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THE RANGE

OF

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

BEING THE TWENTY-EIGHTH FERNLEY LECTURE

DELIVERED IN HULL, JULY, 1898

BY

RICHARD WADDY MOSS

CLASSICAL TUTOR, DIDSBURY COLLEGE

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CHARLES H. KELLY

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1898

To

"all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness."

"The God of peace, . . . make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."

PREFACE

THE following pages are a lecture, not a treatise, being suggestive and practical rather than exhaustive and complete. Christian experience is as manifold as is human temperament on the one hand, or the gifts of God's grace on the other. The lecturer has endeavoured to note merely a few of the directions in which thought may be profitably turned, with a view at once to the glorification of God for the bounty of His provision for the soul, and to the nourishment of a spirit of devotion and hopefulness amongst the people of God.

DIDSBURY COLLEGE, MANCHESTER,
September, 1898.

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THE RANGE OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER I

THE CHRISTIAN REGULATION OF THE BODY

Man, a unit of graded elements—The body generally over-indulged or over-restrained in religious prescriptions—Its sanctity, in the New Testament and in Christian doctrine—Its care, a religious duty within limitations—Asceticism has no religious quality in itself, whilst reasonable physical exercise has—The fatal enthronement of the body, and its due subordination—The body a servant, with the rights and obligations of service.

SINCE living man is a unit compounded of body, mind, and soul, and since religion is of such a kind that it cannot legitimately consent to any limitation of its control, the sufficiency and the comparative value of Christianity may be regarded as contingent upon its effective concern for the whole of man. His body is his least estimable, if not his least important, part. Its weakness is one of the greatest obstacles to continuous effort, its weight amongst the heaviest of his burdens, the urgency of its untamed impulses one of his frequent incitements to sin. As the

house of which his mind is a tenant for a time, it needs to be kept swept and garnished, fit for occupation. As the agent of a sovereign will, whatever reduces its alertness, or renders it sluggish and reluctant, disqualifies it to that degree for those functions which are appointed by nature and sanctioned by religion.

As a rule, the body has been wont to receive either too little or too much attention, as a part of the discipline which religion was supposed to require, or of the worship which it enjoined. Occasionally, when its relations to the present life have been ignored, physical indulgences that were alleged to await it hereafter have been turned into the strongest, if not the principal, motive to conformity. In some cases the encouragement and the gratification of its lowest lusts have been incidental to, or even conspicuous elements of, the prescribed ritual; in others the body has been persistently crushed, and its most wholesome needs denied, under some conception of the divine which made human pain a pleasure to a deity, or the crippling of a man's body a necessary stage towards saintliness. Excess of physical gratification led to its natural consequences of satiety, weariness that was intolerable, distrust and hopelessness; and the issue of the over-restraint was hardly better. The will or the mind broke down under the strain, and the man became a madman, a hypochondriac, or an impostor. It is probably correct of all religions except Christianity, and even of certain of its developments, that, whenever any cognisance has been taken of the body, its powers have been exhausted by over-indulgence, sterilised by a disproportionate asceticism, or, at least, man has been left without any quickened

sense of responsibility for its management, and has felt at liberty to do with it what he pleased.

The New Testament, on the other hand, both directly and by significant implication, reveals and emphasises the sanctity of the body, and guards against its neglect and its misuse. In a single paragraph in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. vi. 12–20), St. Paul enunciates four truths, which, if each was not entirely novel, had never before been linked together in so forcible and surprising a combination. The body is "for the Lord, and the Lord for the body"—His for service, as He is the body's for indwelling. Our bodies are "members of Christ"—not merely organs of His thought and will, but "limbs" of His, designed to move and act in tuneful accord with His every wish. With such a dignity is the body invested, that against it, as against everything that is divine in its essence or claims, man may even sin. The body, again, "is a temple of the Holy Ghost"; and since so august a Being condescends to inhabit it, and to make His sanctuary there, the basis upon which the final appeal rests is more than adequate: "Glorify God therefore in your body."

Elsewhere the same apostle shows his respect for the body by exalting it into an emblem of the church, deemed by Christ so honourable and so highly to be esteemed, that He "purchased" it "with His own blood" (Acts xx. 28). For the sake of His body, "which is the church" (Col. i. 24), the opportunity for a self-denial that can be compared with "the afflictions of Christ" is spoken of as a matter for thanksgiving. The climax of a passage in which the exaltation of Christ is exhibited in its graded

glories is the fact that He is "head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 22, 23). All the gifts and ministries of the church are "unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 12).

But in the doctrine of the incarnation may be found a yet more striking indication of the respect with which the Christian religion regards the human body. If it was worthy to be assumed by Christ, it cannot conceivably be a right object of contempt, and every abuse of it is a desecration. By becoming bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, our Lord touched the whole physical nature of man with the sceptre of His favour, and made it meet, or recognised its meetness, to be linked with the divine. It was because "the Word became flesh" (John i. 14), that He was able to dwell among us, and we to behold His glory. The manifestation was transcendent, and is subduing the world; the instrument by which it was effected is invested in the process with abiding dignity, value, and significance. Christ is its saviour (Eph. v. 23); and amongst the blessings which He secures for man is "our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. viii. 23).

The body having been selected by Christ for such honour, its care within right limits becomes naturally a matter of religious obligation. What exactly are those limits is nowhere expressly stated in Scripture, which, though not entirely silent concerning them, leaves their determination chiefly to the reason and conscience. It is possible to imagine circumstances in which the demands of the body would have to give way before higher claims, and its subjection to a strain beyond what considerations of

health warranted has on rare occasions been defended, not unsuccessfully, on the ground of the exigencies of a pressing duty or the constraint of an enthusiastic love. But these are exceptional instances, which cannot be brought under obvious and general law; and when they arise they must be settled by each man for himself, with due recognition of the responsibility of decision. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. xiv. 5) is the rule that applies to such perplexities as involve differences of practice with similar purity of motive; and against a plea of full assurance expostulation may proceed, but condemnation must be withheld.

Within these real, if variable, limits the Christian religion seems to require, and certainly secures, that the body should be neither over-indulged nor over-restrained. Inasmuch as the laws of health are laws of God, methods by which He has ordained that the body should be kept in the fittest condition for effort or use, those laws find their highest sanction in religion, and under its influence produce their best results. To that the experience of the insurance societies and the bills of mortality are a sufficient witness. Whatever may be the exact meaning of "severity to the body" in the difficult passage, Colossians ii. 23, evidently St. Paul does not in any way identify the process with religion, but ventures rather to speak with some contempt, and classifies it with self-imposed and superfluous services. The severe treatment which the soldier metes out to his body by exposing it to hardship,[1] or the student by ignoring its claims,[2] may be justified by the results; but the un-

[1] Lysias, *Or. Fun.* 25; Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* iii. 7. 18.

[2] Plutarch, *Moralia*, p. 137.

sparing repression of the body has inherently no religious quality at all. Essentially indifferent, like circumcision or the eating of meat, discipline becomes valuable or worthless in the light only of the ulterior ends for the sake of which it is practised.

On the other hand, in regard to the due exercise of the body, the New Testament is far from taking the corresponding position that physical exercise in itself is of no account. On certain conspicuous occasions the Bible has been quoted as favouring athleticism, which it certainly does not condemn, so long as the body is not worshipped, or its development turned into a substitute for religion. Scripture recurs to the arena and the gymnasium for some most effective symbols; it exhibits the same natural laws as presiding alike over the growth of the body and the graces of the soul, the secret of self-control not differing much in respect of human effort from that of agility: and in one place it recognises, expressly if perhaps not heartily, the benefit of physical culture in itself. There is a little doubt whether "bodily exercise" in 1 Timothy iv. 8 relates to gymnastic exercises proper, or to some discipline of an ascetic character akin to modern training; but in either case it is the external body that is in view, its muscles that are being exerted or prepared for exertion; and upon such exercise the judgment is that it "is profitable," although the qualification, "for a little" purpose or time, is immediately added. A religion that enjoins ministry to the physical needs of others, and scorns the man who says to the poor, "Depart in peace," yet gives "them not those things which are needful to the body" (Jas. ii. 16), cannot be accused of neglecting or dishonouring the body.

In it,—its life or death, its bonds or freedom,—Christ may be "magnified" (Phil. i. 20). In it, "the dying of Jesus" may be borne about, and "the life also of Jesus may be manifested" (2 Cor. iv. 10). The brands of Jesus on the body (Gal. vi. 17) are warrant enough for warning away every disposition on the part of others to question, or thwart, or annoy. And since the body is capable of rendering such service, religion, though neither committing nor consenting to the blunder of exalting the servant above the master, is not reluctant to give the servant its due measure of credit, attention, and care.

There is however a sad discovery which no man is long in making, that his body is not easily kept in its proper place of subordination. Its appetites are strong, often clamorous for indulgence or for mastery,—the appetite for inglorious ease, the lust of the flesh, the instincts that periodically rebel, and the senses that are permanently impatient. For all these the Christian religion provides due means of restraint; and the adequacy of the control has been shown, as it may again, in an experience that denies none of the legitimate cravings of the body, permits no extravagance or rebellion on the part of any of its powers, and even encourages it to exercise itself in the service of God and His people. In Galatians vi. 7, 8, the teaching assumes a general form, though not without allusion to that special vice of selfishness which is unfailingly present in sins of the flesh. The nature of the soil, in moral as in natural husbandry, determines in part the quality of the harvest; and "he that soweth unto his own flesh," making its gratification the design and aim of his sowing, "shall of

the flesh reap corruption." Blighted grains, pellets of blackened and disappointing dust, and not the good wheat of the kingdom, must be expected by every one who makes the indulgence of the senses the law of his life.

In the Epistle to the Romans (viii. 5–13), the same conclusion is stated even more sharply, with some of the reasoning upon which it is based, and with logical remorselessness and cogency. To enthrone the body and let it rule is of necessity fatal; "for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die." To subdue it and make it die is the secret of real life; for "if by the spirit ye mortify the deeds" (literally, the doings: *i.e.* if ye check, frustrate, and bring to nought the incipient actions of the body, and keep it continually under stern authority), "ye shall live." The writer of those words indicates elsewhere (1 Cor. ix. 27) in his own case exactly what he means. The incorruptible crown is in view before him; and he says, "I buffet my body,"—beat it to shape and use, compel it by blows of the fist to serve as a pliable instrument of religious purposes,—"and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected."

If the Christian religion does not on the one hand look with favour upon the maltreatment of the body, it does not on the other surrender to the body. To the sin that is in it, no grace is extended. In accordance with its precise function as an organism or a collection of appliances, it is bound down to its position of subordination, and there both guarded against misuse and compelled to serve its end. There can be no reasonable doubt that within the sphere of Christian civilisation, and the more fully as the Christian elements in civilisa-

tion have gathered force, the lawful rights of the body and their limitations have been recognised and respected as they have been recognised nowhere else. It is now a matter of almost uniform observation, that the humanitarian work of the world is best done under Christian influences. Humanitarianism itself is indeed a product of Christianity; and some of its most popular movements may be said to date their initial success from the time when they entered formally into alliance with the Christian faith. In personal experience too it has been found again and again, that the grace of God in Christ gives a man mastery over passions and lusts that refuse to yield to any form of human power, and makes the body an obedient, if sometimes a hard-pressed, servant of the consecrated will. In all the churches, and nowhere else with the same facility and to the same degree, men find it possible to present their "members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. vi. 13).

CHAPTER II

THE CHRISTIAN REGULATION OF THE MIND

The mind, of higher relative value than the body—Its natural powers are exaggerated in rationalism, and overlooked in agnosticism—Its actual limitations, as witnessed in experience, and as recognised in Scripture—It cannot by itself fill up the natural conception of God, or foretell the events of the near or the distant future, or read the final destinies—The greatest breaches with reason are to be met with in the philosophies or the counsels of practical duty—The principal reasons why a similar charge has been laid against Christianity are the ambiguity of the term impossible and the occasional extravagance of the mystics—The Christian religion, when rightly viewed, proves favourable to culture—Scripture appeals directly for the exercise of the mind, implicitly requires it, and supplies both necessary and worthy objects of thought—The future is sufficiently revealed—The alliance between religion and reason, as a matter of history—Religion and education—The tendency of non-religious thinking to melancholy, contrasted with the effects of allying reason with religion.

Of man, however, the body is in many respects his least important part. The New Testament frequently refers to its low relative value, as, for instance, in the great hymn to the Praise of Love, "If I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 3). That the mind, heart, and soul are its superiors is a common theme of poets and novelists; and that the Christian religion should provide for these faculties yet more abundantly is but natural. Religion accordingly

directs and employs the activities of sense, supplies the will and the fundamental emotional powers with stimulus and with appropriate objects of action, and presents to the mind a theory of the universe, of which parts transcend though they satisfy the reason, and of which no part is inconsistent with the rest or with the necessary postulates of thought.[1] Reason is neither contradicted nor flattered, but its limitations as human and finite are remembered and respected. It receives truths which it wants, and has presented to it subjects of inexhaustible interest, in the contemplation of which lies the secret of perpetual intellectual progress.

The treatment thus accorded by religion to the reason is in strict harmony with the nature of the latter and with its capabilities. By rationalism reason is assumed to be competent to find out God, and to formulate a sufficient theory of anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Agnosticism goes to the other extreme, denying alike the power of the mind to frame any positive idea of the unseen, and in the absence of sensible evidence its right to conjecture. Christianity, not forgetting that reason is a faculty of man and therefore a sharer in his imperfections, does not expect too much from it, and is patient with its hypotheses and blunders; but at the same time bears in mind its divine origin and its quasi-divine functions, and consents to its continuing in theology the process it pursues in natural science, and to its passing in due

[1] Cf. W. James, *The Will to Believe*, pp. 125–133, for some suggestive and vigorous remarks on the relation of a religious philosophy to the departments of the mind.

measure from the visible elements to the laws that regulate them, and to the Lawgiver.

With the rationalistic position the Christian Scriptures, which are professedly a revelation needed by man, have of necessity little sympathy. To add that human nature, were it not for its weakness and the inconsistency of its vanity, would also have little sympathy, would not be a serious exaggeration. Each of the physical sciences themselves might be described as consisting of a small nucleus of truth embedded in an encompassing sphere of mystery. In whatever direction the mind advances, in studying itself or the things external to itself, the steps taken with confidence are comparatively few, the barriers through which it can barely see are close and high. As the very bases of its reasoning, this faculty has to be contented with inductions that are imperfect, with assumptions that baffle demonstration. Only by the keenest watchfulness can it prevent its methods from becoming faulty, or its apparatus from being misused. Whilst into the realm of the seen it can penetrate only a little way, certain manifestations of force puzzle and defy it, the secret of life is unapproached, and the mind remains a perplexity even to itself. What it has found out, and apparently what it can find out, bear only a small proportion to what it has failed, and apparently must fail, to find out; and with every new advance in knowledge, the limitations of its functions and of its power become the more conspicuous.

The recognition of this qualified competence of the mind as itself both finite and divine, touching in its origin the highest sources and the lowest, and partaking

of the qualities of both, rules its treatment by Christianity. The mind is not de-rationalised or crushed, but is confined within its proper sphere, and there encouraged to effort and progress. Every human faculty has its legitimate office and use; and so far is religion from denying prerogatives to reason, that every help it can render is required, and, according to Bishop Butler, even the right of judgment concerning revelation is conceded. There are grounds indeed upon which theology, or the systematised truths of religion, might be regarded as a rationalisation of the universe, as making its order and history intelligible; and this is a process in which such royal investiture is put upon the reason, that the temptation to assume imperial rank becomes a frequent danger, imperilling alike religion and reason. The latter consequently has to be kept in its proper place,—a place of dignity indeed, but also of such a degree of humility as corresponds with its intrinsic inadequacy.

In several respects these limitations of the reason come to the front in the teaching of Scripture. Elihu considered himself a wise and well-informed man, but confessed that "by reason of darkness" (Job xxxvii. 19) no speech of his could set forth in order "the wondrous works of God": adding, "The Almighty, we cannot find Him out" (xxxvii. 23). In one of those magnificent passages elicited from His inner consciousness by the needs of men, our Lord speaks royally,—"All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27). For

majesty, for ample and reverential effectiveness, St. Paul never associated his reader more closely with himself in worship than when he wrote of "the blessed and only Potentate; . . . who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable: whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power eternal" (1 Tim. vi. 15, 16). The very words pulsate with awe, and "the angels veil their faces whilst they gaze."

But it is not merely in regard to the knowledge of God that the necessary weakness of the human mind has to be confessed. To it that which is to be is dark, and no conclusions from the past enable the secrets of the future to be read. Each day has its sufficiency of evil (Matt. vi. 34), just as for each day there is provided a sufficiency of grace; but the man of shrewdest wit is unable even to conjecture of what kind the evil will be, and upon what part of the life or purpose of the soul it will fall. Our hopes gather in rich promise, and are scattered. Ambitions that are right and worthy have to be renounced. The incoming tide of circumstance rolls up to our feet the unexpected and the baffling, and too often pours into the heart the overwhelming and the hopeless. Weakness and failure close careers that were discreetly chosen; or an overlooked incident disturbs an entire calculation, and throws the whole system of object and means out of gear. To withhold the prayer to see the distant scene is self-denying, but superfluous, for each to-morrow is shrouded in its own thick cloak of darkness. In some mood of prophetic vision the clouds may lift for a moment, but the next they come down again upon the pathway, and make every step uncertain and hazardous. Whether it is a

badge of man's frailty or a consequence of his freedom, the nearness of his mind's horizon is a discovery he soon makes: and if he retain much confidence in his power to foretell the future, the basis of his confidence must be sought amongst the vagaries of human vanity and not amongst the warrants of experience.

Whilst reason is unable to discern the immediate future, or to trace its events in their natural sequences, to unaided vision the periods beyond are even more obscure. Many practical benefits would follow, if the old request were granted, "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is" (Ps. xxxix. 4): but the recurring urgency of the desire is itself a witness to the limitation of the reason, and the moment and manner of his death remain a standing uncertainty to every man. And "who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?" (Eccles. vi. 12.) "He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them" (Ps. xxxix. 6). To insure permanence for some of his plans, civilisation has invented an artificial system of the utmost completeness; but its complexity is such that in its application the best experts occasionally blunder, and no degree of skill can eliminate every conflicting element, or reduce the ambiguities to absolute distinctness. Moreover, there are matters of far greater importance than those for which a measure of stability is secured by law; and for these the most exact guide of which the reason can avail itself is a theory of probabilities, where the problems are chiefly puzzles and the results only approximately correct.

If, despite the help of all the sciences, the mind cannot

unravel or pre-determine events close at hand, it is not surprising that dark shadows lie upon the remote judgment and the final destinies. Whether indeed there will be a future judgment is claimed as an open question by some, denied as a postulate or an inference of reason by others. The conception is present in some form in almost every mythology, but generally with accompaniments so grotesque as to repel the mind in proportion to its maturity. Where even on such a ground as the incompatibility of desert and recompense in this life, the idea of a re-adjustment hereafter has been proclaimed a necessity of thought, the idea has had to be left unclothed; or if the expansion has been attempted, the world has welcomed the product, or ignored it, as the play of a free fancy. Whether the passage refers, according to the older interpretation, to the felicities of heaven, or more directly, according to the context, to all the wealth of the provision which God has made in Christ for man, there is no ground whereon the statement can be disputed, that "whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him" are "things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man" (1 Cor. ii. 9). The physical senses, the heart in its aspirations, the mind with its methods,—the grace and the peace of God transcend them all, and so do the joy and the woe which future destiny will unfold. It "passeth knowledge" is the verdict which every Christian pronounces upon many a matter that revelation brings before him, and which every sincere man pronounces upon his religious belief, or the belief that religion offers him, whenever he tries to define it. His reason carries him on every

excursion to a certain point, but fails by itself beyond. Its dignity, its place in the organised comity of the man, the magnificence of its achievements, require that it be treated by religion with courtesy. Its only partial mastery of practical life, its habit of outstripping scientific evidence, its proved inability to predict the future from the history of the past, its liability to distortion, and many another defect, forbid that reason should be taken as the supreme and final guide in the things of God or the things of the soul.

The complaint has sometimes been made that religion, or at least theology, involves the reason in contradictions, and tyrannically demands from it the acceptance of discordant propositions. Whether such a complaint would not lie better against some of the counsels of practical duty and some of the more highly commended philosophies, is open to consideration. In the emergencies wherein a man is bidden to take the bull by the horns, the process may be convenient and effective, but can hardly be said to be rational. The direction pays no heed to reason, because reason has discredited itself by silence or failure. In the state of nature again, and in the relations of the nations, force, which is entirely unreasonable, is the final arbiter. The philosophies also are wont to figure as the most perfect productions of the human mind, and reason and reason alone is claimed to have operated in their construction. There are however some curious doctrines in the philosophies, ancient and modern. One of them (Stoicism), contrary to the belief of the greatest of the poets, makes much depend upon names. According to it, life is full of evil: and the evil, as long as

it is called by that name, will press upon and pierce the heart. An arbitrary change of terminology at once puts the matter right: and if evil be but resolutely named good, happiness is alleged to follow. If that be so, words are much more than counters; as their multitude is popularly supposed to be a concealment of the absence of thought, their inappropriateness may be philosophically pleaded as a contradiction of experience. But it has been reserved for more recent times to present to the ordinary man, as the masterpiece of the thought of the ages, a system which rests in part upon the strange principle of the identity of different things. There are sections of Hegelianism through which can be traced the steps of reason in its sobriety and in its triumph; there are other sections which no disciple or expositor has yet succeeded in rendering intelligible, and in the presence of which the mind can only stand aghast. Theology contains certain truths that tax human language for their expression, and go beyond anything that reason alone might have been expected to discover; but for incoherence and absolute breach with reason, recourse must be had to some of the maxims of prudence or to some of the speculations of philosophers.

Apart from the necessary transcendency of many theological conceptions and inferences, there are perhaps two main reasons why this reproach has attached itself especially to the Christian creed. Both involve carelessness of language on the part of good men; but the one must be sought amongst the apologists, the other amongst the mystics.

There is an old paradox, *Credo quia impossibile*, ascribed

often to Augustine, but more correctly to Tertullian,[1] which is a not unfair representation of the way in which the mysteries of the faith have occasionally been referred to. But an impossibility may be so called either in virtue of an intrinsic quality, or on account of the limited ability of the person or faculty concerned. In the latter sense alone has the word any application within the sphere of Christian thought. Reason, as the faculty of a finite man, must partake of his imperfections: as he rises towards God, it must rise with him; but at present the distance of his separation from God is the measure also of its defects as an instrument of thought. To call upon reason to accept contradictions would be criminal; but to offer it beliefs which are in the line of its own advance,—additions to and not confusions of its knowledge, means by which what it surmises becomes certain or what it knows is unified,—is to treat it in a way that is congruous alike with its own character and with the best known methods of education.

The other cause is to be found in the extravagance of phrase in which mystics of the extreme school have sometimes indulged. When men multiply such paradoxes as that nothing is credible except the inconceivable, nothing near except the remote, nothing so visible as the unseen,[2] they may be talking a language that is plain to the initiated, but they cannot complain if the unimaginative are mystified and the unsympathetic repelled. Ecstasy

[1] Cf. *De Carne Christi*, sec. 4: "Credibile est, quia ineptum est; . . . certum est, quia impossibile."

[2] Instances of such statements are frequent in the mystical literature of the religious rhapsodists of Germany, and in the devotional writings of Englishmen who have come under its influence.

and incoherence are near neighbours; and in all periods of religious history, except the hard and the dry, there has been perplexity in the attempt to keep the mystical element within proper bounds, and, whilst rightly exercising it, to give no occasion to the enemy; when exaggerated, mysticism provokes the charge of unreasonableness, and spoils man's touch with practical duty; when it is shunned and neglected, the soul's wings fail of their widest extension, and the exhilarations of the upper air and of the nearest approaches to God are lost.

Whilst the restraint that religion puts upon reason is thus natural and legitimate, and in precise accord with the relative dignity of each, on the positive side the mind is encouraged to exercise itself, and is brought into contact with objects of knowledge, the most august of all and the most inexhaustible. That religion is favourable to intellectual culture of the truest kind and of the highest degree is so obvious, that the only cited exceptions to that law prove upon examination to involve a misapprehension on the part of the man who cites them as to the meaning either of religion or of culture. The former is identified with some ecclesiastical system or regulation; or the latter is reduced, until it implies no more than the easy activity of the mind in regard to some specialised branch or branches of knowledge. But inasmuch as religion claims all the sciences as its handmaids, and carries their ultimate conclusions into the presence of God for unification and for worship, its right practice involves no atrophy[1] of any part of the brain. The lower

[1] There are some significant confessions, from a religious as well as an artistic point of view, in Darwin's *Life and Letters*, i. 100–103, ii. 139.

intellectual tastes and the higher alike are gratified and directed, the most powerful educative stimulus is brought to bear, and the mind filled with orderly conceptions that at once purify it and promote its progress.

If it be objected that such a description of its effect is ideal, it must be remembered, on the other hand, that the failure of some religious men to reach an ideal is due solely to their own imperfections. And a method or a force is not wisely judged by its results in the hands of those who do not rightly use it. There are several passages of Scripture which directly call upon a man to employ and exercise his own mind, not only in devising his way, but in reflection and even in long and earnest study. It would not be difficult to collect from the book of Proverbs a series of passages that might fairly be entitled the Praises of the Intellect. "Happy is . . . the man that getteth understanding" (Prov. iii. 13), would fitly introduce or close them: and amongst them would occur such confident maxims as that "the heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge" (xv. 14), and such emphatic counsels as "Get understanding: . . . with all thou hast gotten get understanding" (iv. 5–7). "Let each man be fully assured in his own mind" (Rom. xiv. 5), points to a degree of conviction that can be reached only by a combination of mental processes. "Brethren, be not children in mind: howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men" (1 Cor. xiv. 20), is the kind of advice that is in place, not in a religion that discourages the exercise of the mind, but in the mouth of a man who had been brought up at the feet of the greatest teacher of his age. The same apostle prays for a people he loved, in

compact and highly charged phrase, that they might be "knit together . . . unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding" (Col. ii. 2), so that "the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" and "the mystery of God" might be open to them. To the disciple to whom he was most attached he wrote: "Consider," that is, give your mind to "what I say," in all its bearings, in its logical correctness and implications, and in every application to personal duty; and "the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things" (2 Tim. ii. 7). In his own spiritual life he was so far from admiring what is unintelligible, or desiring the diffused exaltation in which reason seems to be superseded and unfruitfulness follows, that he once wrote, "I speak with tongues more than you all: howbeit in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (1 Cor. xiv. 18, 19). Every manifestation of the Spirit of God, who is never the author of confusion, but whose methods are sometimes beyond though never against human knowledge, he would welcome; but by preference he chose the lowlier walks, where the mind was not compelled to linger behind, and the service was "reasonable" (Rom. xii. 1).

Nor is such teaching in the New Testament confined to St. Paul. In the Gospels anxious thought for the morrow is forbidden; but the miracles are themselves appeals to thought, and the primary object of the whole story is intellectual conviction with the faith that includes it. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews generally identifies himself with the persons he is counselling, and does not often address them directly and as apart from

himself. Two of the occasions when he ventures to do so are of interest in the present connexion. "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus" (Heb. iii. 1), he writes in the one case, using a word that denotes continuous observation and fixed attention. In the other passage (xii. 3), he chooses a word that is not found elsewhere in the New Testament,—a word denoting minute and detailed examination, the comparison of part with part, the kind of analysis that overlooks no particulars and misjudges none,—and thus constructs a verse that has many a time turned the disposition to complain into the glad sense of association with Christ and of fellowship in suffering: "Consider Him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against themselves, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls." In face of such a marvellous display of heroism, it may be said as fitly as at one of the scenes of catastrophe in the Apocalypse, "Here is the mind which hath wisdom" (Rev. xvii. 9). For "whoso is wise shall give heed to these things" (Ps. cvii. 43); and wise heed to the ways of God is the secret at once of well co-ordinated human knowledge, and of the emancipation of the soul from circumstance and from evil.

But not only in this way of instruction and appeal does the Christian religion show itself favourable to mental culture; it provides the mind with matters to think about, which both meet the mind's necessities, and form in no exaggerated phrase the crown of human knowledge. The fact of the Son's pre-existence from eternity could not conceivably have been discovered by the reason alone. That fact however makes the conception of a

personal God, ruling amid all the silences and solitudes that preceded the first creative fiat, intelligible and thinkable, supplying all the elements that are necessary to constitute personality, and preserving the mind from helpless entanglement in the degradations of materialism. The Trinity, the providence of God, the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection of Christ, the holiness of the universal Father and the sanctifying grace of His Spirit, and all the marvels and the efficiency of the mode which He has contrived for the perfecting of human character —such subjects of thought transcend all others in importance, attractiveness, inexhaustibility.

In every mind too, however it has been acquired, there is apparently a sense of the future, the ambiguities of which either haunt and baffle a man, or are resolved by some over-mastering conviction. There is probably no ingredient of natural consciousness more frequently present or more fruitful in its emotional effects than the contrasting brotherhood of expectancy and apprehension. The Christian religion alone provides men, not with guesses, but with certainties as to the otherwise unknown years that stretch illimitably forwards. Not only is incorruption brought to light in the Gospel, remaining no longer a fancy of the poets, an unsustained intuition, or an imperfect induction, but it assumes the form of an underlying conception, and is recognised as so certain that revelation takes no trouble to prove it, paying it the honour of unhesitating assumption. Other elements of stability follow. The human incidents of the future, and the play of man upon man and of fitness upon opportunity, are left unveiled: but it is known of a truth that Jehovah

is the God of the future, and that He will be present among His people with sufficient grace in every one of life's emergencies and surprises. And beyond the nearer future stretches an eternity the particulars of which are still hidden, although its ruling principles are stated with clearness and decision. "We know that we are of God" (1 John v. 19), "that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him" (iii. 2), that the Lord will "judge His people" (Ps. l. 4) and "do right" (Gen. xviii. 25); and such knowledge is strength and peace.

It is well for a man to equip his mind with the treasures of every language and the conclusions of every science, and to train it to easy action in regard to any perplexity that may present itself. It is well too for a man to know what death means, and what comes after death. Inasmuch as the Christian can do both, the superiority in fulness of intellectual advantage lies necessarily with him. The man who says, "I have gotten me great wisdom above all that were before me" (Eccles. i. 16), but "in much wisdom is much grief" (i. 18), who crushes down his religious faculties and refuses to allow them to help him to a single certainty about the future, that man, in regard to harmony and completeness of culture, must take a place beneath the saint who both explores the provinces of human knowledge, and exults in the assurance, "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be," but "we know that . . . we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). Christianity carries on and consecrates human culture, responding to the demands of the mind, and opening up new fields for its occupation, but never restraining

or coercing it except when it is beginning to wander from God.

There are moreover some matters of history which significantly illustrate the true relation of religion to reason. It is hardly fair to judge that relation by the extravagances of small and ephemeral sects, by the sneers of men whose opinion on any other subject no one would think of citing, or even by the blunders of ecclesiastical authorities under the joint influence of exclusiveness and fear. A factor in human progress may be misunderstood or for a time checked and frustrated, but it soon recovers, and never fails to produce at last its full effect. And in the large movements of history since Christ died, there can be no doubt that religion and reason have been in general alliance, or that much of the best work of the latter has been done at the incitement or with the encouragement of the former. In many of the masterpieces of ancient literature, religious impulse and intellectual gift, power of mind or play of fancy, wrought side by side; and whether the test of quantity or that of quality be applied, there have been few later ages concerning which the same might not be said. Still as of old, the finest thinking owes generally its inspiration, its guidance, or its issue to religion; and no atmosphere is so bracing to the wits as that of the Cross or the chamber of devotion. Of literary art, if it be permitted to grade its products, a perfect hymn is probably the finest gem; and the man who provides the people with adequate and timely words for their worship rules more spirits than any. Nor at present is any province of thought proving so attractive to the mind, so provocative of its exercise and skill, as

that which occupies the borderland between the sciences of observation and the domain of inspiration. To carry up to God the latest conquests of human knowledge, and bring nature and man into explicit relation with Him,—reason has no higher ambition, and all its steps in that career wait upon religion.

Between education and religion, at least within the circles influenced by the Scripture, the alliance has always been of the closest. An early passage in the Old Testament (Deut. vi. 7) binds upon the Jewish father the duty of instructing his sons in a law that touched human life at almost every point, thus investing the relationships of kindred with consecrating responsibility. Detailed regulations followed in the course of time, according to which schools were planted even in the smaller villages apparently as adjuncts to the synagogues, and the modern provisions for insuring attendance were anticipated.[1] The teacher who by way of eminence in Jewish literature is simply called Rabbi (Jehuda Hanasi) once said[2] that "the world exists only by the breath of school children"; and it was a maxim[3] which attracted approving comment, that "he who has learnt and does not impart to others disregards the word of God." Whilst secular education amongst the ancient Jews was thus religious in its origin and care, Christianity certainly did not divert men's energies into a different channel. On the contrary, there have been countries and times in which monastic schools have been almost the only schools; whilst fighting

[1] *Baba bathra*, 21; cf. Spiers, "School System of the Talmud," reprinted from the *Jewish Chronicle*.

[2] *Shabbath*, 119. [3] *Sanhedrin*, 99.

could be learned elsewhere, reading, and to a greater degree writing, could be learned nowhere else. Many of the older seats of learning were originally ecclesiastical foundations: they are now gradually ceasing in civilised countries to be sectarian, with gain to the religious elements that still enter into their constitution and largely control them. In Sunday schools the secular education, for the sake of which they were in part established, was by no means given from secular motives; and now that the need for it has ceased, the whole training is becoming religious and biblical. Even where the school is, as in a few places,[1] a wholly distinct organisation from the church, its officials and agents would be the first to disclaim the operation in themselves or upon their work of any higher motive than the love of God, and for His sake the love of the children. The function of education has been defined upon good authority[2] as the instruction of men in the utilisation of those sources of happiness which nature affords, with a view to their knowing "how to live completely." In the absence of religion no such function can be discharged, and every attempt to do so must leave a man's most urgent needs unsupplied and yearning. Theoretically, the co-operation of reason and religion is indispensable to the completeness of life: how well they have co-operated when the rights of each have been recognised, and the servant's work has been done as before the master's eye, the intellectual progress of the race is itself a witness.

[1] An arrangement of this kind is always to be deplored, as weakening the corporate agencies of the church, and imperilling the duties of communion on the part of the scholars.

[2] Mr. H. Spencer, as quoted in Lady Warwick's *Progress in Women's Education*.

It is not often that the mind apart from religion attains to any large, full, and abiding degree of satisfaction. Its persistent exercise has in some way become associated with a tendency to melancholy; and pessimism, which is never more than the passing mood of a religious man, is always apt to become the profession of the non-religious philosopher. One eminent writer,[1] whose experience can only be called Christian with a qualification, says that "the gloom of an eternal mourning enwraps, more or less closely, every serious and thoughtful soul, as night enwraps the universe." But to the Christian the gloom is only transitory, and the darkness of each brief night is soon pierced and broken up by the morning. Instead of being enwrapped in dulness, the more thoughtful his soul becomes, the more continuously does he walk in light, and the darkness overtakes him not (John i. 5, xii. 35). In one of his University Sermons (1859), Dr. Pusey described his own experience towards the close of what he considered a long and tempted life. "For forty-five years," he said, "out of duty and not out of curiosity, I have read more of unbelief than most, in every form, in every province and district where it has made its assaults; I have read it until the flesh crept and the soul sickened: but our dear Lord's promise was fulfilled to me, 'If they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them,' and my safeguard was this — loyalty to, and I hope I may say, though all too poor, a love to our divine Master." In that mind at least there was no thickening gloom, but a strong and restful confidence, not far removed from certainty. "In all

[1] *The Journal Intime of H. F. Amiel*, trans. by Mrs. H. Ward, p. 102.

my study of the ancient times," wrote an historian to his friend,[1] "I have always felt the need of something, and it was not until I knew our Lord that all was clear to me: with Him there is nothing that I am not able to solve."

But nowhere does the satisfaction of the mind receive better expression than in the New Testament. Philip was the calculating apostle (cf. John vi. 7): with his arithmetical intellect balancing proofs against improbabilities, he once measured the demonstration that would leave no room for doubt, and with reverence and decision submitted his conclusion to Christ, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (John xiv. 8). There was yearning in his intonation, and in the grace of his Saviour the response to such yearning, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (xiv. 9). In Him, men are "enriched in all utterance and all knowledge" (1 Cor. i. 5), all life becoming illuminated with "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). The revelation of the holy Fatherhood, whose love is not slack nor His justice hard, is the supreme thought of man, a sufficient basis and inspiration for dutifulness, the pattern and the power for emancipation and for perfecting. The greatest of hymn-writers pictures Jacob as wrestling with God for the sure knowledge of His name, and as counting the cost less than nothing:

> Lame as I am, . . .
> I leap for joy, pursue my way,
> And as a bounding hart fly home,
> Through all eternity to prove
> Thy nature and Thy name is Love.

[1] Johann von Muller to Karl Bonnet. Cf. Luthardt, *Apologet Vortr.* Eng. trans. p. 363.

And the greatest of the apostles finds words too weak for the utterance of his rejoicing wonder, and turns to worship: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! . . . To Him be the glory for ever" (Rom. xi. 33–36). When the mind, like the heart, of man, has found its way into the inner shrine where God reveals Himself to His worshippers, it can do no other than acknowledge, "Where Thou art is heaven."

CHAPTER III

RELIGION AS A CO-ORDINATING POWER IN MAN

The faculties and functions of man are graded alike in Scripture and in common opinion—In religion itself there is a recognised hierarchy of motives—Self-preservation, the strongest instinct, sometimes subjected by natural means, but in religion steadily kept in a subordinate position—Judaism anticipated this grading, which becomes the rule of Christianity—The influence of religion in other domains of morality—It restrains the vices and purifies the social instincts, as no other agency can—It supplies the individual with new motives and virtues, extends the range of duty, exalts its sanctions, and makes of man a self-governed unity —Testimony of Scripture.

As to the relation of religion to the other faculties or functions of man, there is an equally singular agreement between Scripture and observation. According as the parts and powers are graded by every one who is not himself misled in judgment by sensualism, so are they graded in the philosophy of the Bible, and in the experience of the Christian. It is commonly acknowledged, for instance, that the pleasures of the mind are higher than those of the body, and that there are some pleasures, of altruistic satisfaction or ethical fruitfulness or divine communion, which are higher still. A scale of values, that did not begin with the instincts most deeply rooted in the flesh, and gradually rise through the mental and social faculties to moral judgment, to conscience, to

aspiration after God, would be self-condemned in the opinion of most men. Similarly of the various pursuits in which men indulge, there may be rivalry for the lowest place between sensuousness and the vindictive infliction of injury upon others; nevertheless it is curious that the dishonour attached to the latter is itself historically a product of religious even more than of social considerations, whilst there is but little unwillingness to concede the solitude of the supreme position to religion, as the loftiest and sovereign pursuit of man. The only adequate sanction of philanthropy, of the modern humanitarianism that spends itself upon the sick and needy, of the sacrifice of personal comfort or convenience for the succour of others, is to be found in religion, and being found is almost everywhere applauded and commended, if not everywhere obeyed. Conscientiousness, again, has been described as the prime quality of scientific work, which is thus indebted for its successes and progress in part to the mind, in part to something more important still. In the hierarchy of man, an opinion which is practically unanimous puts the body at the bottom, fills the intermediate places variously, and with the soul crowns the scale.

Within the various religions themselves, and amongst the adherents of each, a grading not altogether unlike may be traced. As they advance in refinement, the eagerness for a Mohammedan paradise ranks by common consent below even the desire to flee from the wrath to come. The anticipation of fellowship with the saints and with the dead, and of all the social joys that fill the pictured future, recognises its mistress in the absorbing presence of God. And the full recovery of His likeness, in spotlessness from

sin and in the instinctive imitation of His loving care for the needy, stands with good and unquestionable right at the head of all spiritual ideals as "pure religion and undefiled" (Jas. i. 27).

Of the instincts rooted in the body, the strongest is generally allowed to be that of self-preservation; and accordingly he who has had the longest and most intimate acquaintance with human nature from the beginning, who has made it his special study and himself the most expert mental philosopher out of heaven, is represented as holding that "skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life" (Job ii. 4). Yet so far has the training of man advanced, that in his engrossment with other things he is able to forget and ignore this instinct, to repress and silence it in the presence of what he now calls higher claims, and even under religious constraints to scorn and contemn its cravings. Any great ambition is enough to bring the first result to pass, or any occupation or study in which a fair degree of interest is felt. Military discipline, professional honour, social opinion, the pressure of any masterful purpose, will accomplish the second. In both these cases the sacrifice of the body is accepted, not gladly, but sternly as a necessity that must be faced, or carelessly as a possible incident to which a strong man may be indifferent. It is only in religious experience that the body's protests against the apparent ways of God are instantly rejected, and its clamours to live in dishonour exultingly checked. There is a sullen regretfulness with which the acknowledgment is sometimes made, that it is possible to do worse things than die; and occasionally the voice of a brusque sage may be heard counselling others

to count renunciation better than life. Possibly there is more indignation than peace in Job's famous saying, "Though He slay me, yet will I wait for Him: nevertheless I will maintain my ways before Him" (Job xiii. 15). But the intonation of Habakkuk's words is a sufficient key to his spirit: "Though the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls"—*i.e.* though famine stares me in the very face, and the body sickens for want of sustenance and dies: "yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab. iii. 17, 18).

It is however in the New Testament that the minor importance of the body and of its life receives fullest expression. There are few of our Lord's paradoxes or plays upon words that are repeated as many as six times in the Gospels; and the exceptional repetition is an indication alike of prominence in His teaching and of attractiveness to His disciples. Six times[1] He is reported as saying, with little variations that modify the emphasis but accentuate the central truth, "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it." The life of the body and the true life of the man are thrown into contrast; the former must not be over-valued, and may well and wisely be forfeited, if thereby the latter is secured. It is a doctrine that shifts the centre of gravity from the resolution to live long to the fixed purpose of living rightly. Not to seek death, but to welcome it in preference to any relapse

[1] Matt. x. 39, xvi. 25; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24, xvii. 33; John xii. 25.

from God, becomes accordingly the rule of Christian duty.

Anticipations of that rule may be met with in Judaism, which is full of types of religious experience as well as of Christian privilege. The second book of the Maccabees must not be regarded as strictly historical, but at least it reveals the temper of the times in which it was written. Eleazar was tempted to deny God, but determined "to die willingly and nobly a glorious death for the reverend and holy laws," and "went straightway to the instrument of torture." When he was at the point to die, he "groaned aloud and said, To the Lord, that hath the holy knowledge, it is manifest that, whereas I might have been delivered from death, I endure sore pains in my body by being scourged; but in soul I gladly suffer these things for my fear of Him" (2 Macc. vi. 28, 30). A good mother, nameless but never to be forgotten, saw her six sons done brutally to death before her eyes; and when her seventh, the youngest, was plied in his agony with promises of wealth and high estate if he would but recant, she steeled her yearning heart, and called to her darling "in the language of her fathers, My son, have pity upon me that carried thee in my womb, and, . . . proving thyself worthy of thy brethren, accept thy death, that in the mercy of God I may receive thee again with thy brethren" (vii. 27–29). But nothing in the Apocrypha can compare, in pathos and convincing demonstration, with the great roll of the dead in the Epistle to the Hebrews. A few names are singled out, simply a few from an innumerable multitude of crowned men, "of whom the world was not worthy." Here they had no rights of citizenship; and

the body was a tenement of clay, which, if it did not serve their purposes and still more if it frustrated their purposes, the tenant was ready to leave for his home. "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were slain with the sword" (Heb. xi. 37); and the story of their deaths, instead of being a dirge, is a militant and triumphant strain, that has stirred men ever since to loyalty and heroism.

St. Paul knew life on most of its sides, wealth and poverty, success and failure, authority and impotence. He had been the hope of his nation, and became its scorn. In this life and its opportunities he never lost interest; yet except for its opportunities there seemed to him little reason for a desire to live. "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened" (2 Cor. v. 4), was his mood when he thought of the glories beyond. The groan soon ceases to be heard, when he thinks about God; and he adds, "We are of good courage, and . . . make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him" (v. 8, 9). The same contending emotions, with the same tranquil issue, find expression elsewhere. "I am in a strait betwixt the two," he writes to the Philippians (i. 23, 24), "having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake." At Miletus the future was altogether threatening: "The Holy Ghost testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me"; and yet the apostle continues, "I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course" (Acts xx. 23, 24). The martyrologies, the records of evangelical devotion, the divine register

of the motives and hindrances of the godly, are all full of instances where the servant has not been unwilling to be like the Master, and has so triumphed over the urgency of the instinct of self-preservation as to consent to die.

In the case of other instincts too, and of the whole domain of natural morality, the same truth holds good. Religion, in actual experience, checks the vices together with the corruption they tend to produce, exalts the motives, extends the range of duty, introduces the higher graces, preserves the rightful supremacy of the soul, lifts man up to God. By non-religious methods habits can be fixed and character formed; but every character is the better for consecration, and otherwise the perfect co-ordination of its parts is impossible.

Of the restraining and quickening influences of religion a better witness than M. Taine could hardly be desired. The philosophy of his earlier life was, even according to his admirers, somewhat crude and mechanical; and with all his intellectual culture and progress, he never rose far above the earth-born mists that thicken the lower air. After accumulating in many hundred pages the indications of the factors that had worked for centuries in the development of a great country, he states his conclusion [1] thus: "We can now reckon the value of what Christianity has brought into modern society; how much modesty, sweetness, and kindliness; what it there maintains of honesty, good faith, and justice. Neither the reason of philosophers nor the culture of artists and men of letters, nor yet even the sentiment of honour, feudal, military, and chivalrous,—

[1] Quoted in an article on Henri Taine in the *Quarterly Review*, July, 1897, pp. 211, 212.

not any code, or administration, or government, can, in this, its function, avail if it be wanting. There is nothing except Christianity which can hold us back on our native incline, or prevent the gradual slipping downward by which, incessantly and with all its weight, our race goes back into the depths; and to-day the ancient Gospel is still the best auxiliary that social instinct can call to its aid." Had the writer been entirely free from prepossessions, he would probably have called the Gospel the approved guide and governor, rather than the auxiliary of the social instinct.

With him there are few historians or moralists who are not in substantial agreement, and his main conclusion is supported by all history. Plans and theories of government have been tried one after another, some of them professedly the cream of human science. Sparta of old, and the French Revolution in later times, sufficiently show how they work and to what they lead. Readjustments of opportunity or of relation, now with a view to usher in some socialistic millennium, and now at the bidding of some revived political school, have been made under every condition of advantage, and found wanting. Men can alter the incidence of taxation, they can provide careers for energy and promising investments for talents, and they can render it possible for some of the neglected rights of humanity to exercise themselves and obtain their own. Nevertheless it is the gentleman, in fustian or in broadcloth, and the lady, in silk or in mended rags, who sweeten society; and these are products, not of legislation and political sentiment, but of honour and conscience, which flourish and make themselves felt in exact proportion as religion is

refined and perfected. "Democracy," so Renan writes in one of his Letters, "has no discipline, and no moral ideal to impose." Religion is at once the antiseptic and the tonic of the human race; its reformation fills moribund States with new life, its presence and supremacy are the prime condition of human progress.

The community is only the larger arena, upon which the operation of great principles is seen in more complexity, though not necessarily in more distinctness, than on the stage of individual life. There are indications enough that religion can control and regrade the instincts of each man, and make of all the elements that constitute him a self-governed unity, equal in dignity to that of his origin, functions, and destiny. It supplies him with new virtues, and with new motives to virtue. For even if faint traces of humility, patience, and purity of intention can be found in the pre-Christian centuries, they were the adornment of only a few sages; whereas Christ popularised such qualities, exemplified them, and so effectually urged their cultivation upon men, that to-day no moralist would deny their merit, and no casual lounger in the market-place would like to be charged with lacking the last of them. If wrong be regarded as the breach of an impersonal law, the restraint is sometimes adequate, and sometimes may be made so by the fear of public opinion and the coercion of the magistrate. But when wrong is regarded as sin against a personal God, there is an internal restraint, mighty and irresistible, unless the belief is forgotten for a time. Duty, as being the expressed will of an external authority, may be done reluctantly: duty, as being the carrying out of the wish of an all-loving God,

would readily be transcended, if it could. To help and minister to the needy, the children of other people, the men who themselves fulfil no obligation, is superfluous and a work of supererogation, according to the civilisations into which the spirit of Christ has not gone forth. It becomes spontaneous and a gratification of soul to those who have heard a Saviour saying, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me" (Matt. xxv. 40). Thus in Christian experience the communications of the soul with the world outside are duly regulated, the free soul itself is brought into relation with the divine, no pure enjoyments or rational interests are denied it, and in union with the Holy Spirit its wise autonomy and its progress towards perfection are assured.

In the Scriptures there are many implications of this relative value of the parts of man, and many express directions as to the concentration of effort and culture upon the more important, to the repression, if necessary, of the others. "Keep thy heart with all diligence" (or, according to the margin, "above all that thou guardest"); "for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. iv. 23), is one of the counsels of wisdom. In the case of the Saviour there is a strain of teaching, stern and remorseless, which begins with the Sermon on the Mount, and recurs more than once in the subsequent ministry. "If thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee. . . . If thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee" (Matt. xviii. 8, 9). No quarter must be given to any organ or instinct that would separate a man from God. St. Paul was ready even to renounce an indulgence that might separate another man from God, and once wrote,

not in ecstasy, but with strong purpose, "If meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble" (1 Cor. viii. 13). Elsewhere, he argues that, whilst gifts of intellect and endowments of influence are good, there is a still more excellent way. "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing" (xiii. 1–3). St. John does not differ from him, though his temperament was different. "All that is in the world," he writes, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John ii. 16, 17).

CHAPTER IV

THE SECRET OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH

Health as the equilibrium of the instincts—The existence universally of the religious instinct—Its satisfaction possible only through religion, without which equilibrium and the resulting content cannot be reached—Change of view on the part of Mr. Romanes—Professor W. James on the wisdom of faith, and its relation to spiritual content—Happiness, according to Mr. P. G. Hamerton, and according to philosophy and Scripture—A poet's contrast between nature and man, true only when the equilibrium is unstable—Religion secures stability, and thereby calm and strength.

To speak of this proper graduation of the instincts and interests as the condition of the complete health and perfect life of man is not much more than a change of terms. The conception of health is generally very vague, and to express it with precision is not easy. The best or least objectionable definition is probably that which regards health as the condition of equilibrium[1] of the instincts, marked negatively by the absence of any severe tension and positively by physical ease and content. In religious experience, therefore, according to the stage which it has reached, the religious instinct must be duly equilibrated with the others, and the symptom and result will be the spiritual peace to which the New Testament in several passages makes emphatic reference.

[1] Cf. Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, ii. 379.

In writing thus of a religious instinct, an objection might be raised that the phraseology showed no close adherence to technical accuracy. It would be a sufficient reply that the mysteries of psychology are not at present under discussion, and that the term in question is used with the exact sense it bears in the extended conception of health. That there is in every man something religious, an aspiration upwards, a need and demand for communion with some unphenomenal person or power, a consciousness of the existence of an invisible world both above his own head and beyond his own life, does not really admit of doubt, and cannot seriously be contradicted. It has been detected in every tribe of savages; and the civilised men who have professed to be without it have generally, as the years passed, disclosed some private superstition that has put their boast to shame. There are indications in the fragment of autobiography[1] written by Charles Darwin in 1876, that he was never wholly without what he calls the religious sentiment; and in some of the variations of his belief, the sentiment deepened into conviction. Whenever a traveller has reported the discovery of a race in which there was alleged to be no discernible element of religion, his conclusions have had eventually to be revised. The man in whose thoughts God is not and has never been has still to be found, and amongst the fundamental and characteristic constituents of man may safely be placed a sentiment or instinct or need of religion.

This aptitude and yearning for God in the human breast being thus acknowledged, it follows that the religious

[1] Cf. especially *Life and Letters*, i. 309–312.

instinct must be fitly recognised and met before real health can be enjoyed, or the condition of content, the goal and aim of every function, be reached. If "the heart requires a God," nothing but a God will satisfy and tranquillise it. That it does so require, and is incapable of settled and full peace until it find Him, has been shown at length by Pascal,[1] and is attested by general experience. "The misery of man is great upon him" (Eccles. viii. 6); and under whatever mask he hide it, behind the mask—of frivolity or engrossment or unconcern—there is a heart more often heavy than light, with secret wounds for which the world has no healing balm.

Mr. G. J. Romanes published[2] pseudonymously, in 1878, a vigorous attack on theism, in the course of which he wrote, "I am not ashamed to confess that with this virtual negation of God the universe to me has lost its soul of loveliness." When he died in 1894, he left behind him a series of notes he had prepared for use in a projected work that was to have been entitled "A Candid Examination of Religion." These were afterwards published, and amongst them is the following:[3] "I know from experience the intellectual distractions of scientific research, philosophical speculation, and artistic pleasures; but am also well aware that even when all are taken together and well sweetened to taste, in respect of consequent reputation, means, social position, etc., the whole concoction is but as high confectionery to a starving man. He may

[1] *Pensées*, bk. i.

[2] *A Candid Examination of Theism*, by "Physicus," who in the preface describes the book as written "several years ago," but kept back for the benefit of "more mature thought."

[3] *Thoughts on Religion*, edited by Canon Gore, pp. 151, 152.

cheat himself for a time—especially if he be a strong man —into the belief that he is nourishing himself by denying his natural appetite: but soon finds he was made for some altogether different kind of food, even though of much less tastefulness as far as the palate is concerned." If the highest earthly satisfaction be gained, it soon "palls by custom"; and whenever "one end of distinction is reached, another is pined for. There is no finality to rest in, while disease and death are always standing in the background." That there is "a vacuum in the soul of man which nothing can fill save faith in God" is "unquestionably true." Thereupon Romanes proceeds to speak in glowing terms, themselves a witness to the rising of his own faith, of the happiness of religious, and especially of Christian, belief. "It is a matter of fact that besides being most intense, it is most enduring, growing, and never staled by custom. In short, according to the universal testimony of those who have it, it differs from all other happiness not only in degree, but in kind. . . . It has no relation to intellectual status. It is a thing by itself, and supreme." Spiritual content, therefore, in the eyes of a trained and distinguished man of science, an observer, and a logician, is strictly dependent upon and actually secured by religion.

The next witness may fitly be a philosopher by profession, in some departments of philosophy exceeded in ability and authority by few. Professor William James has made his contribution[1] to the settlement of the vexed question, whether life is worth living. The misery and woe of life are general and unmistakable. "In the

[1] In an address under that title, reprinted in *The Will to Believe*, pp. 32 ff.

deepest heart of all of us there is a corner in which the ultimate mystery of things works sadly." An optimistic temperament may feel joy in living, but temperaments and moods are fickle. Rousseau wrote of the nine years he spent at Annecy: "Happiness followed me everywhere; it was in no one assignable thing; it was all within myself; it would not leave me for a single instant": but in his later days he became "a prey to melancholy and black delusions of suspicion and fear." Here is a dismal message for man from James Thomson's *City of the Dreadful Night*—

> This life holds nothing good for us,
> But it ends soon and nevermore can be;
> And we knew nothing of it ere our birth,
> And shall know nothing when consigned to earth.

Weariness of life is one of the diseases often bred by reflection, by "too much grubbing in the abstract roots of things"; and, says Mr. James, reflection, if carried further, will oppose an effective remedy. He does not use theological terms, nor does he speak in the full-hearted and confident way of a greater philosopher, "I know Him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him" (2 Tim. i. 12): nevertheless he has not failed to discover that "pessimism is essentially a religious disease; . . . it consists in nothing but a religious demand to which there comes no normal religious reply." And his counsel is substantially, Let a man venture himself upon the religious truths which to science are unprovable, and assume on trust an unseen spiritual order; and though he will be able thereby to form no positive idea of the larger world that surrounds

the world of his present natural knowledge, there will be a qualified blessing, for faith "in an uncertified result" is often "the only thing that makes the result come true." In "the crepuscular depths of personality the sources of all our outer deeds and decisions take their rise. Here is our deepest organ of communication with the nature of things; and compared with these concrete movements of our soul, all abstract statements and scientific arguments—the veto, for example, which the strict positivist pronounces upon our faith—sound to us like mere chatterings of the teeth." The religious instinct vindicates itself at last, and the teacher's note becomes clear. Spiritual content and the faith that lives by religious truths are one and inseparable, the first growing as the second does, and withholding itself from every heart into which the latter is refused admission.

An artist may well be consulted next. The last book [1] of the late Philip G. Hamerton, published not long after his death, is devoted to the discussion of happiness and its secrets. But the tone of the book is melancholy, the pensive wisdom of the author elsewhere becoming now sombre, disappointed, regretful, as though his stoical self-sufficiency could no longer be maintained with ease or with hopefulness. The grip of a fatal disease was upon him as he wrote, and too much must not be expected of a man when he is walking the shadowed valley. But the book itself is, in its definitions, its argument, and its conclusion, an undesigned testimony to the close and vital relationship between happiness and religion. The former is defined as "that degree of satisfaction with our existence which, in

[1] *The Quest of Happiness.* London, 1897.

spite of minor vexations and disappointments, makes us willing to go on living as we are now living without any important change." In that sense of the word, a dog basking in the heat of a warm fire, or a cow chewing the cud in a lazy and sunlit meadow, may be commended as the best specimens and most inspiring examples of a successful life. Aristotle preferred to regard happiness as "the exercise of the faculties in the way of virtue"; and if that be correct, though but partially, it is clear that the maintenance of present external conditions is not a matter of the first moment. Hamerton again advises men to seek happiness as they do fortune or scholarship or skill, and to abandon ideals as material only fit for poetry, contracting their desires, and never yielding to any temptation to grasp the infinite. The method is consequently one of struggle and repression, in the application of which there can necessarily be little comfort. The reward is doubtful, for, whilst a man may find the world a tolerable place, Hamerton implies that, had he himself had the power, he would have created one with some differences. To make happiness dependent upon external conditions is thus manifestly to fail in our object.

There are two or three primary needs, the gratification of which, though not essential, is probably an aid to happiness. Amongst them are physical health, companionship with kindred spirits, and the means of simple living. But, on the other hand, there are sick people who seem pre-eminently happy, and poor people whose hearts are full of peace, and the lonely man is not always a man of sorrow. In Christian regulations express provision has been made for whatever need men have of mutual sympathy

and help; and by the use of the prescribed means spiritual health may be more easily maintained, and the soul quickened in its growth. But to enjoy life, the indispensable thing is that a man hold it lightly, and be comparatively indifferent to what it has the power to bestow or to take away. External circumstances come and go, and change endlessly; man needs to stand amongst them as lord, not subjecting himself to any of the things which "perish with the using" (Col. ii. 22). To do that, his religious instinct must be allowed full play; the inner development of character and soul, the perpetual feeding of spiritual life, must be made central amongst his ambitions. The free working of all the instincts in their due measure, with religion as their recognised master, is the condition of equilibrium, wherein alone the soul is stable, full of riches, and at rest.

The poets are fond of comparing or contrasting a human mood with an aspect of nature, not always to the advantage of man; but occasionally they allow themselves to generalise, not always to the credit of their logic. Only a limited or forgetful observation could, for instance, prompt Mr. William Watson to write[1]—

> With stormy joy, from height on height,
> The thundering torrents leap;
> The mountain tops, with still delight,
> Their great inaction keep.
>
> Man only, irked by calm, and rent
> By each emotion's throes,
> Neither in passion finds content,
> Nor finds it in repose.

[1] In *The Hope of the World.*

It is a contrast between nature in her storms and quietudes, and man in his weakness. The strong man is proverbially calm, not "irked by calm," and sometimes can set up a barrier against inrushing waves of emotion that are mightier in volume and more forceful than nature's torrents. Resolution and pride can do that. If the contrast had been with religious man, the poet would have needed other words. "Calm's not life's crown, though calm is well": many a time on the still mountain tops a wearied, worried soul[1] has met with God, and drawn in large draughts of that easy strength, of which the secret is quietness and confidence (Isa. xxx. 15). And as for emotion and its throes, there is an old promise, "When the adversary shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (lix. 19, margin of Revised Version). Christian experience accordingly exhibits the man whom the bees are trying to sting, and at whom the powers of darkness are thrusting sorely, not as rent by his emotions, but as saying with some exultation, "They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them" (Ps. cxviii. 12). If the heart be united in the fear of God, though danger or sorrow draw nigh, "the peace of God" stands sentry before it (Phil. iv. 7), and "the peace of Christ" fills, rules, and arbitrates within it (Col. iii. 15).

[1] Cf. Wordsworth's "Song for the Wandering Jew"—

> Though the torrents from their fountains
> Roar down many a craggy steep,
> Yet they find among the mountains
> Resting-places, calm and deep.

CHAPTER V

THE LIFE OF THE SOUL AS CORRESPONDENCE WITH ITS SURROUNDINGS

Life defined as correspondence with surroundings—These in the case of the soul are chiefly of three classes.

Imperfect correspondence with nature—Questions of origin and issue variously treated by different scientific authorities; but the terms of natural causation themselves require explanation—Phenomena appeal to more than the senses—Religion alone supplies the postulates for their metaphysical interpretation.

Unrecognised influence of Christianity upon man's correspondence with human surroundings, which involve mainly elements of disturbance and of obligation—The miseries of the times, often exaggerated, but capable of complete relief under the remembrance of the relation of God to men and the world—Religion, not only thus the solvent of fearfulness, but also the only effective bond of dutifulness—Neighbourliness is a religious virtue, anticipated in the non-Christian religions, but consecrated in Christianity—Altruism, ultimately and logically defensible on religious considerations alone—Religion supplies a strong ethical will, with adequate incitement and additions to natural resources.

The most important factors in every career are the influences of the Holy Spirit, and their treatment is vital—Congruity with divine relations, as an ethical rule—Correspondence with God, voluntary and not forced or reluctant, fruitful of every virtue, if resolutely made the law of all life—The use and profit of seasons of rapt emotion and privileged vision.

LIKE the conception of health, that of life does not readily take form in words; but there can be little doubt that the continuance of life depends upon a certain degree of correspondence with its surroundings, and that its quality and

richness are determined by that degree. The more complete the correspondence, the more perfect the life: and whatever defect there is in the former will be accompanied by a similar deficiency of the latter.[1]

The actual surroundings of the soul of man are in number beyond counting, as well as of the utmost complexity in the blending of their relations. They may, however, be classified; and in the case of every class it will be found that under the influence of religion alone can full correspondence be constituted.

The first class consists of nature, with all its contents and appeals, as far as it is external to man. That is the precise region in which most of the recent and wonderful progress in man's knowledge of the sciences and use of his knowledge has been made. Yet too often the advances have been in a few directions only, through man's refusal to put himself into complete correspondence with nature, to study it in all its aspects, to reap the bountiful harvest with which every one of its fields was ready to reward his toil. The correspondence has been confined to the phenomena of nature; its mysteries have been exposed to a selective choice, and everything beyond the reach of the senses has been theoretically shunned, even though the theoriser has at once proceeded to unify some of his observations, and to place them under the protection of a convenient hypothesis.

[1] These views, to which Herbert Spencer was probably the first to give expression, will need, in their relation to the biological sciences, to be slightly modified, in view of the accumulating evidence that the most extreme changes in environment, when gradually and slowly made, are not fatal to vitality. But thereby the utility of the definition in the examination of matters of the soul is certainly not diminished.

This process has been applied most frequently to the questions of the origin and the issue of nature, which have been dismissed either as involving resort to despised metaphysics or as referring to matters magisterially pronounced unthinkable. Haeckel, for example, writes[1] of original creation, that the process, "if indeed it ever took place, is completely beyond human comprehension, and can therefore never become a subject of scientific enquiry"; but he makes no attempt to prove the premiss from which so formidable a conclusion is inferred. The position of Spencer and Tyndall is not substantially different. Darwin is less dogmatic, and hesitates. In a letter[2] to Sir Joseph D. Hooker in 1863, he writes curiously: "I have long regretted that I truckled to public opinion, and used the Pentateuchal term of creation, by which I really meant 'appeared' by some wholly unknown process. It is mere rubbish, thinking at present of the origin of life; one might as well think of the origin of matter." A reader may well ask, Why not? especially as he possesses an enquiring mind, and finds Darwin acknowledging and almost protesting his belief in a God of adequate resourcefulness. Sixteen years later he wrote,[3] "In my most extreme fluctuations I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of a God"—which is equivalent to confessing that he had with him a belief, which if correctly used might perhaps have saved him from some of his fluctuations. Apparently Huxley always held "that creation, in the ordinary sense of the word, is perfectly conceivable." He

[1] *History of Creation*, Eng. trans., i. p. 8.
[2] Quoted in *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, iii. 18.
[3] *Ibid.* i. 304.

adds,[1] "I find no difficulty in imagining that, at some former period, this universe was not in existence, and that it made its appearance in six days (or instantaneously, if that is preferred), in consequence of the volition of some pre-existent Being." That must have been written before or in 1887. Referring to creative acts in virtue of which species of plants and animals are alleged to have come into being, he proceeds to ask for some particle of evidence as a condition of belief in "a statement which appears to me to be highly improbable." But it should not be forgotten that, in certain reminiscences contributed to a monthly journal,[2] Mr. Wilfrid Ward reports a conversation, in the course of which Huxley said: "One thing which weighs with me against pessimism, and tells for a benevolent Author of the universe, is my enjoyment of scenery and music. I do not see how they can have helped in the struggle for existence. They are gratuitous gifts."

In regard to this matter of origins Huxley may consequently be said to occupy an intermediate position between those of the religious and of the non-religious respectively. He was probably feeling the intellectual tendencies which began to show themselves in the scientific world towards the close of his splendid career, and have continued to gather force. The position of Romanes is even more encouraging. He wrote[3] in or probably before 1892, that "in the opinion of most biologists the origin of life is a question which we may well hope will some day fall within the range of science to answer," but that "at present, it

[1] In a chapter contributed to *Life and Letters*, ii. 187, 188.
[2] *Nineteenth Century*, Aug., 1896, p. 287.
[3] *Darwin and After Darwin*, i. 15.

must be confessed, science is not in a position to furnish so much as any suggestion upon the subject." He too may be held to have slightly modified his opinion in the course of not many years. For in his *Thoughts on Religion* he appears to argue [1] that, if one science has to stop at the limits of the sensuous, another can take up the task, and carry the enquiry further. Phenomena have to be explained in terms of natural causation, and then natural has to be explained in terms of ultimate causation. Without that attempt the explanation of the phenomena is itself left incomplete; and the man who engages in it must either break and hopelessly lose himself, or find his thoughts at last in the lofty sphere of the divine activities.

This correspondence with nature at all points may fairly be regarded as a condition, or even as a constituent of spiritual life. The man who insists upon using phenomena only as far as his senses serve him, of necessity uses them only in part, and learns only some of the lessons they were designed to teach. Nature, which in one aspect is the work of God, and thereby an intimation of what He is, in another aspect is a temple in which He must be worshipped. Face to face with its sanctities, its solitudes, its magnificence, its mysteries, man has both to consider and to adore. The mind, contemplating the marvellous processes, must pass in thought backwards to their origin, forwards to their end. From the handiwork the view changes to the Designer and His purpose. To exclude all influences from without, except those that flow through the channel of sensation, is at once to introduce new difficulties into the explanation of nature, and to disappoint

[1] Cf. especially pp. 121–126.

and afflict the soul with self-imposed frustations. There are limitations upon the finite mind, and, in its fullest correspondence with nature, it will conclude, as Job did, "Lo, these are but the outskirts of His ways: and how small a whisper do we hear of Him!" (Job xxvi. 14.) But it is His voice that, as far as the ear can catch its tones, must be heard, His "goings" that must be felt. In Psalm civ., Humboldt says[1] that "the whole universe is sketched with a few bold touches," and the thought of the universe operates in two main ways upon the poet. It fills him with wonder and awe: "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches" (Ps. civ. 24). And it binds him to God in exultant and permanent devotion: "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have any being" (ver. 33). St. Paul writes that "the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity" (Rom. i. 20); and the perfection of spiritual life involves the metaphysical as well as the physical interpretation of the things that are made, and the prostration of the soul: "All things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Col. i. 16, 17). "Of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things. To Him be the glory for ever" (Rom. xi. 36).

The human influences that surround the soul are to most men of greater attractiveness, and to all men probably of greater weight. Each man is of necessity related to others,

[1] *Cosmos*, Bohn's Eng. trans. p. 413.

and the play of soul upon soul never ceases. From one side to the other claims and attendant obligations flow and re-flow in a continuous stream that perhaps empties itself at death, but never before. The home, the neighbourhood, the community, the nation, the race, the consequences of past human action, the plans and contingencies of the future—with all this environment the ordinary correspondence of civilised men is already determined largely by Christian sentiments, of which the source is often unperceived or forgotten: the proper correspondence can be effected and kept up only by the aid of religion, and is always proportionate to the extent to which the life is genuinely religious.

Of this class of influence much tends to the unsettlement and disquietude of the human spirit. The wider view of society and the narrower one are alike full of apprehension; and there are not many periods when men do not in some of their moods feel, with Shelley,[1] that

> the future is dark, and the present is spread
> Like a pillow of thorns for the slumberless head.

Keats once wrote[2] that

> Here, where men sit and hear each other groan,
> . . . but to think is to be full of sorrow
> And leaden-eyed despairs.

Yet his dulness was the result of the fret and inexorable pressure of life, rather than of the complexity and pain of man's relations with man. There is no need however to resort to the sensitive poetic temperament for the

[1] *Prometheus Unbound*, act i. [2] *Ode to a Nightingale.*

discovery of forebodings or their expression. "At the sound of the neighing of the strong ones the whole land trembleth" (Jer. viii. 16); and every continent, almost every country, is full of war, or the rumours of war, or the din and waste of its preparations. Ancient kingdoms are collapsing; and around them stand the angry dogs, jealous of one another, but eager for the fray. One race is left to be persecuted for its faith, and another to be baffled in its endeavour to protect itself with the merest shreds of self-government, because the concert of Europe is resolved into an instrument of mutual watchfulness and protest. Every interest of the country is threatened, so say some of the economists: and society is gradually disintegrating, bad manners spreading everywhere, the churches failing to touch the larger and more powerful sections of the population, spiritual vision ceasing, and a great wave of indifference to the creeds and moral sanctions sweeping over the land.

It is a dark picture, too dark, as every one knows who does not by false induction exalt the fears of his own dismal moods into the features of society. Morality and religion are progressing, not losing ground in the world; and the shadows are slowly but certainly uplifting. Compared with the state of things a century ago or less, there is more light and richer, and reason for looking forward to a still brighter to-morrow. But at the same time it would be silly blindness to overlook the gray tones on the canvas, and in plan or diagnosis to let day-dreams take the place of substantial fact. The world is full of evil, and neither are ethical claims sufficiently recognised, nor is the work of religion properly done. As far as human relations alone

are concerned, if man knew about them nothing more than what is naturally in the mind, it would almost be wiser and more reasonable to fear than to hope.

There is an old saying that "fear hath punishment" (1 John iv. 18); consequently its only right to a place in the human breast is that of an interloper, to be ejected with haste. The best way to do so effectually, is to fill with some counter and antagonistic emotion the place the fear is apt to occupy. And in actual experience a bulwark against every assault of trembling has been found in the introduction of the remembrance of God into all the intellectual processes by which estimations of the present and opinions concerning the future are formed. The man in whose thoughts God is not can make himself reckless or stern: God must be in all his thoughts if his peace is to be as a river (Isa. xlviii. 18).

Proper correspondence with human relationships and actions means, therefore, that all such things are viewed as in the presence of the throne of God, and that His supremacy and His purposes as certified by history are never long forgotten. The whim of one emperor and the autocratic command of another, the jealousies of nations, the decisions of democratic councils, public opinion with all the influences that modify it, the wrath and the vice of man—it is easy to imagine that in one or the other of these, or in their combination, lies the mightiest force making itself felt amid the relations of men. But there is one thing mightier than them all; and that is the will of the great Father, whose purposes always bring themselves to pass in some way of consummate wisdom, whether men hear or whether they forbear; and

who makes even evil passions serve Him, and restrains whatever cannot be turned to any good use (Ps. lxxvi. 10). "At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep" (ver. 6). Cyrus was a victorious pagan, but the right hand of Cyrus, saith Jehovah, "I have holden" (Isa. xlv. 1). Step by step, the outstretched, invisible, divine arm led him on, along what he regarded as a career of conquests that redounded to his own glory, but what was actually the path of the vengeance of a great God and of the furtherance of His gracious will. Asshur is "the rod of" God's anger, and the staff in the hand of Asshur is God's indignation (Isa. x. 5). The wicked even, according to one Psalm (xvii. 13, cf. the margin of the Revised Version), are the sword of God; and Jeremiah (li. 20) represents God as addressing a mixed people, "Thou art My battle axe and weapons of war: and with thee will I break in pieces the nations." No one who keeps for practical use his belief that God is great and greatest of all will be long or seriously disturbed by the temporary successes or threatening combinations of earthly powers. He will remember the message concerning Jerusalem when that city was afflicted with almost every conceivable distress: "Thine heart shall muse on the terror. . . . Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tent that shall not be removed, the stakes whereof shall never be plucked up, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the Lord will be with us in majesty" (Isa. xxxiii. 18–21). The Lord, known to be present in majesty, actively ruling, securing in His own wise way the steady advancement of the race in moral consistency and come-

liness — that is the unfailing remedy of men's fears. A poet (Keats) writes,

> To bear all naked truth,
> And to envisage circumstance,—all calm;
> That is the top of sovereignty.

The calmness may be stoical or Christian, the despair of hopelessness or the quiet assurance of progress and right. In religious experience alone is the latter found in all its strength; and there alone it is at home.

But the threatening elements in human relationship, if sometimes more patent and pressing, are hardly as important as the elements that involve personal duty. It is more than doubtful whether an adequate basis for such mutual obligations and claims as are now recognised in all the higher civilisations can be found anywhere except in religious convictions; whilst, on the other hand, Christian experience exhibits at once an imperative that brooks no denial, resources and incitement that are unfailing. More than one philosopher indeed has contended that, apart from religious considerations, the measure of a man's duty to his neighbour is that of his neighbour's duty to him, and that a man who neglects his duty to another thereby forfeits any claim he may have had upon the other. According to that view, neighbourliness becomes in many of its manifestations either a superfluity or a disguised attempt to enhance a man's own comfort; and mission work is a gift of needless generosity to the community, in which there is no reason at all that men should feel constrained to engage or indulge. Social wastrels have broken nature's only contract, and set all men free from any obligation to them.

Fortunately for the race, such reasoning has never commanded ready assent where an ethical religion has been known, and it is at once rejected and thrust aside wherever the Christian religion is practised. Even in ancient Egypt, though the assertions of blamelessness are the more frequent upon the tablets, liberality to the poor, and even some of the more delicate forms of kindliness, are more than once enjoined. "I am one that smooths difficulties, . . . prudent in preventing and easing, quieting the mourner with pleasant speech," claims one man[1] when defending himself at the bar of Osiris. "Let no punishment be done when a noble is busy: do not depress the heart of him that is already laden," is one[2] precept, inculcating at least some sympathy with suffering, and much abhorrence of vindictiveness and worry. "Eat not bread while another stands, without reaching out thy hand for him," has[3] a parallel in the New Testament. Another precept[4] is very fine, and anticipates the courteous reserve upon which modern opinion passes no faint judgment: "If thou art gracious concerning a matter that hath happened, and leanest to favour a man in his right, avoid the subject, and do not recall it after the first day that he hath been silent to thee about it."

But only within the Christian sphere does the true brotherhood of man receive emphatic assertion, and philanthropy call all human energies to its service. The universal Father counts ministry to the most woebegone, stricken, helpless of His children as devotion to Himself. The man who has thrown away all the claims that

[1] Flinders Petrie, *Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt*, p. 141.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 142. [3] *Ibid.* p. 154. [4] *Ibid.* p. 153.

reason concedes him for counsel and help finds them again, and more than they, as a brother of the Lord, as a sinner for whom Christ died. "Who is my neighbour?" (Luke x. 29) asked the supercilious lawyer in his hope to confuse and perplex the Saviour. The parable of the Good Samaritan contains the unexpected answer. The mere need of the man who is in distress relates him immediately to the man who is able to meet or help his need. The former has claims upon the latter, the latter obligations to the former; and the measure of both depends no longer upon a sentiment of reciprocity or a standard of interchange, but upon the boundlessness of the compassion of the heart of God.

On another and perhaps even more fundamental ground, duty may be said to be rationalised in religious experience. That the greatest good of the greatest number should be the end of social action, is rarely denied. Nor would the statement be widely questioned, that it was sometimes right for the individual to endeavour to promote the happiness of others even at the cost of the sacrifice of his own. But a certain class of philosophers start with the assumption that every man is by nature, and ought as man to be, wholly self-regarding; and proceed at once to argue, with apparent inconsistency, that he ought to devote himself supremely to other men. The assumption is large, and not entirely warranted by the facts of consciousness; but the inference, if rational considerations only be admissible, is a *non sequitur* of the grossest kind.[1] Of every bridge between the two that reason alone has attempted to build,

[1] Cf. a valuable section in Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, ii. 331–344.

each end rests on firm ground and arches symmetrically for a time; but the lines of construction never meet, and the most ingenious engineering has to leave a dangerous leaping-place in the middle.

Of late there have been signs of a disposition to defend altruism with evolutionary rather than syllogistic pleas. The contention is substantially that, if human nature be left alone to develop under the play of circumstance and climate, it will of its own accord unfold in two directions; the masculine elements in its ancestry producing the masterful temper that struggles for its own way, and burns incense to its own will, whilst the motherly elements yield tender pity, kindliness of thought and deed, and the whole company of the graces of service. But whatever name is given to such a process, it has clearly no right to the one it claims. Evolution works by stern and ruthless laws, and is entirely indifferent to everything about the individual except his fitness to survive. To the unfit it does not minister, but without the least compunction kills them off. When it confronts the failing and the weak, "the lion hath roared, who will not fear?" (Amos iii. 8.) To mate evolution with compassion is the unholiest and most alien of wedlocks. To point to it as the means of salvation and the parent of all the philanthropies might seem a sportive paradox, had not science and theology alike been seriously invoked to give their patronage to such an impossible interpretation of the great harmony that binds together human nature and human duty.

The secret of the harmony lies in religion alone, in the religion of Christ pre-eminently. St. Paul argues accordingly, "Now we that are strong ought to bear the infir-

mities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. . . . For Christ also pleased not Himself: but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell upon Me" (Rom. xv. 1–3). "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9). He "went about doing good" (Acts x. 38); and His example has ever since been for His followers a welcome rule, His love a constraint, sweeping them on in the mastering conviction that "He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 15). If the teaching of St. Paul transcend his practice, as that of every modest teacher should, it does not transcend his aim. At Athens he was urgent to be left alone (1 Thess. iii. 1), sick possibly or sick at heart, that others might be established and comforted. "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is made to stumble, and I burn not?" (2 Cor. xi. 29) he asks indignantly, almost passionately, in one place, the anxiety of the churches and the burdens of other people becoming to him for the moment a sufficient authentication of his mission, even as "the marks of Jesus" (Gal. vi. 17), branded on his body, were to him at another time the sufficient symbols of his enslavement to Christ. "I was free from all men," he writes again in conscious and almost proud independence; but at once he adds, "I brought myself under bondage to all: . . . and I do all things for the gospel's sake" (1 Cor. ix. 19–23). The service of man has sometimes been commended to the world as a superior substitute for the Christian religion, which is as clear a case as history can show of maltreating the inventor, but

appropriating his invention. The incarnation alone is the historical explanation of altruism, the power that removes all limitations from its range. Its consistency as a theory, its imperiousness as a duty, its magnificent alleviations of the stress and pain of human life, are rationalised and become intelligible only within sight of the Cross. The perfect example of service, the bond of all neighbourly duty, is the Son of man, who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28).

Not only does obligation become real in religious experience, but incitements are supplied, together with the interior resources of a strong and tenacious purpose. It has been said,[1] that no difference in the moral life of man is so deep as that between the easy mood and the strenuous one, in the latter of which present ills become insignificant, so long as the larger ideal is in view. The strenuous mood is possible to every man; but it can be aroused, temporarily perhaps by the wild passions, abidingly only by the appeal of one of the highest virtues. "In a merely human world without a God, the appeal to our moral energy falls short of its maximal stimulating power";[2] and the infinite perspective opens out only when God is seen. "All through history, in the periodical conflicts of puritanism with the don't-care temper, we see the antagonism of the strenuous and genial moods, and the contrast between the ethics of infinite and mysterious obligation from on high, and those of prudence and the satisfaction of merely finite need."[3] One reason why faith

[1] W. James, *Will to Believe*, p. 211.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 212. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 213.

always triumphs over unbelief lies probably in the permanency of the enthusiasms which the former excites, as compared with the flatness into which the latter is liable after its spasms to lapse.

The statement of St. Paul (2 Cor. v. 17) that, "if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature"—or better according to the margin, "there is a new creation"—is capable of more interpretations than the familiar ones. When a religious awakening takes place in the heart of a man, it affects his whole nature, calls into action unsuspected powers, modifies and sometimes entirely changes his career. There are no watertight compartments in his construction; and a lofty resolve, a spiritual ecstasy, a divine vision, sends waves of influence through every part. A genuine conversion first of all turns the man's face towards God, and then stirs up all the best forces of his nature, sustaining the more subtle and rallying the most spent, until his days are filled with new activities for which neither inspiration nor resources are wanting. "The old things are passed away; behold, they are become new."

This change has been illustrated times without number in the lives of individuals, and it can be traced with confidence upon a wider stage. Lollardry was primarily a religious movement, but its contribution to the intellectual, the industrial, and even the political life of the country cannot be seriously questioned. Puritanism again, whatever its excesses, was an effective stimulus to activity in almost every department of life that was not supposed to be allied with evil and hopelessly bad. Moral results of the most valuable character were confessedly produced by

Methodism, which also extended the national interest in literature, and has proved no unimportant factor in the commercial development of the country. The exile of the Huguenots was among the greatest blunders a nation ever committed, and other nations are still benefiting from the strength, the stern purpose, and the loyalty to freedom and truth that were thus infused into them. According to our Lord's own figure, personal religion is the salt which seasons all, checking the spread of corruption, flavouring and vitalising the heart of a nation and the spirit of man.

How religion multiplies a man's resources and incites him to effort and diligence, appears frequently in the New Testament. Nehemiah was aware that religious joy is really a synonym for strength (Neh. viii. 10); but the second paragraph of the second Epistle to the Corinthians (i. 3–11) literally throbs with the two emotions, interblended and inseparable. On the one hand are pressure and strain: "We were weighed down exceedingly, beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life." On the other is glorying, renewed with a passion that can compass its expression only by transgressing the rules of literary art: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort: who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." Neither sickness nor burden could repress the apostle's ardour to make others share in the benefits religion had conferred upon himself. Our Lord once gave to His disciples what must have seemed the impossible and even absurd command to feed five thousand people with five

barley loaves and two fishes (John vi. 9). A prosaic, unimaginative man might well ask, "What are these among so many?" An economist, who lives by arithmetic, might well wonder, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little." But because the disciples simply did what they were told, without "fingering their muscles" or adopting the market's measure of their resources, everybody's appetite was satisfied, and the broken pieces that remained were more in quantity than the original food. That is ever the way with our Lord. He sends His people to duty, and fits them for it whilst they are trying to do it; and when the appointed work is done, their strength is greater than when they began. A story so sublime, so rich in its bearing upon practical life, a standing rebuke to the wisdom of the world, is fitly repeated some five or six times in the Gospels, and was enacted more than once with small modifications in detail before the eyes of the disciples. The estimate of ability that prudence makes is rejected in favour of the fuller estimate that includes the presence and grace of God. "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. ii. 16) is the question many a man has asked himself when the providence or the Spirit of God has brought him to the threshold of new duties or has opened out new opportunities for the exercise of influence for good. That the heart should occasionally so sink is natural enough, if modesty be a virtue; but it is a uniform religious experience that, whenever a man is led to feel his "sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. iii. 5), the hesitations are stayed, and the duty is dealt with in a way God pronounces honourable and good. On every side of life,

its terrors as well as its claims, religion is clearly the secret of proper correspondence with men, and the only means by which such correspondence can be effected.

Sometimes may be detected a disposition to regard the influences from without, of nature and of man, as exhausting the surroundings of the soul. But that is to overlook the most important and decisive part of life's environment. In every biography there is interest in learning under what skies a man was brought up, who were his teachers, and how the stars and the landscape, the incidents of his village and the memorials of the past, affected him. From all these fountains flow contributions to the forces that mould and make him; but the supreme questions concerning every human life are, on the one hand, how God by His Spirit wrought upon the man, and, on the other, how the man responded. Divine opportunities come to every heart, quickenings of spiritual aspiration, moments of clear vision, moods when the presence of God is felt: and everything in the future depends upon whether these revelations are welcomed or disdained. No turning-point in life is so critical as that of conversion. The encouragement of the Spirit of God to take up His permanent abode, or His treatment as merely a transient guest, determines whether the soul shall quickly mature and effectively leaven the neighbourhood around, or shall just survive in languors. The activities of life exhibit a man's energy and the purpose he is pursuing: but their real value is always contingent upon the motives from which they spring, and the quality of these varies with the degree of inner communion with God. Proper correspondence with the influences with

which He encompasses the soul is the condition of religious life, perfect correspondence is its perfecting.

As a general statement this is so true in substance, that upon it with a slight modification an attempt was once made[1] to construct an ethical system, and even to elaborate a complete code of human duties. The method of argument was commended, though not adopted, by Butler in the preface to his *Sermons*; but the attempt, whilst removing arbitrariness from the origin of obligation, was vitiated by a false analogy that might have been avoided by using an unmutilated Christian theology. It was argued that there are certain eternal relations which the intellect immediately perceives, thereupon directing the will, unless some disturbing passion intervene, into congruous action. The relation of man to God, for example, is that of creatures to the Creator, of the frail and impotent to the Almighty. Fitness therefore becomes the sanction of such emotions as reverence and awe, of such attitudes as dependence and worship. This law of congruity determines the action of God's own will; consequently no positive command and no revelation of the future adjustments of destiny are needed to make congruity the rule for human life. It is a scheme that works admirably, provided a man is not a Calvinist, but in other respects accepts the revealed doctrine of the Trinity, with its implication of the existence of personal relations from all eternity. To resume fit relations with God by the action of the will and the help of the Spirit, and amidst varying temptations to maintain them day by day,

[1] Samuel Clarke, *Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion*, pp. 197–223.

may even be taken as a serviceable definition of religion itself.

The need of this harmony with God, not merely as a general principle, but in the sense of voluntary correspondence with the different influences He sends, has received frequent expression in literature; and its consciousness is one of the richest of religious experiences. Amiel describes[1] how he spent the morning of a spring Sunday in self-disgust. As the day advanced, he noticed that the hawthorns were clothing themselves with blossom, and the whole valley with beauty and light. He listened to "trivial preaching," to untimely pleasantries, to the merry songs of the birds. He saw griefs without hope, pitiful loneliness, "the working of marriage in its frivolous and commonplace forms," the conduct of old men to whom age had brought no wisdom. "Everything," he said, "has had the same message for me, Place yourself once more in harmony with the universal law; accept the will of God; make a religious use of life." It was one of these experiences that led him to frame the reluctant rule of expediency, that "as it is impossible to be outside God, the best is consciously to dwell in Him." On the same grounds of the irresistible will of God and the necessity of resignation, he counsels every man, "Only be at peace with self, live in the presence of God, in communion with Him, and leave the guidance of existence to those universal powers against whom thou canst do nothing." There is too much unwillingness of constraint in the words to make the tone entirely Christian; and yet the accord of man with God has to be effected, either by the glad

[1] Amiel's *Journal Intime*, trans. by Mrs. H. Ward, p. 142, cf. p. 1.

devotion of the human heart or by the forces of the divine throne.

In non-Christian religious experience can be found suggestions that point to a similar conclusion. Buddhism contains a somewhat elaborate provision for the culture of aspiration, desire, and will: in one precept it commends an expansive sympathy, still a little exclusive if the qualifications of other precepts are borne in mind, but in itself not a remote parallel to Scripture. "We will abide tender and compassionate," so runs a passage[1] in one of the sacred books, "loving in heart, void of secret malice; and we will be ever suffusing such an one with the rays of our loving thought, and from him forthgoing we will ever be suffusing the whole world with thought of love far-reaching, grown great and beyond measure, void of ill-will and bitterness: thus and well must ye exercise yourselves." The dynamical conception of love as an energy radiating from a glowing centre is familiar elsewhere; but if the "such an one," which is love's nucleus, is merely human according to Buddhist thought, the nucleus is dead or unavailing, as Buddhism itself is a sufficient witness. There is a commandment that carries with it better resources, "that he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John iv. 21).

A great though eccentric French theologian has described religion as "a conscious and voluntary relation, into which the soul in distress enters, with the mysterious power on which it feels both it and its destiny depend": nevertheless the relation must be maintained, not only in view of the

[1] Majjh., 21st Sutta; quoted by Mrs. Rhys Davids in a paper "On the Will in Buddhism," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1898, pt. 1, p. 56.

mysteriousness of God and of the distresses of the human soul, but in all the aspects in which God can be contemplated, and by the soul in all its needs. The further definition is added of "the penetration of man by God": whereas again, no such one-sided penetration is possible, either according to the moral constitution of man or to the moral government of God. God appeals continually to the human spirit, offering guidance and grace; the guidance must be sought or accepted, the grace must be welcomed and used, or else the spirit continues just as before, save for its waste of another possibility. Correspondence with God depends entirely upon a man's sincerity and his efforts, even though on the other hand all its stages are, according to a favourite paradox of Scripture, a progress of grace.

Nor is there any part of man's nature or life in respect of which this correspondence may not be the rule. Of the wicked it is said in one psalm, that "all his thoughts are, There is no God" (Ps. x. 4); and another psalm represents a righteous man as thus praising God. "In the multitude of my thoughts" (*i.e.* doubts, suspicions) "within me Thy comforts delight my soul" (Ps. xciv. 19). The "words" by which God revealed Himself to man or cast light upon man's duty and ways were to be the continuous subject of the Hebrew's thought and conversation. Thou "shalt talk of them," so ran the law, "when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deut. vi. 7). Few things indeed are more characteristic of Mosaism in its early form, or of the gross literalness of usage into which it declined, than the attempt to identify religion with every occupation, and to exalt every

act, however trivial, into an intrinsic part of worship. The conception still remains unsurpassed, but its reduction to practice has been brought under the great law that "the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. iii. 6). To have God in all our thought, so that no opinion is formed, no design undertaken, no consequence imagined, except with the remembrance of His unceasing presence and rule, —that is the invincible barrier against misgiving, the secret of peace and of strength.

In the thirty-seventh Psalm an old man of wide experience records his conclusions didactically for the benefit of those who should come after. This inference at least follows, that it is well for man to welcome every influence from God, and to direct all confidence towards Him. "Commit thy way unto the Lord": "rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him"; "delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart"— such counsels of wisdom fitly close with an assurance, concerned more intimately with character than with condition: "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord: He is their strong hold in the time of trouble. And the Lord helpeth them, and rescueth them: He rescueth them from the wicked, and saveth them, because they have taken refuge in Him." A man of such experiences might well resolve, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing, yea, I will sing praises" (Ps. lvii. 7).

There are times in life when God by His Spirit draws very near, and converses almost as with a friend. One who is aiming at correspondence with Him will court such hours, and long to multiply them. Upon their right use clearer vision is conditioned, with purification of motive

and spiritual enrichment of every kind. For elation God provides heart-searching, for depression uplifting; and each is the effectual corrective of the other. In mysteries that baffle the mind, a central spot of pure light opens up when they are examined through the lens of the Cross: and the ignorance that remains is no longer a humiliation or a torment, but a field of enterprise and promise for the aspiring soul. Failure in the presence of temptation ceases to be a bitter memory, or the sense of weakness a hopeless hindrance, when the almighty Spirit is felt to be pouring in His strengthening grace. Of a life without God the ablest man might well despair to make anything: a life touched by God at every point, with resolute accord with Him as its keynote and principle, means of necessity the perfecting of every virtue, the mastery of every peril, and at last a soul purified, matured, ripe for the destiny that awaits it above.

CHAPTER VI

THE SUBSTITUTED SELF

The self, wrongly and rightly explained—Scripture not a systematic philosophy, but philosophical and true to human consciousness—The self, a man's standing and worst trouble—Various forms of the evil self, apparently incurable; but Christianity leaves no room for personal despondency—The stages of the treatment of the self: symbol of clothing, mortification of the separate forms of the self, the crucifixion of the whole, the appropriation by Christ of its functions.

Imperfect views of self-transformation and its secret—Not to be confused with exhaustion or apathy—Not forced or reluctant—Not the rapture of poets or the mystical rising of the inner light—St. Paul's personal experience—The inseparable unity of Father and Son in the Godhead.

In the expression of Christian experience, as in all speech, the necessity constantly recurs of using terms, the exact meaning of which philosophy herself is puzzled to tell. The simpler the term the greater is generally the difficulty. It is doubtful, for example, whether men think or talk about anything more than they do about themselves; but it is certain that the most skilful would consider a hard task set him, were he called upon to say clearly and fully what he meant by himself. The prevailing explanations admit of classification under two heads. By some the self is held to be constituted by the collocation of the states of thinking, of feeling, and of willing. Any number of these states are available for the purpose, and the right

of selection is unlimited. Placed together in any order, as bricks of various shades might be placed together to make a particoloured wall, or drops of water to make an iridescent stream, there emerges a self which is no longer obscure in its origin, and for which an admirable apparatus of mechanical causation has been provided. By others the self is separated in analysis from its states, and is regarded as something, an entity or subsistence, itself free and sovereign, underlying or running through its states, and so binding all together in continuity with a bond of life, but at the same time transcending them, and scorning to transfer to them its prerogatives. In favour of this view stands the testimony of consciousness, which has under the former definition to be convicted of error, or to be explained away. The latter conception is likewise to all appearance more than holding its ground amidst the conflict of theories and the play of recent thought; and under its light a series of passages in the New Testament, which in no sense depend upon it for force or intelligibility, become revelations of the supremest privilege.

The Scriptures, though saturated with the best philosophy, are not a treatise on that subject. When most concerned therewith, they avoid technicalities of phraseology and method. Their psychology is popular, not systematic or precise. They were designed not merely for the scholarly few, but for "wayfaring men" (Isa. xxxv. 8), for the class of "plain and honest" people whom Butler so highly esteemed. Thus interpreted, they proclaim as the earthly goal of religious experience sometimes complete oneness with Christ, and sometimes the disappearance of the

sinful self, and the assumption of all its functions by the indwelling Christ.

That nothing in life gives a man so much trouble as himself is generally allowed. In this sense, better than in any other, the old saying holds good, that a man's foes are they of his own household (Matt. x. 36). To be wounded in the house of friends (Zech. xiii. 6) is distressing; but to be beaten down and baffled by the persistent refusal of our own heart to submit to discipline, to find faults still surviving in vigour and cropping out unexpectedly after the efforts of years to subdue them, is amongst the saddest of mortal experiences. No one is spared from this universal lot, yet fellowship therein brings no comfort. It is the standing background of every life, but no familiarity and no degree of repetition make it tolerable. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity" (Prov. xviii. 14)—so much at least independence and a steadfast and tenacious will can do; but to spend our days in continuous warfare, with the only consequence of continuous and seemingly helpless captivity under the law of sin, may well provoke the hopeless groan, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24.)

Beyond the sin which is central to every form of the unregenerate self is some special kind of sin, peculiar to each man, and possibly due in part to his original temperament or to some defect or blunder in his training. It is what Solomon called, in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, "the plague of his own heart" (1 Kings viii. 38), the secret bitterness which no one communicates in full to another, the burden that has to be borne alone.

Elsewhere (Heb. xii. 1) it is "the sin which doth so easily beset us," or, according to the margin of the Revised Version, which "doth closely cling to us." How closely every sincere man knows in the depths of his spirit, though to others he appear master of himself and free from every fault.

To enumerate the various forms of this evil self would be to tabulate the constituents of unsanctified human nature, together with the combinations they admit. Ill-temper is generally present, in the shape of discontent or jealousy, of self-assertiveness or petulance, of resentment or wrath; and this, constantly reappearing and declining to be bound or slain, makes the days grievous. Mind and will become enervated in an atmosphere of indolence that no effort can dispel, and the conscience rebels helplessly against the waste of irrecoverable time and the constant postponement of duty to a morrow that never comes. Or an absolute inability to settle down, itself takes possession of the nerves, inducing all degrees of restlessness and making the completion of worthy work impossible. A tendency to sarcasm breaks away from every restraint, and becomes a habit and "a whip to scourge" the man who indulges therein. The heart refuses to be drilled or enticed into charity, and everything that is thought to be wrong for oneself is forthwith judged and condemned in others; that a man can be brought to believe all things and to hope all things (1 Cor. xiii. 7) turns into a dream, the realisation of which becomes continually more remote. Or the will sinks into feebleness, out of which no appeal can rouse it to steadfastness or strain; and a man is humiliated by the invariable sequence of lofty aspirations and power-

lessness to rise out of the dust. But whatever man's failures and miseries, he can endure them, if hope remains. Accordingly a famous artist represents a weak woman as casting off her weakness, and, buoyed up only by a great hope, as toiling on.

> Her feet are travel-stained, and bruised, and torn;
> Her eyes are blinded that she cannot see
> One step before her.

But the bruised feet press forward, and the helpless eyes peer indomitably into the darkness. Sometimes however the self proves so intractable that all hope of deliverance dies out of the breast, and a man seems to have no other refuge left him than the ancient one of suicide or the modern one of apathy.

In Christian experience such despondency can never be more than a passing mood. There is no ground or excuse for it in the case of a man who knows that the resources of the almighty Spirit are available. The promise to him is, "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand" (Ps. xxxvii. 24). He may wonder twice and a third time, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?" But he will still cleave to his conviction, and will call upon himself for effort: "Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God" (Ps. xliii. 5). Since the provisions of grace include a God who is our Father, a Saviour who loves men to the death, and a Spirit whose counsel and ministry are on His part unrestrained, hopelessness concerning self can have no justification in reason. The proper attitude for a soul, against which the battle

seems to be going, and over which the uncircumcised are beginning to triumph, is, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise: when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me" (Mic. vii. 8).

There are three or four stages in the treatment which the New Testament prescribes for this sinful self, or rather three or four variations in the expressions by which victory over it is explained or celebrated. In some passages the self is viewed as the raiment of a man, as clothing that may be put off or changed. Accordingly, St. Paul writes to the Colossians (iii. 9, 10) concerning the change that took place in their regeneration, and was graciously proceeding, "Ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him." There the soul is made anew by re-creation in the image of God; and its subsequent career may well, and must, be marked by the deepening of that image. Elsewhere (Eph. iv. 22–24) the substance of the teaching of Christ is summarised: "that ye put away . . . the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; . . . and put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." The self, left to itself, disintegrates morally, and tends to corruption; to cast it off, and assume in its stead the garb of a fresh personality, is the secret of real purity and of wholesome growth. Hence the sharp and ringing command to men who were in danger of wasting themselves in revelling and strife, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. xiii. 14) —a better occupation than that of making provision for the lusts of the flesh. Clothes become in a sense almost a

part of a man; by them according to a great satirist a man tries to conceal, or according to common observation to adorn, what he is. In religion alone can clothes be said under some circumstances to become the man, eliminating his sovereign parts or appropriating their functions; but the clothes must be the Spirit and righteousness of Christ, with which the world's drapery has no garment of beauty and strength that can compare.

But this figure of raiment, whilst sufficient for a temporary purpose, is obviously imperfect. Its use involves in one case the laying upon men of an impossible command, and in other instances introduces by implication a confusion between the things that are within, and those that are beyond, human control. For the self of a man is a very Nessus-shirt, which not Hercules himself can tear away. It is God who creates the new man; and by the grace of God alone can the will succeed in casting off the old man. Restraints and discipline of various kinds can modify the self, alter and re-adjust the parts, introduce new constituents and effect new combinations, patch up the old garment until its likeness to the original may barely be recognised; but only within the sphere of the Christian religion is effectual provision made for divine action in putting off the old and putting on the new; and for an extraordinary and supernatural process of that kind the figure of raiment does not entirely serve.

Passages of a second class relate to the parts of the self in detail, and enjoin the mortification of such as are wont to prove especially dangerous or offensive. Between the teaching of Christ on the subject and that of St. Paul a distinction may perhaps be traced. In the former the

parts of the self that are threatening are referred to particularly, and a specific and very stern treatment is prescribed. The latter more frequently regards the self as compounded of parts, to correct whose separate action the whole must be dealt with. Twice and possibly thrice (Matt. v. 29, 30, xviii. 8, 9: Mark ix. 43, 45), according to the Gospels, our Lord spoke to His disciples without ruth or pity, "If thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. . . . If thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell." That is about the only condition under which implacability enters into the human ethics of the New Testament. Under the older covenant a similar course was to be followed in regard to other people who sinned, and the closest ties of parentage or love were not to shelter the offender. One ancient law runs, "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, . . . thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him: . . . but thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death" (Deut. xiii. 6, 8, 9). But the law of Christ bids a man be full of excuses for the sins of other people, inexorable only towards his own. The worst offender must be borne with patiently, triply appealed to and reasoned with, and not until then cast out (Matt. xviii. 15–17): and even in that case he must not have his chances of repentance summarily ended, but must be left to the tender mercies of God.

Wisdom admits of no dallying, lest the corruption spread, with anything that leads to sin in a man or his organism, whether precious as the eye or indispensable as the hand. When a limb is mortifying, quick amputation is generally reckoned better than death; and the mutilation of the self by rigorously cutting away the evil urgings that will not be silenced is better than defeat in the struggle for virtue, just as St. Paul seems to have felt in regard to more than one form of secular ease or success, "It were good for me rather to die, than that any man should make my glorying void" (1 Cor. ix. 15).

The same apostle drew up a list, for a special purpose and possibly without any attempt at exhaustiveness, of the evil phases and activities of the self that are to be thus put away. In his Epistle to the Colossians two such lists occur in a single paragraph (iii. 5–9), or possibly it is but one list broken into two by an abrupt and emotional re-casting of the sentence. The course of thought seems to be that the Christian's life is no longer one of mere relation to the world; the principles for its guidance are from above, upon "the things that are above" the energies should be concentrated, and the canon of wisdom becomes —"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," and let Christ occupy the whole sphere of life and its developments, and be "all and in all." Elsewhere (Rom. viii. 13) St. Paul assures his readers, "If by the spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." The steady, pitiless putting to death of the evil that is rooted in and for the most part constitutes the self, emancipates it, so that its perfecting in full life proceeds without hindrance.

But the cluster of passages on this subject that has always attracted most attention is one that is consecrated by the transference in symbol to the Christian of the very process whereby Christ took away sin. The most general statement is in the Epistle to the Galatians, where St. Paul, after enumerating the more prominent of the works of the flesh and contrasting them with the fruit of the Spirit, adds decisively, "they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof" (Gal. v. 24). Susceptibilities to evil, the active appetites that are wont to seek it, are on the cross, nailed there with the sacred body, itself sinless, but bearing all sin; and therefore in a disciple's heart they have no business, and need have no play. In other places the apostle adopts the language of experience. To the Christians at Rome he writes, "Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin" (Rom. vi. 6). If the body, in which sin inheres and by which it works, is hanging lifeless by the Saviour's side, sin's reign must be over, and the soul is free to live in undisturbed union with the Saviour. Whilst logical assurance is the key-note of that verse, with a lifting up of the heart towards the close, the certainty of absolute confidence triumphs in another: "Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14). On the one hand, the world crucified (dead or dying), so that there is no fatal influence of evil that can proceed therefrom; on the other, the self crucified (dead or dying), so that there is nothing left therein to which the world can appeal — it is a

double rampart, solid masonry cased in armour proof, a guarantee of the safety of the soul within, fittest matter in the world for boasting.

The supreme passage on the subject is however in an earlier part of the same epistle, where the expression of religious experience rises perhaps to its highest conceivable point. "I have been crucified with Christ," writes St. Paul; "yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. ii. 20). The last clauses are not explanatory of the central one, but an indication of the inability to reach such a privilege by the use of merely human means, and of the necessity of calling in the most stimulating and effective of spiritual resources. Of the central revelation there are anticipations in other sections of St. Paul's writings, but nowhere an exact parallel. Union with Christ, according to Romans vi. 5, is accomplished by a process with which His death and resurrection may be compared: "for if we have become united with Him by the likeness of His death, we shall be also by the likeness of His resurrection." In Colossians iii. 4, Christ "is our life," in the sense in which the apostle writes elsewhere, "To me to live is Christ" (Phil. i. 21): that is, "I have no conception of life apart from Him; He fills up its whole sphere, and exhausts its highest conception, being at once its inspiration and its end, the secret of its strength and the sum of its joys." But not even that quite reaches the utterance in the Galatian epistle. "I have been crucified," says the mature apostle, a cultured and travelled man, with no wildness in

his talk, "the old ever-sinning self is dead on the cross or dying: yet I live: nevertheless the I that lives is no longer the old blunderer, but the Christ that liveth in me." The original self, apt to sin, haunt of the vices, is gone; and its place as the free sovereign of the life is occupied by Christ. Such an assertion is more than the familiar truth of the indwelling of Christ or of His Spirit; it is the consummation of the process by which Christ is formed in the disciple (Gal. iv. 19), the substitution of Christ for the self which is not merely merged or lost in Him, but which disappears and yields to Him the rights of control. This man becomes Christ-possessed, not transiently or altogether in a figure; and the utmost is done in him that can be done by religion.

Attempts have been made to explain philosophically this immolation or transformation of the self, and illustrations, especially of its lower degrees, are not confined to the literature of Christian devotion. It does not mean the dying down of hope and purpose into exhaustion or apathy. Not farther is the east from the west than is the mood in which a melancholy man groans[1]—"To make an object for myself, to struggle, seems to me more and more impossible and amazing: at twenty I was the embodiment of curiosity, elasticity, and spiritual ubiquity; at thirty-seven I have not a will, a desire, or a talent left: the fireworks of my youth have left nothing but a handful of ashes behind them." This miserable man, who seems even to have found a degree of pleasure in entertaining and recording broken thoughts of that kind, sometimes

[1] *The Journal Intime of H. F. Amiel*, trans. by Mrs. H. Ward,

attained to better vision. Elsewhere he writes[1] that the true dignity of man is constituted by "humble, constant, voluntary self-sacrifice," just as "society rests upon conscience, and not upon science." In a man there are two selves, an evil one and a divine; and salvation lies in abandoning the former and taking refuge with the latter. Yet "the task of living with one's own demon" cannot be escaped, and must be undertaken with courage; and Abel must perpetually exercise himself for the subdual and redemption of Cain. From this unending dualism our author rises once at least for a moment, though not with much confidence, into the fresh and upper air. A religious man, he argues,[2] should efface himself, in order not to check the work of the Genius who is making a momentary use of him: "a pure emotion deprives him of personality, and annihilates the self in him." To vibrate in unison with God, in harmony with the universal order, so that "the individual cannot hear himself unless he makes a false note"—that is the supreme state; but "how rare for us poor creatures," for whom existence is conflict and its foundation dissonance with God! That may be called the view of Christian surrender as entertained by a sick man, whose body was a constant burden to him, and into whose heart only a few of the influences of the Cross had streamed.

By Carlyle frequent use was made of the religious conception of self-sacrifice, though again not as in the New Testament. He was too apt to be ruthless and domineering in tone, and to fix his thought upon the services of duty rather than upon the sanctities of personal character.

[1] *Journal Intime*, p. 177. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 239, 240.

Annihilation of self he once defined as the casting oneself "at the footstool of God's throne, 'To live or to die for ever: as Thou wilt, not as I will.'" It is right as far as it goes —not so good as the Saviour's "I delight to do Thy will, O my God" (Ps. xl. 8), or, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me" (John iv. 34); but an effective putting of the spirit of Christian bondservice, which finds no hardship in the path of obedience, and even tries to anticipate the commandments. The parallels in the Epistles are the passages where God's ownership of men by right of creation or of purchase asserts itself or claims its due return; such as, "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). The will is not "lost" in God's, but placed upon one side or resolutely kept in subjection, in order that the latter may prevail and rule; and the utmost gladness of which such service admits is the reasoned and qualified satisfaction, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do" (Luke xvii. 10).

There is again a lonely rapture, in which the body seems to cease for a time to retard the soul's upward flight, the senses that are in touch with the secular become dull, and the self, suffused with the divine, is transformed or forgotten. Tennyson describes the mood as produced by pondering upon the inner mysteries and as issuing in emancipation and enlargement—

> More than once when I
> Sat all alone, revolving in myself
> The word that is the symbol of myself,
> The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,

> And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
> Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
> Were strange not mine—and yet no shade of doubt,
> But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self
> The gain of such large life as match'd with ours
> Were Sun to spark—unshadowable in words,
> Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world.

Another account of the mood is occasionally met with amongst the mystics. Some of them are disposed to represent the experience as due not to the loss of the self so much as to its purification and gain. The "inner light," according to Maeterlinck,[1] for instance, is not the product of the descent upon a man of the Holy Spirit, but merely the ascent in the natural and legitimate way of his own spirit within him. That spirit is a ray of the universal light, but man's sins and especially his insensibility to the character and worth of his birthright thicken the media through which the ray shines. If care in tending be constant, if obstructions be cleared away, and lamp and wick be cleansed and trimmed, the flame will burn more brightly, and may at times so dazzle that the self is enveloped in a circle of self-produced light, the radiance of which makes all that is outside one great darkness. It is doubtful whether in the New Testament or in human experience there is much that supports such an explanation. The inner light, which is man's natural possession, has a marvellous faculty of turning into darkness, however tended, in independence of God. In Christ alone can be seen "the true light, even the light which lighteth every man" (John i. 9). The most illumined soul is ever the

[1] See a suggestive article by Mr. A. Symons on "Maeterlinck as a Mystic" in *Contemp. Review*, Sept., 1897, p. 352 ff.

one in which the enlightening Spirit most intimately dwells. "Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee" (Eph. v. 14), filling self and soul with His light.

In the Scriptures several instances of this rapt mood are recorded, the highest and fullest account coming from the hand of St. Paul. In Jerusalem once he "fell into a trance" (Acts xxii. 17), much as St. John at Patmos "was in the Spirit" (Rev. i. 10), or as the older prophets dreamed dreams and saw visions. But one such experience seems to have left a special mark upon his memory, and in his final letter to the Corinthians he refers to it at length, hesitating through awe yet positive beyond gainsaying: "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not: God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven" (2 Cor. xii. 2). This degree of rapture may be exceptional, sent "by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations" (xii. 7), though the later verses in the paragraph certainly come down to the level of experience possible to all, and approximations may be found in the devotion of unofficial Christians. Nor does St. Paul tell us anything more about his self in the passage than that for the time it passed out of view, and was as though it was not. As regards character rather than qualification for service,—the extent to which the Christian religion can deal in the way of moral perfecting with the formative elements of a man, the apostle's highest word is that[1] to the Galatians: "I am dead, yet I live; I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

[1] Cf. *supra*, pp. 88, 89.

The attainment of such an experience by modern men may have been expressed with truth and humbleness; but on such a subject most Christians prefer, rightly or wrongly, to be silent or to speak with bated breath.[1] Thomas à Kempis, in one of his genuine[2] little books, writes with longing, "O when shall it be that I can with boldness say, 'I account myself as one that is dead upon earth'? For he that is dead cares for neither the praises of men nor the reproaches of the malicious." But the best explanation of the actual meaning of such an experience is obtained from the few glimpses that are granted into the inner consciousness of the God-man. On the one hand, He could say in His sublime sense of utter separation from sin, "The prince of the world cometh, and he hath nothing in Me" (John xiv. 30); and on the other, "The Father is in Me, and I in the Father" (x. 38), "I and the Father are one" (x. 30). The prayer of the Saviour for His people was "that they may be one, even as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one" (xvii. 22, 23). Thus the spiritual monism is to be reached at last—each Christian one, because the strife within him dies down before the presence

[1] It is reported of one of the greatest of the presidents, if such a distinction amongst the dignified occupants of the Conference chair may rightly be made, that on the eve of his election he remarked to an intimate friend, "I have been trying to attain self-annihilation, and have not succeeded." So great was the saintliness of the man, of whom it may be said with confidence that he "walked with God," that his friend was of a different opinion.

[2] *Soliloquy of the Soul*, translated by Flower, p. 33. This little book, whose contents are of varied quality and occasionally rather forced and heavy, may with some confidence be ascribed to the reputed author of the *De Imitatione*, which is sufficiently superior to show that the two are not the work of the same man.

of the indwelling Saviour, to whom the self, having shed its sin, has yielded all control: all Christians one, because the same Christ lives and rules as the self of each, binds them into the unity of a common life with Him, and God becomes finally all in all.

CHAPTER VII

DETAILS OF VIRTUE AND OUTLINES OF METHOD

Jewish conception of holiness, as separation from sin and the imitation of the kindlier virtues of God; and of saintliness, as love's ingenuity in the effort to please Him—The humanity of Christ, a standard and pledge—Perfection, etymologically and as likeness to God—The separate virtues of service and of good-will—Life's sorrows, as treated by the essayists and philosophers (Taine, Stephen, Hinton, Marcus Aurelius, and others), and as borne and interpreted in Christian experience—Philosophy fails to quiet the human spirit for several reasons—Experience of Augustine, Tennyson, St. Paul—Satisfaction with self, not permanent in this life, of which the law is struggle and effort.

Human volition and divine grace—The former ineffectual of itself, but necessary to success—The resolute imitation of Christ—The unlimited power of the Spirit, whose influence is free, abundant, and perfecting.

In the Old Testament and its dependent literature there are in use two terms of the highest ethical import, and upon them was founded in Jewish exposition a lofty conception of the religious experience possible to man. The terms may be distinguished as equivalent respectively to holiness and to saintliness. The former denotes on the negative side separation or withdrawal, and on the positive the imitation of God. "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (Lev. xi. 44), is paraphrased[1] into "As I am separated, so be ye separated"; and the separateness of God is not

[1] *Sifra*, 57 *l*.

explained metaphysically, but morally, as implying aloofness from things impure. The imitation of God also is conceived as taking place strictly within the sphere of the Law, but as confined almost exclusively to God's attributes of grace. There is, for instance, a tradition[1] that Elijah, who rightly said of himself, "I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts" (1 Kings xix. 10), was once rebuked by God in the words, "Thou art always jealous." By a late Jewish authority[2] the duty of cleaving to God (Deut. x. 20) was objected to, on the ground that "God is a devouring fire, a jealous God" (iv. 24): and the solution was found in the advice, "Cleave to His ways; as God nurses the sick, so do thou." Though in Scripture itself the justice of God, and even His severity against sin, are sometimes set forth as models for man's imitation in due degree, the tendency of later Judaism to hard literalness in ritual observances is scarcely more noticeable than the disposition to magnify the kindlier virtues at the risk of neglecting the sterner. Christian theology of recent years, and at intervals in the centuries preceding, has been apt to take a parallel course.

The Jewish conception of saintliness goes far beyond the partial imitation of Jehovah and obedience to His expressed will. "Sanctify thyself even in that which is permitted to thee" is the great rule:[3] and the saintly man is represented not as endeavouring merely to carry out his Father's orders, but as eagerly anticipating them, as seeking in unbidden ways to give the Father joy. Love,

[1] *Yalkut Shimoni*, ii. 217, and elsewhere.

[2] Quoted by S. Schechter in a valuable paper on the Rabbinical Conception of Holiness in the *Jewish Quarterly*, Oct., 1897, pp. 1–12.

[3] *Jebamoth*, 20 *a*.

and not law, is the sanction of duty, of which the ingenuity of a devoted heart becomes thenceforth the measure. The danger of such an ethical method is that much room is left for the play of personal temperament, leading to the exercise of choice amongst duties of equal obligation; but an effective safeguard is the divine help, which Jewish and Christian teachers alike bid men to seek from heaven.

According to the New Testament, no degree of moral attainment is impossible to Christian men, and experience ranges from a humiliating sense of weakness against temptation to the triumphant consciousness of mastery and freedom. The perfect humanity of Christ is the prophecy of that of His disciples. He could say, "I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33); and so in due time can they. To every Christian now struggling with evil, often full of fear that defeat is awaiting him, the sinlessness of Christ is a sure promise: "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. xvi. 20).

On several occasions a careful study has been made of the use of the term perfect amongst the writers of the New Testament, with a view to determine its exact shade of meaning and the hopes concerning character that are warranted. There is no need to repeat a task already done so well. The only conclusions that will stand are that the term is frequent in Scripture; that the meaning is fully grown or entire, that is to say, as might have been expected, perfect; and that perfection is a gift of God, neither unrelated to the capacity of man, nor withheld from his faithful effort. So much is pledged by the teaching of Christ, who certainly does not tantalise men by

representing unattainable ideals as already within reach. In the Sermon on the Mount—the official character of which renders any charge of extravagance impossible, and of which sanity is as distinct a note as is searching inwardness—He says with imperative assurance, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v. 48). He may be referring to the whole company of the virtues, or to the special grace to which the preceding verses relate; but whether the allusion be generic or specific does not touch the point at issue. In regard of one virtue or of many, Christ bids His people be perfect, and compares their perfection with that of the Father. So completely did St. Paul enter into his Lord's meaning, that in one place he declares the functions of the Christian ministry will continue "till we all attain . . . unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13); and in another he announces the purpose for which he was praying for his friends, that they might "be filled unto all the fulness of God" (iii. 19). St. Peter too held that men might "become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4). Scripture clearly knows no other limit to religious experience on the one side than that of likeness to God, of the saturation of the soul with the elements of such likeness until morally, if the Ephesian phrase hold good, there is no divergence and little difference.

In the case of these elements, the teaching of the New Testament is sufficiently detailed to allow separate investigation. The virtues that characterise the relationship of man to man have already been noticed together with the duties of ministry and service. "Render to all their dues"

(Rom. xiii. 7) is a general rule, with the applications of which many paragraphs in the Epistles are filled. The justice that refuses to soften before impenitence, the tenderness that helps a fallen man to rise, the courtesy that gently asks when it might authoritatively command, the fellow-feeling that shares the burdens of others and intercedes for them in their sins, the self-forgetfulness that exalts obligations above claims and counts it more blessed to give than to receive, the devotion that neither pain nor fruitlessness can restrain from spending and being spent, are all illustrated in the experience or counsels of the apostles, just as all were exemplified in the practice of the Saviour.

"Whence come wars and whence come fightings among you?" indignantly asks St. James (iv. 1). The question admits of various answers. The greed of gold, the passion of rule, the pride of power, the lust of territory, conflicting ambitions and imagined wrong, can set great nations by the ears and part very friends. But this "is not a wisdom that cometh down from above. . . . The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits" (iii. 15, 17). The love of Christ is fatal to every passion of disintegration or envy. The living Christ is the only vital and all-embracing bond of union. Where He reigns, "there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman" (Col. iii. 11).

> Love, like death, hath all destroyed,
> Rendered all distinctions void;
> Names, and sects, and parties fall:
> Thou, O Christ, art all in all!

The common mercy-seat is the meeting-place for the nations, and thither the tribes are already going up. The influence that dwells there is gradually welding each heart into unity with itself, all hearts into union with one another because first of all into union with Christ.

There is another side of life characterised by the action of pain, mental and spiritual, even more than physical. The causes of the pain are personal weakness, disappointment, consciousness of failure, the outrages of opposing fortune, the apparent indomitableness of sin. How forcible these causes are, and how bitter the results, the experience of every sincere man is a sufficient evidence. Whilst however experience is uniform as to the reality of men's miseries, the treatment and the prescribed attitude of soul are not the same. Taine has no better counsel than that a man should bear in mind there are a few compensations, and writes[1] despairingly: "There is surely an excess of evil in the world. Every hundred years man removes from his path a stone or a bramble; but stones and brambles remain in plenty to tear and wound him. Has he comfort, then his tender feeling of discomfort grows; the body is protected, the spirit falls diseased. One thing adds to its dominion, experience, and with it we advance in scientific knowledge and power. Else, on the whole, we lose as much as we gain, and our surest progress will be in resignation." It is cold comfort to tell a man that his misery is a hopeless experience for himself, but will possibly contribute something to the race's knowledge of science.

[1] Cf. *Quarterly Review*, July, 1897, p. 197.

To follow our own best judgment, with comparative carelessness as to the result, has been recommended on the assumption that no certain knowledge of God or of His relation to human life is attainable. "We stand on a mountain pass," writes[1] Mr. Stephen, "in the midst of whirling snow and blinding mist, through which we get glimpses now and then of paths which may be deceptive. If we stand still we shall be frozen to death. If we take the wrong road we shall be dashed to pieces. We do not certainly know whether there is any right one. What must we do?" The best answer he can give is, "Act for the best, hope for the best, and take what comes. . . . If death ends all, we cannot meet death better." But what if death does not end all? To risk everything upon an untrue or even an uncertain hypothesis is recklessness, not reasonableness. Experience counsels more wisely, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding" (Prov. iii. 5); and adopts a happier part, "Though I walk through the valley of deep darkness, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me" (Ps. xxiii. 4, marg.). The darkness in the valley is impenetrable; better step quietly through it with the hand-clasp of God, than plunge independently into the mist of the mountain.

Many of the inconveniences and pains of life can be made tolerable by thought about the purpose they serve. According to James Hinton,[2] indeed, "these are the only things in which we rightly feel our life at all. If these be not there, existence becomes worthless, or worse; suc-

[1] J. F. Stephen, *Liberty*, etc., 2nd ed. (Lond., 1874), p. 353.

[2] *Life of James Hinton*, pp. 172, 173.

cess in putting them all away is fatal. So it is men engage in athletic sports, spend their holidays in climbing up mountains, find nothing so enjoyable as that which taxes their endurance and their energy." Pain is consequently pronounced "an essential element of the highest good." It elicits endurance, fortitude, moral energy; and in all these there is enjoyment proportionate to the intensity of life. Such a gospel may suit the young and the strong, and fits years and men in whom the vital forces are unexhausted and full; but it does not entirely explain misery, nor can it compare in certain and magnificent effect with St. Paul's experience: I will "glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10). The joy and the glorying are not the exuberance of vitality, but the outflow of an increased consciousness of the presence and help of God.

Philosophy has more than once been praised as the cure for life's sadness, though philosophers are not agreed as to the mode in which their remedy may best be applied. One of them formulates[1] the law that pleasures must be tipped with pain to give them their full zest, and contends that to this law the higher and nobler passions offer no exception. He has no difficulty in adding illustrations of doubtful relevancy. "The ambitious man, say a Napoleon, is always exposed to bitter disappointments and mishaps. . . . Even the peaceful pursuits of literature and science have their acute crises of vexation and frustrated hope.

[1] J. C. Morison, *The Service of Man*, p. 316.

Hume, the most even-tempered of men, was so mortified by the failure of the first volume of his history, that he would have gone abroad, changed his name, and renounced authorship, had not war broken out between England and France." To assert that sorrow is unavoidable and a kind of foil to joy, and to illustrate that unnecessary statement by reference to two men of whom the resolution of one failed whilst that of the other stood, may be philosophy, but is not very helpful.

Marcus Aurelius, after describing life as a warfare and a sojourning, and the "things of the soul a dream and vapour," asks[1] in his meditation, "What, then, can direct our goings? One thing and one alone, philosophy; which is, to keep the deity within inviolate and free from scathe, superior to pleasures and to pains, doing nothing at random, . . . accepting the apportioned lot as coming from the same source as man himself; and finally, in all serenity awaiting death, the natural dissolution of the elements of which each creature is compounded. And if the component elements have nought to fear in the continuous change from form to form, why should we look askance at the change and dissolution of the whole? It is of nature; and nature knows no evil." That is the serenity of constraint, enforced by argument, and possible only to a strong man; beneath the thin crust of solidity which reasoning has built up over the heart's agitation there is evidently a quaking bog of fears.

Philosophy alone cannot but fail to quiet and strengthen the human spirit. Regulations that limit freedom and

[1] As rendered by Dr. G. H. Rendall, in his translation of *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus to Himself*, ii. 17.

prohibit action without effectually touching the springs from which actions rise, are its natural product.

> Thou shalt abstain—renounce—refrain!
> Such is the everlasting song
> That in the ears of all men rings—
> That unrelieved our whole life long,
> Each hour, in passing, hoarsely sings.

Neither can the mind be permanently satisfied with negations, nor the heart with confinement and bonds. Philosophy again differs from religion, as search does from possession,[1] a process of pain and strife from a result of peace and joy. Augustine writes, in his *Confessions*,[2] "In Cicero and Plato and other such writers I meet with many things acutely said, and things that excite a certain warmth of emotion, but in none of them do I find these words, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'" Philosophy asks questions, keeps them open, and supplies only partial or tentative answers, whereas spiritual experience, as a great missionary once said, "sets certain questions at rest for us for ever." Christianity, as known from the inside, according to the testimony of those who live there, means the calm, restful, solid consciousness of the rule of God the Father, of the sufficient sacrifice of God the Saviour, of the sanctifying presence of God the Holy Spirit, and therefore means also continuous confidence and victory.

Tennyson is reported to have been walking on one

[1] Pico of Mirandola wrote: "Philosophia veritatem quærit, theologia invenit, religio possidet." Cf. Kurtz, *Kirchengeschichte*, 11th ed., vol. i., p. 352.

[2] Bk. vii. ch. xxi. sec. 27, as rendered by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his *Aids to Reflection*.

occasion with his wife's niece, when the conversation drifted or was deliberately turned to personal religion, and he began to speak of his enjoyment of the presence of God. Let the niece herself describe[1] the rest of the incident.

"I said I thought such a near, actual presence would be awful to most people.

"'Surely the love of God takes away and makes us forget all our fear,' he answered. 'I should be sorely afraid to live my life without God's presence; but to feel that He is by my side, just as much as you are, that is the very joy of my heart.'

"And I looked on Tennyson as he spoke, and the glory of God rested upon his face, and I felt that the presence of the Most High had indeed overshadowed him."

But no record of real Christian experience rises above Scripture. St. Paul once wrote of himself in a paragraph, at the contents of which men have reason to wonder. He was not a young man, but of ripe age, matured by wide knowledge of life in all its phases and of fortune in all her moods. His words are quiet, deliberate, carefully chosen, slowly added to one another, with the intonation rising only towards the close. In this assured and unhesitating way he says, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 11–13). 'Content' means independent of external circumstances; and

[1] In an article on Tennyson by Agnes Grace Weld in the *Contemporary Review*, Nov., 1897, p. 676.

a religion that can not only make a man that, but can also equip him with power to do all things, including the mastery of his temper and the reversal of the whole trend of his nature from sin to God, has evidently no superior and no rival on the face of the earth.

Whether St. Paul retained his experience thenceforth, and continued to the end to enjoy uninterruptedly the vivid consciousness of self-sufficiency in Christ, Scripture does not plainly say. The probability is otherwise. Permanent satisfaction with self appears to be a blessing reserved for the future state; and until the whole course of life is past, and the transforming work of the Spirit is done, the godly man looks forward, and thinks, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Ps. xvii. 15). Sin, as a possibility and a reminder of the need of watchfulness, if not as a power that is actually assailing the heart, is not finally parted from before death. Conflict with it may cease for a moment, but has soon to be renewed. Perfection, in the sense of a condition in which there need be no fear and from which there can be no fall, has been professedly attained by some; but there are grounds for the suspicion that they had reached only some lower standard erected by themselves, and were mistaking it for the ultimate goal. Aspiration and struggle are inseparable from normal Christian experience; and victory, instead of being won once for all, is renewed and repeated until the series is crowned at last.

All progress in religious experience is due consequently to the action of two forces, each conditional upon and co-operating with the other. There must be intense and persistent action on the part of the will; and human

purpose and skill can effect nothing apart from the grace and Spirit of God. Aspiration and desire are the first condition. A great poem represents a choir of angels as committing itself to the opinion that

> Whoe'er aspires unweariedly
> Is not beyond redeeming.

But the aspiration must be unwearied, the desire keen and abiding, the will capable of tension, the whole mind made up at every hazard or cost to cleave to God, or the loftier ranges of Christian experience will rarely be visited. "The desire of the slothful killeth him" (Prov. xxi. 25) is as true of spiritual attainment as of secular enterprise; and the first counsel of perfection is to turn good desires into resolutions, to crowd into the resolutions all the strength and tenacity of will that can be secured, and strenuously to carry out the resolutions in self-discipline and in every wise kind of exercise "unto godliness" (1 Tim. iv. 7).

The imitation of Christ, in the sense of the attempt to let His Spirit rule in ours and determine the method and motives of every action, has generally and rightly been regarded as the best of all disciplines. A perfect ideal, itself supplying the necessary resources together with every assurance of success, is thereby obtained; and the dangers of unpracticalness and of ill-proportioned development are escaped. Not in details however must even the life of Christ be followed, but in spirit and in power. The details indeed are only in a few instances given in Scripture; and the Christian religion does not aim so much at the reduction of all men to a perfect type as at the perfecting of the individuality of each. Not to do

exactly what Christ did, but to act and bear and serve as He would, were He in our circumstances, and from the motives He would feel—few writers in the New Testament fail to exhibit that as the way to perfection.

There is no part of life to which this rule does not apply. In one passage St. Peter uses a word, which really denotes the head-line on a page of a copybook; and in regard to all the buffetings and sorrow of life he counsels men, "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21). When his little pupils are learning to write, the schoolmaster bids them keep the head-line constantly before their eyes, and reproduce it, not their own clumsy copies of it, to the bottom of the page. The Saviour in His suffering supplies the head-line; and we are to imitate Him, not our former poor imitations of Him, to the end of our days. In regard to the active side of life, and to all the little ministries that tend to increase men's comfort and to help them to godliness, our Lord Himself adopted a word that makes Him our pattern. God as He was, He washed His disciples' feet, and said to them, "If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you" (John xiii. 14, 15). Last of all, in an irresistible passage St. Paul combines both sides of life, active and passive, and writes the fullest sentence that ever came from his pen: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who . . . emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, . . . becoming obedient even unto death" (Phil. ii. 5–8). To have that

mind is the worthiest of human ambitions, the summit of human attainment.

No sincere man however is long in finding out that the higher ranges of Christian experience do not open themselves to mere wisdom and will, however complete and inflexible. Resolute effort is the indispensable condition of divine action, but the effort alone can accomplish nothing: in its beginning and in its finished work alike salvation is of God. Scripture leaves no room for doubt that the man who pours out his heart in trust upon Christ will be led on by the Spirit of God to ranges of experience the most remote from his starting-point, led on step by step until God is all the world to him and has accomplished in him all His will. To the Corinthians St. Paul wrote confidently, "We all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 18). The transformation is gradually proceeding; each change, glorious itself, admits to greater glory; and the source and more than competent agent of the whole beatifying process is the Spirit of God. In his letter to the Ephesians, the same apostle pauses as soon as he has recorded the wonderful revelation that man "may be filled unto all the fulness of God," and naturally breaks out into a doxology: "Unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be the glory" (Eph. iii. 20, 21). All the mind can conceive in moments of supremest rapture or moods of most intense yearning is so far from being the bound of what the Holy Spirit can do in a man, that the apostle is constrained to

knit together particles of emphasis, with a view to suggest how far the grace of God exceeds all human thought or hope. The feeblest of Christians can no longer despair of himself in the presence of that verse; for the power working in him has at present only begun to work, and there is no human mode of measuring either the power itself or its possible achievements.

In the light of such a fact the contrasts of mood and the ever-shifting adjustment of the elements of personal character should be considered, together with the disappointments that follow and the continuous cropping up in the life of faults that were thought overcome for ever. Fixedness of pure moral quality is too great a prize to be won with ease or produced in haste. Self-mastery, like faith, has an author who is also its perfecter (Heb. xii. 2). Whilst the uniformity of experience and progress is broken by lapses of effort or desire, and strictly contingent upon "patience in well-doing" (Rom. ii. 7), in every sincere disciple there is a power that worketh mightily; and the explanation of all apparent breaches in the consistency of Christian character and of all delay in its perfecting must be sought in the corrigible defects of human purpose, and never in the suspected inability of the power within.

A Hebrew prophet was once blessed with the vision (Zech. iv. 2, 3) of a candlestick of marvellous design. The lamps were fed from a central bowl, into which flowed continuous streams of oil from olive trees that grew on either side of the candlestick. The vision is a symbol for our own days. On the right hand of every sincere Christian and on his left is the living Spirit of God, who is everywhere anointing with His grace those who are

eager to receive it. The great secret of a sanctified heart and life is to open up the channels of communication along which the oil of the Spirit can flow, to keep them open, to expand and enlarge them. His rich influence will stream then unhindered into the soul, purifying and vitalising it; and the influence will stream out of the soul upon the household, the neighbours, the men with whom daily duty brings us into contact, and the whole sphere of our lives will be filled with sweetness and power. The unfamiliar graces will gather about us, every grace in completeness and in proportion with the others, until we pass from the ultimate limit of the range of Christian experience in this world into the presence of God, and are allowed at last to see His face.

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