to-day be teaching the Koran at Oxford. There is also a cynical view which, at recurring intervals, gains vogue, that regards the written histories as merely a full dress view of humanity, giving no true view of its real inwardness. What actually happens, these people say, is too sordid for recital. The story, so told, would be a series of *chroniques scandaleuses*. We remember Pascal's grim jest, "If the nose of Cleopatra had been shorter, the whole face of the earth would have been changed." And this sardonic view of history could be made entirely consistent, because every event and series of events has two sides, an upper and an under, and we can choose which we look at. The English Reformation may be discussed in

the light of the labours and sufferings of a Tyndale and a Coverdale, or as an affair of the relations of Henry VIII. with Anne Boleyn. We might judge the Anglicanism of the Restoration by the seraphic fervour of a Thomas Ken, or by the action of his contemporary of Durham, who secured his bishopric by a bribe of some thousands to Nell Gwynn. Surely nothing exists in the wide universe that lends itself to more opposite interpretations than human nature and human affairs. To the average observer they offer almost irresistible temptations to take a side view, and judge from that. But he will be all wrong. He may accumulate innumerable facts, but his perspective will be out of joint.

Plainly, not a too well-marked track this science of history, and the philosopher as well as the wayfaring man may easily err therein. And yet the deeper minds, as they have brooded this question, have felt a growing certitude that the human story contained a central secret of co-ordination, which, when found, would be discovered to be not a sordid one. It has often been said that Bossuet in his "Histoire Universelle" laid the foundations of the philosophy of history. It was laid long

centuries before his day. Augustine, in his "City of God," propounds a view of the world and of human nature in general which contains too much of his early Manicheeism to suit the modern conscience, but in his great sweep of vision, in which he views the whole story of the world as one vast drama with a predetermined end, he undoubtedly opened the way which has been traversed with such results by the Lessings and the Hegels of later times.

As outcome of all these researches and questionings it remains that while, as we have seen, at a far remove from anything like completeness of view, we are at least able now to make some affirmations. One is that the springs of real history are ever hidden. We are all of us more or less conscious of this. It is the first feeling of the genuine student, as he turns the pages of this or that authority. He longs to get behind his Gibbon or his Macaulay to the sources where they worked. And when we are there we still want to press on. Behind the parchments and the ancient chronicles there is still a secret. Our feeling in watching this turbid current of human life as it rolls its vast volume before our eyes is that of Heroditus

when he looked on old Nilus. We would, with him, fain follow back to the head waters. As we stand at gaze over this stretch of ages, what, we ask, is the chief contributor to its history? We speak of wars, of migrations, of heroes and their achievements. But we are sensible that here, after all, is not the clue. It is the simple fact to say that the one unfailing source and feeder of the current has, from the beginning, been the Unseen. We take a course of centuries, and above the din and whirl of events we discern every now and then, hovering over the horizon, a thin streak of new light, a fresh inspiration for the soul, let down as it seems from the upper heaven. Of the earliest of these we have no record. We only know they have been there by the result. What was it, we wonderingly imagine, that made that stupendous difference between man of the palæolithic and man of the neolithic time? What had come in upon the race during these two prehistoric periods that had changed our ancestor from a seemingly non-religious to a religious being?

He is not there to tell us, but what has happened since enables us to make a good guess. As we come on these later stages we

find the same hint everywhere thrown out. It is that of an unseen hand at work. On the plains of Babylonia we find the old Accadians, four thousand years ago, in possession of arithmetic, of geometry, of the divisions of time, of the Sabbath. Who had been their teacher? Then, spite of himself, man has become moralised. Like a child born amid wild beasts, the instinct of altruism, of regard for others, appears amidst the horde of devouring animal passions, and grows until it gradually dominates them. How did this come about? There is only one answer. Behind the prehistoric, as behind the later and clearer time, what we see is a perpetual secret feeding of humanity from a spiritual source. The story has been well compared to what happens when a handful of iron filings, sprinkled on a sheet of paper, are exposed to the action of a bar-magnet passed underneath. Under its influence the filings arrange themselves into a series of symmetrical curves; when the magnet is removed the atoms resolve themselves back into their original chaos. Human society at present is at a far remove from an ordered cosmos; but it is equally remote from a chaos. As Amiel says: "From the point of view of the

ideal, man shows much of the sad and of the ugly; but judged by its origins the human race has not altogether lost its time." The secret is that the magnet behind the screen has incessantly been at work. Man has been the recipient of a perpetual inspiration. As a Greek father puts it: "And sometimes the 'power' breathes in men's thoughts and reasonings, and puts in their hearts strength and a keener perception."

With this clue in our hands we may survey what is going on around us with quiet confidence, and at the same time with eager expectancy. We are continually looking in the wrong place for the manufacture of history. As Dr. Creighton has well said: "We sometimes speak as though nothing ever happens save what is formally discussed and voted upon. The most important changes are those which are unperceived and unrecognised till they have been accomplished." Nowhere does this truth apply with greater cogency than in what has happened and is happening in the history of religion. We go continually on the supposition that spiritual progress is a matter of the multiplication of churches and of the reconstruction of our ecclesiastical organisations.

It has never been so. The source is always an unseen one. The religious destiny of a generation has again and again, we discover, lain in what was going on in the depths of two or three elect and disciplined souls. How the fortunes of Anglicanism, we now see, were bound up in the thinkings, the discussions, the inward struggles of two or three young men in the Oriel common room in the thirties! Of what deeper significance for the religion of the Anglo-Saxon race were the spiritual communings of another young Oxford student—one John Wesley at Lincoln College—a century before! What issues for Catholicism lay in the broodings of the young Spanish knight Ignatius Loyola, as he lay, wounded by a cannon shot at Pampeluna, beguiling the weary hours with a copy of the "Lives of the Saints"!

Here, then, deep down in the consciousness of great, earnest souls, lies the religion of the future, as ever its fortunes have lain in the past. But immediately, as we say this, the question arises, Whence do these souls come? There are transcendental answers which a Plato or a second century Gnostic would have been eager to supply. But on a humbler and less speculative side it is worth noting that

a part, at least, of their secret is one of ancestry. The immense spiritual force by which Wesley re-endowed the Anglo-Saxon populace with the Christian Gospel did not, let us be sure, begin with him. It was a treasure, slowly accumulating in the consciousness of those faithful ancestors on both sides who, during successive generations, had stood for what was best at once in Anglicanism and in Nonconformity. It is a lesson most inspiring and reassuring in the continuity of spiritual force. Nothing in this realm, any more than in the material one, is ever lost. The humble follower of the Christian ideal, who to-day, in his family and his private life, is striving to put what he knows into his character and his work, may himself be no prophet of the time. But it is in the simple fidelity of such as he that we find the hidden springs of a future greatness. It is along these lines the spirit travels, to burst into glorious illumination in some inspired soul yet to come.

Human history, we say then, is from age to age progressively yielding its secret. The final analysis reveals a factor that infinitely outweighs all of sordid and of discouraging that we find there. It shows us an agent behind

the scenes, whose silence and slowness are indeed often baffling to us, but whose mark is upon every age, and whose results are ever of one character. Von Hartmann spoke of the human race as being cradled in illusions; first of a possible happiness in this life, next of happiness in a life to come, then of a happiness for the race in a future age. Deceived in them all the only problem he declares now is to close the illusion with the ending of existence. But the verdict is not according to the evidence, and we may dismiss it as the moan of a diseased mind. It is indeed this pessimistic school, and not humanity at large, that is cradled in illusions. Busy with its muckrake amongst the garbage of life, it has no time to look up and discover the golden crown which hovers above. For all who can see, the crown, nevertheless, is there. All the signs tell us that history moves to a great consummation. The secret spring that through the ages has fed the world is none other than the River of God, by whose living waters man shall yet find his Paradise.

XXXII.

Of Spiritual Appetite.

THE modern approach to religion through psychology and physiology is continually yielding us fresh results. These findings, while not a contradiction of the earlier theology, offer outlooks which that theology never contemplated. And their value is that they make religion so new a thing to us, related in such hitherto unthought-of ways to the realities of life. Considerations of this kind press on the mind in such a study as is before us. The idea of "a spiritual appetite" as part of our human equipment is familiar, probably, to most of us, though held with a varying degree of precision. It will be near enough to the fact, and to our purpose here, if we speak of it as a sense of the unseen, mingled with a desire for the special experiences which that sense brings. Religious minds associate with it the deepest realisations, and the most potent spurs to action that life possesses.

But in studying spiritual appetite, as thus conceived, modern observation opens up a class of considerations never imagined by the older divines, and confronts a range of problems which it is peculiarly the task of our day to resolve.

One of the first results we get at here is the somewhat puzzling discovery that spiritual appetite, in the most conspicuous at least of its forms, is intermittent in humanity. As with our physical desires, it comes and goes. It is a hunger which is diminished by what it feeds on, until it cries "Enough!" That this is so the simplest reflection on what is daily happening will prove to us. Let us imagine the ablest and most earnest of preachers, charged to his fullest capacity with Divine influences, and before him a picked audience of the most devout souls, hungering and thirsting after God. A point would be reached in his utterance beyond which it were well for him not to pass. It would be the point of repletion. Let him add more and yet more, even of the highest things, and in time the joy of the audience would be turned to pain and repulsion. The physiologist would at this point be ready with his explanation. The

interest of the audience, he will tell you, depends upon the freshness and activity of certain brain centres, and its decline arises from the fact that these centres become in the end overcharged and fatigued. Spiritual appetite, he will say, is a form of thinking and feeling, and, as part of the law of its action, must have its rests and alternations.

There will be more to say on this physical side of the matter presently, but before drawing any conclusions we may go on with our observations. Another notable fact in connection with spiritual appetite is that in many, and often notable persons, it coexists with all manner of semingly most incongruous elements. For a time it will be the ruling factor, revealing itself with the utmost reality and intensity, then to be succeeded by headlong rushes of sensual passion, by all varieties of greed, ambition, and lower interest, until its own turn come again. There have been men who have constructed their theory of life on this perpetual alternation. Their soul is a wheel which revolves, and they reck little as to which side at the moment happens to be uppermost. To yield fully to the passion of

the hour, whether it be a spiritual ecstasy or a sexual debauch, is their view of tasting life in its wholeness. Certain ages have been conspicuous for the production of this type. The Italian Renaissance abounded in them. The memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini offer us, perhaps, the best exemplar. That extraordinary book reveals the author as now reading the Epistles of Paul with utmost relish, or, again, with equal keenness pursuing his monstrous amours, or plunging his dagger into the heart of his adversary. In France we have his feminine counterpart in a Margaret of Valois, who was eqally at home in ribald stories, in lofty speculations, and in the contemplation of God. She seems to put one self into "The Mirror of the Soul," her first work, and another, quite different self, into the gross chronicles of the Heptameron. In such souls there seems no discrimination between one appetite and another. Everything that comes along appears equally good, equally worthy to reign. With Marie Bashkirtseff, these people could choose by turns to be Sardanapalus and Napoleon, the Pope and the Devil. If they exercise discrimination, it is one solely of age. They would accept the witty Frenchman's appor-

tionment, and be a pretty woman till thirty, an ambassador till fifty, and a cardinal for the rest.

This ebb and flow of spiritual appetite, observable more or less in us all, has given rise to abundant theorising and to abundant experimenting, in religion and life. In every age there have been heroic souls, with a special gift of temperament, who, rebelling against the natural law, have conceived a life in which the mind should keep ever at its topmost strain, with no admixture of what was beneath. For this they have been willing to pay the price, and to cut themselves loose, as far as might be, from the world's activities and incitements. But the common sense of humanity has rejected asceticism. There is not blood enough in its veins. Pascal's word, "that man is neither angel nor beast, but in trying to make an angel of him one often ends in making him a beast," has sunk into the world's memory, so verified as it has been by a long experience. The revelations of the "Black Book," compiled by Thomas Cromwell at his visitation of the English monasteries, are a proof, horrible, but for ever convincing, of what Nature thinks of the violation, under

whatsoever auspices, of her fundamental conditions.

It is, by the way, in this connection curious to note that the Renaissance period, which exhibited such strange admixtures of religious fervour and animal passion, gave birth also to a lofty attempt at the spiritualisation of human love. We find in the Italy of the sixteenth century women proclaiming a new doctrine which relegated what they called "matrimonial love" to an inferior moral position as compared with the "celestial love" which was to unite men and women in a nobler bond. Cardinal Bembo writes eloquently on this theme, declaring that the knowledge how truly to love comes only in riper years, and that its essence consists in eluding the impulse of the senses, which only disturb the spiritual rapture of pure affection. It sounds well, but at best it was a doctrine for the *élite*, and one that, so far as we know, had little enough effect on the morals of the time. A daring attempt, from another side, to solve the problem has been in the Antinomianism, appearing under various guises in different ages, and revived in a peculiarly dangerous form by a modern school of Continental mysticism, which has

allowed the bodily life every kind of excess, under the plea that the soul in all this is a non-participant.

Truly the puzzle of how best to live in this world has been a great one, and sorely have our predecessors been bewildered in their attempts to answer it. In our own solutions we have at least the immense advantage of their experience. They traversed every road, and each band of searchers seems to have brought back a bit of the answer. But they are all tormented with the feeling that they have not the whole of it. How the best in its wholeness seems ever to elude these eager travellers! A second best, or a fragment of the best, seems all they hope for. We can sympathise so fully with that old thirteenth-century writer who finds in himself an appetite for three things, "honour, wealth, and God's grace, in order that he should possess the fulness of his power." But he despairs of getting them altogether. "Alas! It cannot be that riches and honour and the grace of God should come together in a single life." It does not occur to him to ask "Why not?" He is obsessed by that Latin conception of God and the world which made Augustine reproach

himself for his joy in music and in the sunshine which gave so great a relish to life.

But what, then, are our own conclusions? Are we nearer than our fathers to the solution of the enigma? Are we to admit that spiritual appetite and its satisfactions are an evanescence, a portion of that eternal flux of things which belongs to the human consciousness as well as to the outside world; a something begotten of a previous, different state, and producing in its turn another mental condition, often its opposite? Assuredly in certain forms of the soul's desire there is, as we have already acknowledged, a to and fro, a coming and a vanishing. Plotinus speaks of having three times enjoyed the immediate vision of God; Jacob Behmen tells of a great experience in which "the triumph that was in my soul I can neither tell nor describe." But in all these instances, and one could multiply them indefinitely, we have ever repeated the old story of the ebb and flow. These highest reaches of the soul are but a moment in a life, which the memory alone retains. And the physiologist, as we have said, assures us that the very structure of the body and brain makes it impossible that it should be otherwise.

But at this point physiology has another thing to say to us. While it shows the spirit's highest exercises as dependent upon an organ, it points also to a power which in its turn is operating mysteriously upon the organ and making it anew. It is well known that the brain of a great scholar contains deep and crooked furrows, and hundreds of creases which do not appear in the brains of ordinary men. This means that mental toil is continually transforming and developing the tool whicq the mind works with. The soul is ever shaping its instrument. And when we speak of the volatile character of religious feeling and desire, we have to remember that in the spiritual evolution of humanity, the brain channels along which man's highest perceptions reach him will become immeasurably developed, and his capacity in these directions correspondingly strengthened. We are in this respect the creators of ourselves. Every act of our will by which we respond to the celestial voices, by which we reject the lower and choose the higher, adds to the perfection of the instrument by which the heavens register themselves in us, broadens and deepens the channels along which flow the currents of spiritual power.

And that is not all. The spiritual appetite, as a vivid form of consciousness, we say, comes and goes. That of necessity. But what is to follow it? Shall a man, after a great inward realisation, come away, eat and drink, play with his children, listen to music, go to business and make money? Shall he, after divinest things have passed in his mind, fill it now with the thousand things which the world offers, and allow them in their turn to fire his ardour and to work on his will? The mediæval monk said "No." The modern man has learned better. For he discovers that God is in this world as well as above it, and that he will not even know God in all His aspects apart from a hearty use and enjoyment of His material manifestations. The "seeing all things in God" by which Malebranche sought to solve the metaphysical puzzle of perception, turned into "a seeing God in all things," becomes at once his life's joy and safeguard. And in this sense the spiritual appetite, mutable as to its form, becomes in faithful souls, an unchanging possession. They have the broadest range, for the Kingdom is infinite, but they will take nothing from the world, not its wealth, or power, or beauty,

which does not yield Him who is Holiness and Love as the ground of their satisfactions. "Are you recollected?" Wesley was accustomed to ask of his followers. He meant, "were they in all their variety of pursuit aiming ever at the highest?" It is an excellent question for us all.

XXXIII.

On Being an Outsider.

SCHOPENHAUER, in one of his diatribes upon life, compares it to a conjuror's booth, where the old tricks are perpetually played on each new generation, producing in them the same illusions. It is a cynical illustration, with which we have small sympathy. But there is a side of the comparison which he does not touch, but which might well have occupied his sombre genius. It is that of the behaviour of the crowd in front of the booth. Here we see the outsider perpetually struggling to become an insider. The specially-endowed with thew and elbow worms and wriggles his way from row to row of the narrowing circles, until at last, panting with his exertions, he finds himself at the centre. When there he discovers usually that he has not gained much. The show is commonly a paltry one. Is this nearer view worth the crowding ? The outside, if one only had thought of it, was so much freer.

The fresh air and the infinite spaces lay there. One could move at one's ease, whereas here the air is stifling, and the pressure on every side as of a strait-waistcoat.

Yes, in nine cases out of ten the outside of the crowd is vastly the better, but in the world's present humour you will have an almost impossible task in getting your neighbour to believe it. One finds everywhere an enormous centripetal energy. In all departments the great preoccupation is centre-seeking. To be at society's middle point, of a community's "inner circle," the member of a club whose characteristic is exclusiveness, to be talked of, *digito monstrari*, this is paradise, while to be outside is, in Lord Beaconsfield's phrase, to endure "the hell of failure." And as men get further into the crowd, nearer their booth, the airs they give themselves! The disease of swelled head is an old and inveterate one. In his "Praise of Folly" Erasmus sketches the literary lionlet of his time. "It is amusing to see how easily a few favourable reviews puff up all such scribblers, and if they chance to become notorious enough to have their works placed on the front row of the booksellers' stalls, or to be themselves pointed out, or

whispered about, while tramping the streets, there is no living with them." The words might have been written yesterday. The modern ecclesiastic (of all denominations) shares to the full the craze of centre-seeking. The scribes and Pharisees of the New Testament time were assuredly not in it for scientific pushfulness with your cleric of to-day. In the synagogue the chief seats are at a greater premium than ever. The man of old time who blew a trumpet before him and demanded to be called "rabbi," would, in the light of modern developments, have recognised himself as a child at the business. We have learned a thing or two since then—we who are in the age of the limelight, of purchased bogus degrees, and of the well-engineered newspaper *réclame*.

And yet, in the midst of his utmost pushing and elbowing, there arises at times in the bosom of our struggler a doubt, a most disquieting query, as to whether in all this he is not writing himself down an ass! After all, was not that fresh air he left behind better than this stifling breath? And this strait-waistcoat of utmost convention, though of gilt stripes and richest material, is it not most uncomfortably tight?

Fancy a virile, full-blooded man compelled to dress every morning as an archbishop! Must there not be at times, in the most reverend bosom, a frantic desire for a desert island where, if one chose, one could go naked and not ashamed? There are times and there are natures in which the absurdity of the situation seems suddenly to reveal itself, and then come great revolts. We have princes and princesses running away from Court, dropping their titles and proposing to earn their living. Religion has seen these revolts. The anchoritism of the early Church was largely a movement against convention. Jerome tells us that the monks of his time loved their solitary life, preferring the great free air of the desert to the crowded cities. Every age gives us born outsiders, people who flee from the reeking centres to the farthest edge of the open. Of their number are the explorers, a Columbus, of whom an Italian poet so finely says, "In him the instinct of an unknown continent burned"; a Livingstone, a Chalmers, who were only truly at home when in the wilderness. The expansion of Britain means, in fact, that the race inhabiting its borders has in its soul this irresistible yearning for the great

spaces, a yearning that sends it ever from convention's narrowing boundaries to stretch its limbs under wider skies.

Outsiders of this order have the feeling as a kind of physical sensation. They cannot be crowded. They want a view clear to the stars and to the horizons without the interruption of their neighbours' chimney-pots. But amongst the untravelled, who dwell all their lives in the densest civilisations, there are here and there primitive souls who, in another way, insist on taking their liberty. You cannot tame these men nor buy them. Their career, in its simplicity and unworldliness, even in what may be called its extravagances, is an object-lesson in the real values of life. They do not propose to sell themselves in the market because they find the transaction unremunerative at the price. They will let the other men sweat for ambitious prizes, if only they may be allowed to possess their own souls. The crowded centre—let who will get there, and breathe its hot and fœtid air, if that is their taste. For them the riches of their inner kingdom, with the universe for their playground! The tub of Diogenes is, in this regard, more eloquent to us than the

tub of most pulpit orators. We cannot help a cheer, either, to Thoreau, when, amongst his dollar-hunting Yankees, he declares, "If I should sell both my forenoons and my afternoons to society, as most appear to do, I am sure that for me there would be nothing left worth living for." Such men are worth watching. When a daring soul, under an irresistible impulse, bursts the bonds of his time, and commences to steer a course of his own under the infinite heavens, we are often at the new beginnings of history.

It is necessary, however, at this point, to be more precise in our delineation. For there is a fanaticism of the outside, as well as of the inside, and before we can accurately pronounce judgment here we need to have settled in our own minds some preliminary questions. As we look deeper into this matter, we discover that the chiefest of the world's outsiders have been at the same time the most central of its insiders, and that they were the one by virtue of being the other. They came away from society's centres in quest of the real centres, which seemed to them to be elsewhere. They, too, were centripetal, in search of their middle point. The two things they wanted were truth

and life, and for these hid treasures they were ready to sell all they had. When Xenophanes declared the claims of religion would be best advanced by cleansing the moral atmosphere of the gods whose recorded lives were in opposition to purity, and when Socrates laid down his life in defence of the same thesis, these Greek apostles became outsiders to the religion of their country, in order to lead their compatriots to its true centre. Luther's stand was exactly to the same purport. The papal system had become a centre so remote from the fresh air that the human soul could no longer breathe freely there.

A terrible thing indeed is it for a nation or an age when society's religious centre has become so choked and encumbered that men who want freedom and reality have to go outside in search of it. Such a state of things is depicted for us by Basil, who, speaking of the Church of the East in the fourth century, says: "Sacred things are profaned; those of the laity who are sound in the faith avoid the places of worship as schools of impiety, and raise their hands in solitude, with groans and tears, to the Lord in heaven." What this exclusion of the outer air in religion means

for our own day is exhibited at this moment in France, where, as Père Hyacinthe says, "the Jesuits are masters of the Church, the Atheists are masters of the Republic." The two conditions are cause and effect. How the position is working out on the popular mind is illustrated by the spectacle of a Sunday in Paris, described in the *Chrétien Français*, by M. Bourrier, where, in a pouring rain which emptied the orthodox places of worship, an enthusiastic crowd of some five thousand people packed the Trocadero to celebrate the "Fête of Reason," and where the orators, while ridiculing "the dead gods on whom the priests live," "saluted morality, moral force, justice and the social order." M. Bourrier thinks they were making religion without knowing it. May be. But is it not tragical that these people, in search of their souls, have to go outside the organised Christianity of their land in order to find them?

What is evident is that where, and so long as, the Church centres are not the soul's centres, there will be revolt and secession. The problem of the hour is accordingly to bring the spiritual fellowship everywhere into line with the ultimate truths and laws of life.

The outsider who shows us these is the truest insider. It was for this that Christ went outside the contemporary Judaism. For the same cause His disciples "suffered without the camp, bearing His reproach." No more wholesome lesson on the true doctrine of outside and inside can be anywhere gained than by reading the records of the early Christian centuries. Here we find the most radical of outsiders who were also the most tremendous of insiders. The unity of the primitive Church, so jealously guarded by the succession of its teachers, was felt to be a unity round a true centre. Against the wild imaginings of hare-brained innovators within, as against the barbarian pressure of the world outside, these fathers fought for the Christian institution and the Christian tradition, knowing they had here a spiritual deposit, a record of fact and a habit of life that represented for them the midmost point of the soul's kingdom. The Church fellowship of the future will, in like manner, be preserved only by a similar fidelity to absolute inner reality.

But it is, after all, in its personal aspects that the topic has for us its greatest fascination. It is the doctrine of all others for the humble

and the unnoted. Are we outsiders from the "select circles"? The fact ought to touch our sense of humour, if we have any. With God's love in our hearts and God's work to do in the world, though we be on society's utmost verge, we have life's best. For our position offers the choicest of all soils on which the soul can grow. Outsiders! Yes, but also Insiders. If we look up from our work we see enclosing us on every hand the walls of the New Jerusalem.

XXXIV.

Life's Refusals.

Perhaps the most mysterious, as certainly the most tantalising, of life's aspects is its element of refusal. The world dangles before our desire a million things, which it takes care at the same time to keep well out of our reach. Our vision is our torment. It mocks us with the unattainable. In the mountain country it catches at a glance a score of peaks, each one of which we yearn to climb and cannot. Our discontent on the mountain is exaggerated on the plain. Social arrangements seem constructed expressly for the irritation and baffling of desire. The irony for the hovel-dweller is in his being able to see the palace on the farther side of the road. The jest becomes too much for humanity at times, and then there are *émeutes* and revolutions. When the fighting is over the people discover that the world is just as full as before of things they wish for and cannot have. And it would have been so had

each one captured a bank and kept its contents. For no social or political rearrangements can stop for a moment the working of this system of refusal. And for a good reason. It is innate in the nature of things.

The world is sometimes divided into the "haves" and the "have-nots." But that really is only a surface division. We are all fundamentally "have-nots," and were intended to be. It is not enough, in discussing such a theme, to dwell on the special cases. One thinks, indeed, with tender sympathy of those on whom life seems here to bear most hardly: of the poverty-stricken; of lonely women to whom love and children have been denied; of the maimed, the disfavoured, the invalided, who cry unavailingly for the strength and beauty they see around them; of men who have been within an inch of fame and prosperity, and seen at the critical point the cup dashed from their lips. Pitiful, truly. But that is only half the story. The other half is the history of our so-called satisfactions. For it is at the moment of "having" that man is most acutely sensible of "not having." The soul is never further from its inmost of aspiration than when it has secured what it

seemed to be seeking for. The moment of fruition is the moment of disillusion. We lift the veil and discover there is nothing behind. Have we quenched our desire in its so-called fulfilment? We have multiplied it and added to its rage. We climbed our peak, and, instead of that being the end, it opened up simply a vast perspective of realms beyond our scope.

This sense of life as a calculated refusal grows upon us with the years. It is too evidently premeditated. The animals have no sense of what man here experiences. It is his *peculium* to have a faculty of vision and of consequent yearning which, on every side of his life, transcends a thousandfold what it is possible for him to obtain. And each stage of his career rubs this fact deeper into him. For with his ardour, his thirst for realisation all undiminished, he finds in his later periods doors which before had been wide open shut, one after another, in his face. Passing strange, is it not, that means of enjoyment which in youth were in fullest activity should now, when the soul's aspirations have reached their greatest urgency, be withering and closing up?

The problem here has pressed on the world

through all the ages, and many are the proffered solutions. The explanation of some is that there is no explanation. The early world writer who declared that man is the plaything of the gods is answered in our generation by a Nietzsche, who thinks our planet a ridiculous side-show in the stellar system, and by a Huxley, who argues that moral sentiment is not discernible in the universe, but is a home product for which our race may take considerable credit to itself. A Maeterlinck endorses this verdict with his statement that justice does not exist in the outer cosmos, but dwells alone in the soul. But answers of this kind do not, happily, find any permanent acceptance. If they did they would speedily work moral disaster. Man cannot keep the upward way apart from the conviction that he is being reinforced from outside. If the invisible powers are indifferent, the world in its despair will take the counsel of Propertius: "While the fates permit, let us satiate our eyes with lust, for the long night is coming, to which there shall be no dawn."

Infinitely pathetic is it, indeed, to watch man as, age after age, he has faced the Sphinx and brought his answers. The Stoic reply

was not unworthy. The situation, if it offered no ground for hope, should at least be met with fortitude. We must meet life's refusal with our own refusal. "It is easier," says Seneca, "and more tolerable not to acquire than to lose." "Diogenes," he continues, "so acted that nothing could be taken from him. He kept himself outside the fortuitous. It is as if he had said: 'Go your way, Fortune. You have nothing to do with Diogenes!'" From the East, from Buddhism, came an even more uncompromising answer. Desire itself is the root-evil of humanity. The only real deliverance from the burden of life lies in the extinction of it, of the whole "will to live."

Such an outlook as this is, to say the least of it, not exhilarating. And the invincible optimism that lies at the root of healthy natures tells us that it is not true. All the theories we have been discussing break down at one vital point. They fail to discern the real nature, at once of life's refusals and of its fulfilments. A deeper view discerns here what can only be expressed in paradox. It discerns that fulfilments are *not* fulfilments, and that refusals are *not* refusals. And this because there is no finality in either. What we

call a refusal has always something behind it. We discover by-and-by that it is a gift. Do we imagine that when Nature takes from us she leaves only a blank? On the contrary; precisely as the so-called satisfactions are recognised by the soul as not ultimates, so with equal clearness does it affirm that the disappointments are not ultimates either. The dissatisfaction after a world-fruition and the ache after a world-denial are practically the same thing. They are agents towards a farther end. Their message, to him who will hear, is that desire, so far from being a mockery, so far from being an evil, is of all human prophecies the greatest. That man cannot get his desires fulfilled, that what he has named fulfilments are denied by the deepest in him, is Nature's way of saying that he is launched upon an infinite career. What he cannot find is precisely the thing he is predestined to find. That he drinks of every stream and thirsts again is the surest mark of the eternal that is in him.

It is here that Christianity fits in so perfectly with the world-system in which we find ourselves. It assumes that life's refusals are part of our assets. The smart of the dis-

appointment is one of the working forces in our destiny. The pain of the process is never an end in itself. It is a beginning. Could we see into what by-and-by it will transform itself we should say, as did Madame Swetchine when her friends prayed round her death-bed, "Do not ask God for me one day more nor one suffering less." This is the attitude of Christ. He has no thought of stifling life's desires. On the contrary, as He contemplates the cross, they are intensified. "With desire have I desired." He knew that what He desired He would obtain. Life's refusal would seem to have reached its uttermost in the thought of Calvary, but He takes it with the triumphant calm coming from a perfect comprehension of its meaning. His personal suffering is lost in the largeness of the Divine purpose. He yields to His fate, knowing that His fate conceals within itself the ultimate best. He could have said, with one of His early followers, himself a martyr, "You may kill, but you cannot hurt us."

It is when men have caught from Christ this inner secret that life's refusals, the hardest and bitterest, become transformed. A conquest greater than aught achieved by Alexander or

Napoleon has been obtained when the soul, met by overwhelming loss or blankest disappointment, questioning at that hour its inmost self, finds there the clear-toned answer that all is well. When St. John of the Cross exclaims, "Whatever you find pleasant to soul or body abandon; whatever is painful embrace it," we may gird at the extravagance of the saying. But let us not in our censure forget the marvellous richness of that life provision which has made it possible for men to strip themselves of every surface joy, in the assured confidence that the void would be straightway filled by something the soul recognised as sweetest of all! By sure experience have they learned that

> Some searching bitters are
> Sweeter than sweets and more refreshing far.

Indeed, nothing in the history of humanity has been more marvellous than the answer which Christian souls, age after age, have made to life's refusals. They have caught their meaning, and with inner exultancy have applied their lesson. These adepts have become world conquerors. A Bernard who gives up a court for a cell rules Europe with his counsels. Dr.

Creighton, in a striking passage, speaks of Hildebrand "as knowing well that only that monk will help to subjugate the world who shuns it. . . . Renunciation of the world in the service of a world-ruling Church—such is the amazing problem that Gregory VII. solved for the next century and a-half." These men had taken and used the priceless gift which lay in the hand of refusal.

The topic is for ourselves as the "have-nots." We are all in that category. We are maimed somewhere. The door has been shut against us on one side or another. To some the "No" seems to have been so much more emphatic than to others, and they complain at the harshness with which it has been dashed in their teeth. Every day we hear the cry of the smitten. The maimed, the aged, the bereaved, the desolate ask for comfort which we long to give. What comfort is there? So far as we know there is none greater than that derived from a steady gaze into the true inwardness of what has happened. For the refusals are God's promises; and of a special kind. The words in prophet or gospel are everybody's, and mine only in common with the rest. But *my* sorrows, *my* weakness, *my*

losses, these are the promises which belong not to another but to *me*. Every one of them is a prophecy, every one a force. They can no more retain permanently their present shape than can the fuel in the fire. They are evolving, and on the line of an infinite progression which carries me with it. If we bring to them faith, even as of a grain of mustard seed, we shall assuredly see in them all, as Stevenson puts it, "the kindness of the scheme of things, and the goodness of our veiled God."

XXXV.

Life's Outer Edge.

We have not touched the wonders and mysteries of our life when we consider it simply as a daily thinking and acting. Marvellous, indeed, is that side of it, opening at every point to deeps for which we have no sounding lines. But what we call our strictly personal, our immediately conscious life is only a fragment of our actual selves. To catch a glimpse of what we really stand for in the universe we need to get away from our nature's centre and observe the prospect that opens from its outer edge. A familiar illustration will make our meaning plainer. We see the sun in the heavens as a definitely outlined orb, occupying always the same amount of space, a body of given weight and diameter. But it would be a curious mistake to regard the sun as ending really with these outlines of it. Science shows us that, leaping beyond the great disc, are masses of incandescent gas that flame out for

tens of thousands of miles into the surrounding space. But that is only the beginning. For the whole planetary system is really the sun. These whirling orbs are born of it, receive their motion from its initial energy, and live by the light and heat which it pours upon them.

Now, our personality, in some at least of its aspects, may be set forth in somewhat similar terms. It consists not simply of the well-defined orb of our actual thinking, active life, but of innumerable, immense projections which, flung off from our centre, and wandering far afield, are, nevertheless, as potent as the thought that is in us to-day. More, these projections are at every moment representing us in the general sum of things. It will be worth while to note some points in the work of this depersonalised activity, of this outreach of ourselves beyond ourselves.

Has it, for instance, ever occurred to us to explore the mystery of our dormant relations? The phenomenon we know as latent heat has a curious analogy here in our mental life. In certain natural processes, as in the passage of matter from a solid to a fluid state, a mass of heat seems to disappear. But no particle of it is lost. It is simply latent, and a reversing

process will restore it undiminished. In like manner there is a latent heat of consciousness, a force that seemingly disappears, but which is all the time powerfully affecting our relations with our fellows. There are numbers of people in the world of whom from day to day we do not think, and who do not think of us. And yet through every moment a power is binding us together. A part of us lies in them, a part of them in us. The thing that passed between us years ago, the word spoken, the deed done, is there in each, alive and working; and the fruit of this working will show itself with rigorous exactness the next time our paths cross. It is curious to note the steadfast persistency of this relative life. There is an immortality in it. My old comrade in another corner of the world may have had no intercourse with me for years. And yet that he is there is a fact for me almost as much as for himself. His work, his quality, his goodness are all a part of my possessions. If I do not recognise this now, I shall do when he is gone.

But this outer rim of what we have called our dormant relations stretches ever farther as we gaze. It opens upwards and down-

wards, backwards and forwards in endless perspectives. It puts, for instance, our past in quite a new light. We are apt to think of the bygone years as lost to us. Moralists have for ages discoursed of the vanity of things, because of the fateful transitoriness that is in them. But that is largely an illusion. The past is, though in another way, as much alive as the present. When we are disposed to ignore this truth, we get some rude awakenings. The story of Jacob and Esau is here a true verdict upon life. When the prosperous supplanter, returning to Canaan with his flocks and herds, learns that the brother whom long before he had wronged is advancing with four hundred men to meet him, he discovers, as men have been doing ever since, that nothing is so much alive, so crammed with vengeful energy, as the evil wrought in the seeming buried years.

And if the past is in this way alive, what shall we say of the future ? That also do we carry with us. All those peoples that are to come, all the vast developments that the sun is yet to look upon, are there, coiled and stored in our personality. There is something positively eerie in the thought that the long defiles

of the unborn generations are already taking their destiny from us. Their whole outfit of ideas, beliefs, and inner impulses, the woof and web of their happiness and woe, is being woven from what we are thinking, feeling, performing to-day. They are not here yet, but the relation between us is begun. That vast non-existent looms already as an actuality. What a prodigious responsibility does this lay on us to do and be the best we know! Our duty, to those we see, to our kinsfolk, our fellow-citizens, is an ever-present stimulus to an honest man. But these unseen myriads who beckon to us out of the future touch us with a more pathetic pleading. So helpless are they, so utterly passive in our hands. To the extent a man is spiritually educated will he respond with all his nature to that unvoiced prayer. He will strive, not only for the present, but also for this other time that waits. A mighty imperative is upon us all to secure that, as the result of our being and doing,

> Sweeter shall the roses blow
> In those far years, those happier years;
> And children weep when we lie low
> Far fewer tears, far softer tears.

But the dormant relations belonging to our past and future by no means exhaust the facts that lie upon life's outer edge. Another class of them appear when we consider what is actually going on in the immediate present. Modern investigations are bringing to light the strangest results of what may be called our depersonalised life. Of our disengaged part that has cut itself off from our centre and is working on its own behalf outside we get every now and then bewildering glimpses. What, for instance, are we to make of a case such as that which the scientists of Salpetrière relate of a young unlettered peasant girl of Brittany, who in a certain stage of hypnotism imagined herself to be a priest of the Middle Ages and poured out a stream of monkish Latin? Here one might suppose that we have the double of a personality, thrown off centuries ago, and wandering through the ages to settle and express itself once more through another mind. Or, to take another case, what hidden power of projection is represented by that perfectly authenticated story of a man in London suddenly made to think of an old comrade in New Zealand, whom he had lost sight of there for years, enduring for hours an

unaccountable mental agony on account of him, and discovering afterwards that at that very time his friend was being tortured to death by the Maoris ? We have at present no satisfactory theory of these things. But what, at least, they show us is that the life that has left us, as well as that which beats in our pulses, is an activity with a vast area of function, and a seeming endlessness in its operation. It is, indeed, precisely when we consider the action of that part of us which has been dislodged from our immediate self that we find most deeply graven the word Immortality. It is surely significant as to what is to happen to our central Ego that for this outer edge of us there seems no death.

And this brings us to another point. In dealing with the future we have spoken of a relation which is alive and conscious on our side and dormant on another. The unborn, we have seen, are the passive to our active. But the very fact of such a tie suggests another where the conditions are reversed. The considerations already advanced reveal a universe of such illimitable spiritual potencies that the next step is almost inevitable, to the belief in relations where we are the passive

subjects of higher activities. It would be contrary to the whole analogy of life to suppose that our perpetual forthgiving has no complemental process. A strangely limited being must he be who hears throughout the universe no echo but that of his own footsteps. Everything points to the fact that in our turn we are perpetually receiving; that the projection of life does not begin with us, but high up through all the spheres of being. The wonderful story of the vision at Dothan, where the prophet beholds around him panoplied hosts invisible to unpurged eyes, is authentic to the soul, accordant to all its higher knowing. What the unborn generations are to us, deaf and dumb as yet to all we are doing and thinking on their behalf, so are we to intelligences that are beyond us. Prophetic natures, whose flesh walls have worn thin, get glimpses here and there of what is behind. We have nothing more than a hint, but the whole movement of the universe, so far as disclosed to us, is behind that hint.

In this view death itself is not so much a fact as a suggestion. To Milton's great word that

Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth unseen,
Both when we sleep and when we wake,

we may add Rothe's inspiring thought that these angelic hosts are the developed human personalities to whom death has been the last refinement. And not the less near to us that their activity is at present untranslatable into aught our senses record. That we are unborn to their sphere, as our posterity is as yet unborn to ours, cannot, in the light of what we know, be a bar to our faith in its reality. That strain is too meagre in its message which sings thus of love :

> God gives us love. Something to love
> He lends us ; but, when love is grown
> To ripeness, that on which it throve
> Falls off, and love is left alone.

No ; the love that kindled ours is not lost. It may have become latent, but the hidden energy is there, working in another form, waiting the hour of retranslation and rediscovery to its answering soul.

All this is, of course, the merest sketch. But it is at least based upon reality, and needs to be taken into any proper account of life. At a time when the tendency is to belittle humanity and the worth of existence ; a time, too, when great physical catastrophes have startled men into a new questioning of their

cosmic status, it is well to see, along such lines as these, the vastness of the scale on which our life is planned, and the sublimity of the end toward which its story points.

XXXVI.

The Furtherance of Life.

THE earlier antagonism between Science and Christianity is making way for a remarkable alliance between them. The new relation is indeed more than an alliance; it is a fusion. When we are told that the Gospel for the twentieth century is to be a scientific Gospel, we can, as believers in the message of the New Testament, heartily endorse the statement. For, when stripped of sectarian badges and of artificial accretions, Christianity stands essentially as a science of life. "Learn to live, not live to learn," says a modern French critic, and it is Christianity which teaches us how to apply the motto. The remarkable feature of present-day scientific thinking is that its main deduction, as applied to the human position in the world, is precisely that which Christianity has enforced from the beginning. What Science tells us is that the whole effort of Nature, as we see it, is directed to one point,

the furtherance of life. Incessantly is she striving to enlarge and perfect the organs which may better express the soul of which she is full. Her fierce competitions, her war of species mean that. Types and races that fail to respond to her call go down and make way for others that understand her better. And Christianity is nothing other than the application of this law to man's higher levels. It gives us first a statement of the life of this upper side and an ethic for its guidance, and then opens, for those ready for it, a stream of influence which expands and vivifies every organ and sets the whole nature on a movement toward new powers.

With this double clue, both of Science and of the New Testament, as to the proper object of human existence, it is strange that masses of supposedly intelligent people should make such a blunder of the business of living. The "smart" circles in this view, are anything but smart. The mercenary hordes who make existence simply a rush for gold and for the things it purchases excite one's wondering pity. The feeling is not so much of their moral obliquity as of their essential, hide-bound stupidity. They are not clever enough to see the plainest

things. The individuals who imagine, and tens of thousands do to-day, that a position which gives them the privilege of loafing, of limitless animal indulgence, of commanding the services of others and of being absolved from rendering service themselves, and the further one of looking down with disdain upon the largest possible number of their fellow creatures, is of all things the position to be desired, are hardly so much "miserable sinners" as dolts and blockheads who need to be put to the kindergarten department of the school of life. When the world is a little wiser—that is, when its spiritual evolution has advanced a further stage—there will be a general smile at this earlier folly. It will seem so strange that people who were advanced enough to make all kinds of experiments in chemistry and electricity, and to profit by them, should have been incapable of reading the results of very simple experiments on themselves. For the effects of given lines of conduct register with the absolute certainty of mathematics, and are understandable by anyone who is not a fool. The results can be scientifically tabulated. Character products arise from given constituents as inevitably as does water from its combining

proportions of oxygen and hydrogen. And the outcome of the diagnosis is to confirm at every point the New Testament theory of life and to exhibit the ruinous effects of its opposite.

This theory confronts the idea of ease with that of strenuous endeavour, the pleasures of animal appetite with those of the mental and spiritual consciousness, the joy of being served with that of the joy of serving, the gratifications of pride and arrogance with those arising from reverence and humility. The list of antitheses might be indefinably enlarged, but these sufficiently outline the opposing positions. The point is that whatever of these antitheses we take up and judge according to the scientific test of the resulting enlargement or diminution of life, the result is the same. The Christian ideal wins along the whole line. The godless theory that opposes it is seen by experiment to produce a shrinkage of the entire area of human nature, a decay of its sensibilities, a drying up of its life sources. Along the lines it opens, on the contrary, there is a continual widening of the consciousness, a growing delicacy of perception, a new surface preparing for hitherto unknown impulsions from the unseen.

The question of feeling is by no means the sole element to judge by here, but it is a large one and may be safely called in evidence. A dissipated Roman emperor offered a great reward to anyone who could invent for him a new pleasure. The question was in itself a tragedy. It was a quest after some outside stimulant potent enough to stir once again to some semblance of life the faded, worn-out sensual nerve which had supplied all that this poor crowned wretch had associated with enjoyment. And nobody was sensible enough or courageous enough to tell him of locked-up powers capable of rendering the most delicate and growing delights! To-day there are multitudes of reputedly well to-do people who are no better off. One wonders whether it ever occurs to them to consider the kind of bargain they are making when, for the ever-narrowing round of their easily exhausted delights, they shut themselves off from the vast realm of subtle and exquisite sensibilities which belong to the spiritual life. Does no hint ever come of that sphere of enjoyment where, in Augustine's words, "there shineth into my soul what space cannot contain, and there soundeth what time beareth

not away, and there exhaleth odours that the breath disperseth not, and there tasteth what eating diminisheth not, and there abideth what satiety devoureth not" ? Strange taste, to strum for ever on the bottom note of the instrument while a whole gamut above waits to be touched into melody!

But there are others of higher moral and religious pretension who, to their own grievous hurt, are not less obviously neglecting the Christian laws of the furtherance of life. One meets people who pray fervently but shirk all self-denial, and fancy they can do it with impunity. They might as well propose to ignore gravitation. The broken spiritual law as surely as the natural one will have its revenge. When a man because he is wealthy gives up the strenuous life and falls back on idleness, there is an immediate inward impoverishment. Middle-class citizens will often, as they call it, "retire from business," and in so doing retire from manhood. No man should retire into anything that keeps him back from the full stretch of his every faculty. We should be fishers in the sea of infinite life possibility, with every net spread, and every line searching its treasure-hiding waves.

One sees, too, with commiseration the starved and shrivelled natures that try to live by the pagan law of receiving rather than by the Christian law of giving. A man who is incessantly served and waited upon; who has become accustomed to this and to nothing else; who places his main happiness on what is offered to him by others, is truly in piteous case. A millionaire he may be, but he is a pauper essentially. Think of the abject mendicancy of the proud man! He goes starving unless his neighbour incessantly feeds him with homage. And the food is poison; it exacerbates his disease instead of affording healthy nourishment. Contrast with this the simple results of the New Testament law of serving! In obeying it a whole group of beautiful life-forces begin to develop themselves. The joy here does not wait for any outside response. It springs up in the act itself, and is part of it. And as soon as we serve, even if it be a dog or the most ill-conditioned of our fellows, we begin to love. And to love is a happiness of which no outside happening can rob us. There are religious people miserable in their domestic relationships, and that simply because they are ignor-

ing plain laws. They resent the neglects, the failure of appreciation of themselves by wife or husband or child. Alas! they are handling their happiness by the wrong end and spoiling it in the process. Let them feel first of all and exercise to the full their privilege of giving; let them do their whole duty of serving to these seeming unthankful ones. In the act itself a new surprise of inner delight springs up, and soon the brightness of it will be reflected from those on whom its radiance strikes.

That this is the way and the only way to a really successful life is further evidenced when we consider the developments to which it leads. In the course of a man's career all manner of things—subsidiary existences, one may say—arise, culminate and decay within him. His bony skeleton has reached its maximum at twenty. His muscular system is at its fullest power before he is thirty, and shows a speedy decline afterwards. Intellectual force tends to diminish with the advance in years. The passions have their flowering time and their decay. Certain phases of mental and emotional interest exhaust themselves and cede their place. And then some people tire. Goethe speaks of an acquaintance who was

weary of seeing the green of the springtime, and wished for a change of colour! Marcus Aurelius complains of the unvarying spectacle of the world which goes on exhibiting the same round of things, whether you live to be twenty or a hundred. It is the easiest thing in the world to make life a weariness. The selfish, the indulgent and the idle are certain of the achievement.

But along the line that working Christianity has opened we escape these wearinesses and these disgusts. With perfect insight did Vinet describe Christianity as "the eternal youth of the human race." The practice of it gives the secret of a perpetual inner vitality. It makes life endlessly interesting. For amid all other decays the soul under its nurture is ever consciously growing. The blows of circumstance are felt as furthering its life. It infallibly accumulates wealth, for "the only real wealth," according to the sane definition of Ruskin, "consists in noble and happy human beings." As the years pass and the fruits of the discipline show themselves, the life prospect becomes illimitable. There seem no bounds either to the growth of the receptive capacity or to the spiritual force which pulses

in on it from the unseen. More and more does the surface widen on which the sunbeams play. And the last act, in which the soul accepts death itself as part of this widening process, is its greatest venture of faith. For it proclaims the seeming end to be only the next step in "the furtherance of life."

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