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THE  
RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS  
OF THE  
HUMAN MIND

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THE  
RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS  
OF THE  
HUMAN MIND

BY  
DANIEL GREENLEAF THOMPSON

AUTHOR OF  
'A SYSTEM OF PSYCHOLOGY' 'THE PROBLEM OF EVIL'  
ETC.



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THIS WORK  
IS INSCRIBED TO MY FRIEND AND SOMETIME PARTNER

OSCAR S. STRAUS

MINISTER OF THE UNITED STATES TO TURKEY

AS A TESTIMONIAL OF SINCERE PERSONAL REGARD  
AND IN RECOGNITION OF HIS NOBLE DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE  
OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY  
IN THE FULL MAINTENANCE OF WHICH ALONE LIES THE HOPE  
FOR MANKIND OF INCREASE IN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE



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PART I.

RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS





## CHAPTER I.

### *WHAT IS RELIGION?*

A PERSON of ordinary intelligence would probably resent the imputation that he does not know the meaning of the term *Religion*; but, should he seriously ask himself the question placed at the head of this chapter, he would be surprised to find how much difficulty an exact and adequate answer involves. He will first think of the various systems and organisations really or nominally of a religious character, and perhaps content himself with an enumeration or an example. If more closely pressed he may find himself greatly at a loss, and indeed may be forced to take refuge in that well-known characterisation of the Holy Ghost by an English prelate as 'a sort of a something.' For, while there will be no lack of declarations, heterogeneous and contradictory as they may be, as to what a religious man or woman should believe or do, he will find much less instruction as to what religion essentially is, and what he does find will not be of a satisfactory character, since it almost invariably is given in the interest of some system or some organised body. Moreover, in the efforts which his own intelligence may make, a person will be much perplexed from a proneness of his own mind to confuse the products of religion, its incidents and accidents, with its ultimate distinguishing characteristics.

When, for instance, we speak of the christian religion we have in mind a social organisation, comprising a community of organised bodies united by certain enunciated principles and by certain declared aims. But this society is not the christian religion, but rather a development of it. The religion makes the society. If there were no religion there would be no church. Hence we cannot say that the christian church is the christian religion.

These christian, like all other religious organisations, consist of human beings who are members or become such by virtue of

sundry common ideas or concurrent dispositions toward certain ends. There are many of these organisations and many distinctions within them, thus giving rise both to different religions and different sects. But, although in all these is exhibited some degree of consentience or co-operation, the agreement whatever it may be is an agreement *in religion*, pointing to the conclusion that in order to discover what religion is we must look to the individual mind, in some of its relations, rather than to those social phenomena with which the name is most prominently associated.

In the scientific treatment of any subject a provisional definition of that subject seems a necessity, unless, indeed, we make the order of discovery the order of exposition. If, however, the method by which the conclusions upon which we rest is indicated for the benefit of those who wish to verify or pursue farther the work, it hardly seems desirable or indeed warrantable to weary the reader by taking him step by step over the ground traversed by the writer, and compelling him to make the same halts, to go up and down the same acclivities and declivities, and to toil around the same circuits, before the goal is reached. Certainly it is much more interesting, and also it may well be esteemed more instructive, to utilise for the benefit of the reader the knowledge acquired by laborious work previously performed. Hence, we will declare at once the idea of religion upon which the present treatise will be based, believing that justification for the definition will appear to the minds of readers as we proceed.

The view of religion, therefore, which we present for provisional acceptance is the following :—

*Religion is the aggregate of those sentiments in the human mind arising in connection with the relations assumed to subsist between the order of nature (inclusive of the observer) and a postulated supernatural.*

From this definition it appears that, subjectively considered, the essential characteristic of religion is the intellectual apprehension, assumption, or belief which posits a relation between the individual ego as somehow included in a natural order and a postulated supernatural or extra-natural. Objectively regarded, religion is essentially characterised by the same facts as generally existing in the minds of men who are as a race included in the natural order of things.

Such a relation as the above described, having once been apprehended or assumed by the individual mind ; in consequence

thereof the intellectual, emotional, and volitional sides of conscious experience may all be more or less affected—as regards beliefs, feelings, and dispositions toward action, these varying according to the nature of the relation assumed to subsist between the ego and the supernatural. Hence there will grow up a body of sentiments more or less pervaded, coloured, and constituted by this assumed relation. They will be sentiments, now intellectual, now emotional, now volitional, as the idea of the supernatural relation induces intellectual activity, emotional passivity or volitional movement toward outward action. And wherever sentiments exist which are distinguishably and distinctively the product of the apprehension of relations with a postulated supernatural, such sentiments are *religious*.

Religion, therefore, is not a cognition or series of cognitions, not a feeling or series of feelings, not a volition or series of volitions, but an aggregate of sentiments involving all the three general aspects of consciousness, these sentiments receiving their character, however, from an intellectual apprehension or assumption of a relation of one sort or another between the mind and a postulated supernatural.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *System of Psychology*, by the present writer, chap. lxx.

## CHAPTER II.

*THE PROVINCE OF A SCIENCE OF RELIGION.*

THE positions taken in the preceding chapter oblige us to regard religion as a phenomenon of conscious experience. Our knowledge of religion is thus a knowledge of certain mental phenomena. And since science is knowledge generalised and verified by recurrence to particular facts, the science of religion is such a knowledge of those phenomena. That is to say, the science of religion is simply the science of religious sentiments as existing in the human mind.

It is thus obviously and characteristically a concrete science, because those sentiments exist as concrete facts of mental life, and whatever may be the inferences from them, these facts must always be the basis of the science, furnishing its data and supplying its criteria. The different forms which religious sentiments take will be the subject of observation, and their common characters will be related and associated in the processes of generalisation.

There is no limit, however, to the number of sciences. For a science may be created with respect to any group of natural phenomena which presents similarities enough to admit of scientific coördination. Since science is only systematised knowledge, we may separate and define our knowledge of any aspect of mind, and erect that knowledge into a scientific system. Thus, if we choose, we may have a science of feeling, or a science of sensations, or, again, a science of sensations of sight, making the assemblages of phenomena which constitute the data of the science as minute as possible, and yet preserve the right to use the title of science if only we pursue with fidelity the method of science respecting the data with which we deal. On the other hand, we may widen the limits of science so as to include very large aggregates of phenomena, which yet have common marks by which the associating



power can unite them. One writer,<sup>1</sup> indeed, has ventured to publish what he terms a science of 'Universology'; but without undertaking to pass judgment upon the success of this particular attempt, the doubt may freely be expressed whether so comprehensive a scheme could ever be carried out in such a manner as to be of any value. And yet psychology, for instance, is an exceedingly far-reaching and all-including science, dealing as it does with the phenomena of conscious experience as a whole for scientific co-ordination, while philosophy, which assumes to be the *scientia scientiarum*, is even more extensive, since it is drawn in its ultimate relations from the facts of both the ego and the non-ego world.

If the science of religion be the science of religious sentiments, the field embraced may be a very wide one. For the idea of a supernatural, as before remarked, has its influence on the intellectual, the emotional, and the volitional life. It affects the entire mental experience, and the outward activity as well. Hence a science which treats of these sentiments will have to examine them in their relations to knowledge and truth, to pleasure and pain, to conduct generally, as determining both individual and social happiness. With regard to knowledge, though the science be as a whole concrete, abstract relations will be presented for consideration. And, on the side of volition and action, though the science be a theoretical one, yet there will in the course of treatment inevitably arise important practical applications.

The science of religion ought to be distinguished from sciences of religious institutions, organisations, societies. These last being social phenomena are, as we observed in the preceding chapter, the products of religion. Although the science of religion must necessarily make reference to these social developments, it will only be incidentally, and for the purpose of tracing the effects of causes lying in those sentiments of the human mind which religion forms. These sciences of which I have just been speaking are descriptive, historical, sociological. Considered with reference to such social phenomena, the science of religion is relatively abstract, though still a science of concrete phenomena of human consciousness. It is a science not of *religions* as they exist or have existed, but of *religion* as a general fact of conscious experience.

An abstract science may be formed by taking as its subject matter the relations which the mind posits as subsisting between

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Pearl Andrews.

itself and the supernatural, and considering them abstractly or logically. Such a system is sometimes termed the science of religion, but it does not cover the whole field. It makes abstractions from religious phenomena on their intellectual side, leaving out the emotional and volitional. It can only be of value after the concrete phenomena of religious sentiments have been examined and scientifically treated, or in connection with such an undertaking. It may be included within the science of religion, or may be regarded as a supplement to it, but is not itself properly the whole of that science.

## CHAPTER III.

*RELATIONS OF THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION TO OTHER SCIENCES.*

MANIFESTLY the science of religion is one of the sciences of ego-phenomena as opposed to so-called physical sciences. It has its place not with mechanics, chemistry, astronomy, botany, and the like, but with the sciences of mind and mind's developments. If it be the science of religious sentiments, and these latter are sentiments of the human consciousness, its connection with psychology is evident; indeed it is a differentiation from psychology, proceeding from and depending upon the latter. Its data are a part of the data of psychology, and without the knowledge which psychology gives as to mental phenomena in general the science of religion will not be able to make much progress.

The close connection of our science with sociology is likewise apparent. For religious sentiments are social factors of no mean importance. As they vary under different circumstances and from different causes, so do they modify social institutions, affecting both the political life and the social existence generally. On the other hand, social conditions of all sorts react upon religious sentiments, forming and reforming them. The sciences of religion and sociology must, therefore, inevitably intersect each other, the latter including the data of the former so far as they relate to the development of the social organism.

Since religious sentiments govern conduct to a greater or less degree, there are relations also between religion and ethics. If such ideas of the relation of the human mind to a supernatural be held as to derive a law of action from supposed divine commands as against natural demands of the individual and the social organism, religion must furnish the foundation principles of ethics. It has done so very extensively in the world's history. And in any event

religion is potent in the formation of character ; but character is the parent of conduct, with which in its relations to other human beings ethics deals. Both on the practical and theoretical sides there may be a coincidence or a collision between religion and morality. Thus the science of ethics and that of religion are by no means independent of each other.

So also as the science of ethology emerges into definite form, it must deal with religious sentiments as one of the great factors of the production of character. Much of what is properly within the sphere of the one science is as appropriate to the other also. But at present ethological science is in its infancy, and whereunto it will grow no one can affirm.

Again, religious sentiment has a kinship with æsthetic. It is sometimes claimed that religion is the mother of art. Religious subjects have often monopolised the genius of artistic creation. At least we can hardly proceed very far in either religious or æsthetic science without some inquiry necessarily to be raised with regard to the subject-matter of the other.

Once more, since religious sentiments are of such power in the individual and in the social character, how to shape their growth becomes a matter of vast practical importance. Sentiments of all kinds can be enlarged or repressed, modified, shaped, and determined by education. The science of religion will therefore establish a groundwork for the science of education so far as it deals with the religious character, though it will be found that ethics also will have something impressive to say upon the same topic.

It will thus be seen, without particularising further, that religious sentiments, themselves and their effects, direct and remote, may be traced very far into the realm of many of the most important sciences of ego-phenomena. It is impossible to mark out mutually exclusive spheres for these related sciences. To make the attempt is unwise, for it unduly narrows the limits of vision of the scientific observer, and prevents him often from exhibiting his facts in their proper relations. His generalisations are apt to be less trustworthy, and those who learn from him are in danger of acquiring partial and incomplete instead of comprehensive and complete knowledge. On the other hand, too great latitude and longitude of excursion destroy the unity of the science, or in lesser degree impair that definiteness and systematic character which is always desirable to whatever extent it can be obtained in a scientific treatise.



## CHAPTER IV.

*THE SELF-DISTINGUISHING AND SELF-ACTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS.*

THE foundation of all knowledge is a self-distinguishing and self-active ego. This is not a generalised statement supposably or probably true, but it is a postulate of all knowledge whatever. It is implied in all mental experience. Not a step can be taken in thought without postulating that I am other than the things I see, and that I am myself a source of power and activity. The anti-thesis of ego and non-ego is a fundamental and the first postulate of science. The ego is thus self-distinguishing, excluding itself from non-ego. In this process of self-distinguishing the ego also objectifies its own states, distinguishing them from each other, and from an implied subject ego. One's own consciousness thus is known as an object of cognition. Furthermore self-distinguishing implies self-activity. The mind is conscious of a power to control in a greater or less degree its own trains of ideas, combine them, separate them, and reproduce them. In whatever acts we do, in all mental efforts and operations, we are conscious of a spontaneity, an energy, a power that moves, intends, purposes, wills. In all consciousness is involved the notion of power active or passive, so to speak—power to receive impression or influence, and also power to react and in its turn to influence. Hence that mental life of which religious sentiments are a part and a product exhibits when observed scientifically as an universal characteristic, and because universal also necessary, a consciousness self-distinguishing and self-active. All states of consciousness imply and postulate an ego and non-ego antithetical and mutually exclusive as distinguished by the ego. They also postulate that there are such states of consciousness which are themselves or may be made objects of cognition. Still further analysed, all states of

consciousness thus postulate and imply in all knowing a consciousness of something differing from something; something agreeing with something; something continuing and something succeeding something; of something as represented; and of something receiving or suffering and something acting. These are the ultimate facts universally true of that knowing, feeling, willing consciousness, in whose life religious sentiments appear.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *System of Psychology*, chaps. iii., ix., and xi.

## CHAPTER V.

*THE LIMITATION OF ACTIVITY.*

ALL conscious experience is of motion and resistance in some form. Every activity put forth as consciously an activity of the ego is reacted upon by an environing non-ego; that is to say, the activity of the ego is everywhere limited by something not itself. By these limitations the whole of conscious life is governed. In such limitation consciousness seemingly begins, and without it consciousness is not.

The self-activity is limited in its movement outward upon its environment. The mind as a source of power puts its power into exercise to modify its surroundings. I am now expressing the facts as they appear to the ordinary intelligent mind, without raising questions of how mind can act upon matter, or matter upon mind, or what the connection is between the two. Conscious life is controlled by the thought that somehow it does as mind act upon matter extrinsic to itself. Activity is put forth upon the environment both physiological and cosmological with some measure of success. Man affects by his volition both his own body and the material world beyond his physical organism. But though the power of the conscious self manifests itself in well-marked effects, there is everywhere a limit to that power. Though there are many things which man can do, there are more that he cannot. Some things he at once sees to be impossible for him, while in others which he has deemed to be feasible for his accomplishment he is frequently obliged to confess defeat. With a power to impress his environment it is only within a limited range that he is able to make such impression when he puts forth effort.

Correspondingly, man's resisting power is restricted. Not only does he, as a conscious self, impinge, or seem to impinge, upon his environment, but the environment impinges upon him. The



surrounding physical world with its conditions and multifarious agencies continually affects the body, and with changes in the body go changes in the course of mental states. Pleasure and pain, activity and passivity, and even trains of thought seem thus to be dependent upon the corporeal organism. Many a time the self would, if only it could, avoid or overcome the forces which it distinguishes as not-self. But though its resistance is effectual to a degree, in large part it is impotent.

Again, the mind consciously influences its own states, to some extent in a seeming independence of physical conditions. There is a degree of mental self-government by which attention may be bestowed or withdrawn, habits of thought, feeling, volition, and action formed, maintained, or displaced, as we are accustomed to say 'at will.' Yet here, also, the same limitation exists. The mind acts upon itself according to laws, that is to say, uniformities, which the ego itself cannot transcend. In obedience to those laws, impulses to activity constantly arise, which are defeated by the mind's own constituted nature. The mind is a resistance to its own power. Besides there is the restriction and limitation which we ascribe to environment perpetually frustrating volition. Thus both the surrounding world and the mind's original structure and its acquired, built-up constitution operate as a perpetual limitation upon its own spontaneous activity.

From these considerations we observe that the self-distinguishing and self-active ego throughout its entire conscious life is conditioned by a conscious and ineradicable limitation of its activity.

## CHAPTER VI.

*THE LIMITATION OF KNOWLEDGE.*

COGNITION is an essential characteristic of conscious life. It is in some sort the governor of activity, though feeling furnishes the motive power. From or in the action and reaction of organism and environment arises presentative knowledge; from and in the action and reaction of mind upon itself with reference to presentative knowledge arises representative cognition. In its processes of self-discrimination the mind makes judgments which are preserved and reproduced, and become for that mind a body of knowledge. But the limitations of knowledge are no less conspicuous than the restriction of activity. The ego distinguishes itself from the non-ego. It cognises a force in this non-ego which bears relation to itself. It sees the formative influence of environment upon organism, and a control extending even to the abolition of life, but whence comes this force it knows not. It discerns relations of cause and effect, source and event in the cosmos; but the ultimate cause and source it cannot reach. Though much is known and though knowledge increases, there is always mystery behind. Only within a limited sphere, and under limitations both of subject matter and of method of operation, can the cognitive powers be exercised.

These remarks apply as well when the mind itself is made the object of cognition as when that object is what we are accustomed to call the external world. As already suggested, the reflective consciousness observes uniformities in the mental life, and thus reduces mental action to laws. But the ultimate questions of why and whence it finds itself estopped from answering. Earnest as may be the inquiry, persistent as may be the search, the result is only vexation of spirit. Knowledge itself is an end of activity, and as in all other exercises the active power finds now what it deems

impassable barriers, and again in arriving at what it believes to be attainable, it is frequently obliged to confess itself vanquished.

But, though the limitations of knowledge impress themselves upon the conscious self, what means the cognition that knowledge is limited? How does man know that he is naked? How is he made aware that there is anything which he does not know? His cognitive faculties unmistakably declare that his knowledge is finite, and in that declaration affirm that there is something not known to him. To explain what this means, or to ascertain that it is inexplicable, will be a part of our task in this work. It is enough for present purposes to note the fact that, spite of the recognised limitations of cognitive power, that power asserts, as a postulate of thought itself, that there is a something beyond the limits. Were this not so, we should not have the interest to ask ourselves the ultimate questions, or to set out at all in the quest which we always find so vain. But it cannot be denied that we do ask these questions, nor that our minds do universally declare that there is something which transcends knowledge.

Such being the constitution of the human mind, we should in this connection observe the further fact that one of its capacities for the exercise of activity is the power of constructing, out of the materials that its past experience has afforded to it, fictions which are as wholes not coincident with that experience. It pictures to itself possibilities of experience, in integral forms not given in actual experience. It thus entertains ideals and formulates hypotheses. Under the guidance of the latter it pursues the investigation of truth, and with the former as patterns it introduces new forms into the non-ego world, which it recognises as in some sense its own creations. This constructive activity in varying degrees, but still always existing to some extent, is a universal characteristic of the conscious life of the ego.

## CHAPTER VII.

*THE WAXING AND WANING OF HUMAN LIFE.*

THE last three chapters reveal the proximate causes of the rise of an idea of a supernatural in all human minds. Given a self-distinguishing and self-active consciousness which in the process of its self-distinguishing and in the exercise of its self-activity finds a limitation of its knowledge and power; which by virtue of that limitation is compelled to posit a something beyond the limit; and which has in constant employment a constructive faculty enabling it to develop fancies, imaginings, ideals, and hypotheses—given thus much, and the idea of a supernatural or an extra-natural with some notions about the same must inevitably arise. Hence the genesis of religious sentiments. That they should appear is not only explicable, but that they should not would be a matter which, under the given conditions, would pass our comprehension.

These sentiments, whose generating causes we thus discover, gather force from continual repetitions of the experiences out of which they arise all along the course of human life. In the morning of existence a future of attainment both in knowledge and in action opens out broad and brilliant. There is a joy in life itself, and with zest and eagerness the mind addresses itself to the questions of its own existence and destiny. But from the beginning in its quest for answers to the questions Whence? Why? and Whither? it only returns upon itself.

There was the Door to which I found no key;

There was the Veil through which I could not see.<sup>1</sup>

A profound sense of the fruitlessness of such inquiries soon takes possession of the inquirer. And yet he never can escape the suspicion that there is an intelligent answer if only he could reach it.

<sup>1</sup> *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.*

Dissatisfaction, unrest, fear, hope, longings for the unattainable, despair, mayhap sullen, mayhap reckless indifference or trustful resignation, ensue according to different temperaments and final convictions. We do not and cannot know ; and yet there is something beyond our ken to be known.

Usually, where health and strength are vigorous, objects in practical life soon supersede as ends for attainment the solution of questions which seem speculative and unanswerable. In the full flood-tide of youth and early manhood there appears almost no limit to achievement within the lines of human capability already in some sort forecasted and measured. Nothing is too arduous. Difficulties only stimulate to stronger effort, the future has only glories. Beautiful ideals, joyous anticipations, earnest resolves, a sense of power and sufficiency dominate the whole being. In this exuberance of vitality disappointments and failures count for little and are not long remembered. Waste is little regarded, for notwithstanding the vessel is always full to overflowing. It is not what has been or what might have been that engrosses the attention, but what may be and what shall be.

But while the work of life is going on with energy and enthusiasm there soon comes a check. There is a withdrawal and reduction of vital force. Before, there was a superabundance ; suddenly this excess is first diminished, then ceases altogether. There is nothing to spare. Then the individual first realises the solemn truth that the end is beginning. Before, he was omnipotent ; now he is potent only for a few things, while the sense of coming powerlessness slowly creeps over him. His energy fails, want of success oppresses him, blasted aspirations weigh him down because he knows that his power is slipping away. He circumscribes his sphere of activity, crawls under the shelters of favouring circumstances, no longer fearlessly bares his breast to the storm, seeks to move forward upon the tide of forces greater than his own personality, and endeavours to accomplish through these stronger powers what before he felt himself able to achieve unaided. To preserve what he has rather than to gain more gradually becomes his aim.

Then the sere and yellow leaf. Vitality needs to be carefully nursed and protected. No more triumphs, no more creations, no more conquests. Before stretches the black impenetrable veil. The eye turns backward and rests upon the noble deeds done, the successes gained, the beautiful things seen, the happiness experienced. Life is chiefly in the past, no longer in the future, and but

feebly in the present. Ideals of great achievement no longer fill the mind. The ties that bind one to life are all loosened, friends and the loved one by one go to their rest; the man as a moving, acting power on the material world, on the social organism, on himself, fades and wanes toward nothingness. Then again recur the queries of youth, the last with the most force, *Whither?* Silently, ignorantly, and impotently the end is waited for. In ignorance and impotence it comes, 'You to live and I to die, but which of the two is better God only knows.'

To those whose whole life lies within the shadow of death, chilling and quenching energy for activity, the limitations of human existence are ever present, but often with little diminution of the constructive activity working out in imagination a world of beauty, goodness, and happiness, and with a strong desire for the attainment of all that is denied. To such, as to all whose life work draws to a close with so many things planned and aimed for, unaccomplished and defeated, the question always recurs whether there is not in a world beyond, developing out of that reality which we must ever postulate but never seem to be able to grasp in our knowledge, a renewal of power and life, a fruition of desires and hopes, a blessedness and a joy which is not quenched in its inception, a day which does not go out in its morning effulgence, a fulness and a satisfaction of aspiration which is not delusive or evanescent. Indeed, all flesh is as grass and as the flower of the field. Truly the grass withereth and the flower fadeth. But some things there must be which stand for ever. I know my littleness in knowledge and power. But I should not know this, did I not also know that there is at least possible a greater power and a more transcendent knowledge. Toward this supernatural power and intelligence, or object for intelligence, I am thus ever forced to turn and respecting it ever to raise the voice of inquiry. We do not know. Oh! if we only knew!

Yet ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!  
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!  
The nightingale that in the branches sang,  
Ah, whence and whither flown again, who knows?

Would but the desert of the fountain yield  
One glimpse—if dimly, yet indeed, reveal'd  
To which the fainting traveller might spring,  
As springs the trampled herbage of the field!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Rubaiyât of Omar Khayyam.*





PART II.

RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS IN RELATION  
TO KNOWLEDGE



## CHAPTER VIII.

*THE NECESSITY OF AN IDEA OF A SUPERNATURAL.*

THE word *Nature* has a variety of meanings. Discarding those significations which do not have a direct bearing upon our present theme, it may be remarked that sometimes it is used to designate the whole material world and sometimes the object-world. I prefer the last meaning. Nature is the entire object-world, not merely the world of material objects.<sup>1</sup> Nature is the sum total of that which is produced. The distinction between subject and object is not one between sensations and ideas, to use the old phraseology. An idea of a thinking self is as much an object as is an idea of a material universe extrinsic to self. But both classes of objects—the external and the so-called internal order—are produced, are phenomena in succession, changing and subject to change. They are hence natural, though the one exhibits nature as matter, the other nature as mind.

If, however, we take nature as the world of material objects, we find on examination that we cannot think of any such world as existing without postulating a supernatural. For, we arrive at the notion of a natural world by a synthesis of objects, which to be objects at all to consciousness must exist in relations. One thing always implies some other thing to which it is related. In order to appear in consciousness it must have consistency; but the individuality of a body which ensues from its consistency itself depends upon it being cut off or out of something else; otherwise we have a something standing in relation to nothing, which is an impossibility of thought. Therefore, when by a synthesis of objects we make a whole which we call nature, that whole is such to our consciousness only by virtue of the fact that it is separated and distinguished from something else which is not-nature or is beyond

<sup>1</sup> *System of Psychology*, chap. xv.

nature. It matters not what we include in this whole. Comprehend as much as we may, the moment we place a limit to our comprehension, by that very limitation do we set over against nature a something extra-natural.<sup>1</sup>

It may be said that this material world is relative to the perceiving subject. But the perceiving subject is only known through an objectification, which itself postulates a subject beyond, which is not an object and not known. And the first datum of knowledge is the judgment, which never is overcome or transcended, but implied in all cognition whatever, that this subject-ego is distinguished from a subject-non-ego, both of which are noumena to their respective phenomena. If then it be declared that the synthesis of all material things into a whole of nature postulates only a perceiving subject, still we are forced to posit an extra- or super-natural in this subject. Thus, whether we hold nature to be the entire object-world or only the world of material objects, in either case cognition of a nature of things is utterly and absolutely meaningless, is no cognition at all save with the postulate of a something without or beyond nature, which is itself not nature.<sup>2</sup>

But though the idea of a supernatural seems to be a necessary one, it is not easy to understand exactly what this cognition is. For, even in asserting *that* a supernatural is, we make it an object to a thinking subject, and think it under conditions that include it in nature. In declaring that it is unknown and perhaps unknowable, we still make it an object of knowledge. If nature ever postulates a supernatural, we appear to be able to cognise the latter only as a part of nature.

How, then, can the human mind know a supernatural is the very first problem presented in a science of religion? In order to solve this problem or determine its insolubility we must examine some features of human cognition of that which is natural.

<sup>1</sup> *System of Psychology*, chaps. ix., xiii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, chaps. iii., xv., lviii.

## CHAPTER IX.

## COGNITION OF THE NATURAL.

COGNITIVE experience is primarily of sensations. Sensations are of some form of motion and resistance; but motion implies non-resistance. It is a more clear statement to aver that our sensations are of resistance and non-resistance in some form. Non-resistance is as much a sensation as is resistance. The two are correlative sensational experiences. Our knowledge begins in sensational experiences of resisting bodies and non-resisting bodies, or of *forces* and *spaces*. From these concrete experiences we generalise and obtain the abstract notions *force* and *space*.<sup>1</sup>

This sensational or presentative experience is not, however, all there is of knowledge, even the most rudimentary. There is a self-distinguishing of subject from object in all cognition. This arises only from the ability of the mind to reflect upon its own states as themselves objects. This it can do only through a representation of its primary experiences. The sensational experience *A* is represented as *a*.

Nevertheless this representative object is but a representation of some presentation. It is an object in the same sense as its original. And whatever is implied in the cognition of *A* is likewise implied in the cognition of *a*, with, however, the constant assertion of a difference between the two orders as such. When, therefore, we examine our own processes of cognition we find an order of

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, chaps. xii., xviii. I am of course quite aware of the objections liable to be made to my use of the term *force*; and yet I am very reluctant to abandon the older employment of the word for reasons which I cannot here unfold. I do not think my meaning will be misunderstood. I should be sorry to see the disappearance of such phrases as 'the persistence of force,' for example, and do not believe that the expression 'conservation of energy' or the use of the word 'energy' in general marks any improvement over the earlier phraseology.

experience of the class  $A$  along with another order of the class  $a$ . The experiences of the class  $A$  are distinguished from each other and from those of the class  $a$ , while those of the latter class are distinguished from each other and from those of  $A$ .

The sensational experience, whatever it may be, so long as it is sensation, is cognised as under relations. These are relations to an ego as cognising and a non-ego which is excluded by the ego from itself. Speaking generally, the relations to this non-ego are relations of action and resistance in that which is immobile and non-resisting, of motion and permanence; on the other hand, the relations to the cognising ego are that of object to subject, of ability to appear as presentative to consciousness. This, however, implies that they be represented, for nothing can be thought as an object of thought except as represented.

It is quite impossible to think the presentative object as without relations to a non-ego excluded from an ego which is identified with the perceiving subject. For in the act of apprehending the sensation there is a self-distinguishing of the ego, which could only be by relation to that which is non-ego. Moreover, there could be no cognition of representative knowledge as object to a perceiving subject except through relations to a non-ego. For the representative object is cognised as other than the perceiving subject, and, since it is cognised also as representative, it implies the same distinction of ego and non-ego in the original or presentative experience, otherwise it would not be known as representative. Our entire cognition of subject and object springs from a self-distinguishing in sensation of a self from a not-self, mutually exclusive through an object related on the one hand to the ego self and on the other to an equally real and positive not-self. However much we strive to make it otherwise, an object related to a subject implies a series of relations of that object to an anti-subject set over against and exclusive of the subject.

Hence we get the two orders of relations, which we are accustomed to term the external and the internal worlds. This on the whole is an allowable though not very scientific mode of expression. To be sure the external is also internal, but the internal cannot be made all inclusive without postulating an external to its own integrity. Again the internal has relations to the external, yet always an external as cognised by a thinking self. Thus it is equally true that 'the understanding makes nature,' and that a nature which is not the understanding makes the understanding.

The presentative order is known as such and the representative order is known as such. The experience of representation is primordial as a representative experience. We cognise an event as having actually happened to us and as represented. When we come to analyse this cognition that anything is a representation, we find that we can explain it only by the statement that it is a representation. I cannot tell you how I know that I saw a conflagration a month ago without postulating that the experience I remember actually occurred to me. I know it did because I remember that it did, and unless I remember it I do not know it as a part of my past. Thus in the knowledge that an experience is representative, itself unanalysable, is implied a knowledge presentative.

On the other hand, presentative cognition postulates representation. For a cognition implies a continuance as an object, and it cannot continue save as its past moments are represented while it lasts. The interaction of presentation and representation is necessary for knowledge itself.

When, therefore, we inquire what is implied in an act of cognition, or what are the constituent elements of knowing, we find that they are the same whether we know objects as primarily related to an external non-ego, or to a cognising ego. The constituents of knowing objects of the internal order, mental states as such, are the same as of knowing objects of the external order, material things as such. That which is known is not the same in each case, but the knowing is the same as a process. Because we can only know mental states as representations of other mental states *which we knew*. In the presentative experience the object appears as related equally to an ego and non-ego; in the representative it appears as a non-ego primarily related to an ego, primarily conditioned by this ego as a part to a whole, and secondarily related to a non-ego outside the sphere of the ego.<sup>1</sup>

When we begin the study of the process of cognition with primary or presentative cognition, as has been remarked, we cognise resistances and non-resistances. It is not usual for us to consider that we have a sensation of a space, but unless we do we cannot have a sensation of a force. Motion has no meaning except there be implied room for motion, and a sensation of motion is not possible to be thought of without a corresponding sensation of the immovable. It may appear, at first, that the mind supplies the idea of a space; but, if it does, it supplies the idea of force just

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, chaps. iii., ix., xi.

as much ; whatever is in its sensational experience has equal relation to the ego and the non-ego. If force were wholly outside the mind and space wholly inside, force would not come into the object at all ; and if space were wholly outside and force wholly inside, space would not appear in the object or be thought. We cannot get at the notion of space by abstraction from force, for no amount of generalisation and abstraction from that which is admittedly not-space will ever give us space. The truth, the overlooking of which has confused almost the whole of philosophical thought, is that the object in sensation appears as in every particular correlated to the ego and non-ego. What is given as internal (i.e. mental) has its exact counterpart in an external, material, non-ego relation ; what is given as external (i.e. material, non-ego) has its exact counterpart in a mental relation. Whatever relation the notion of force gives to an externality, it implies equally the relation of space to an externality. If we have a sensation of force we must also have a sensation of space. If *force* is the name of sensation, *space* is also the name of sensation. If there is any externality, it appertains to both alike, and if either one is mental the other must be also in precisely the same degree.<sup>1</sup>

Every cognition of presentative or sensational experience gives us the fundamental notions of forces and spaces. When we further examine we shall find that force and space negate each other. Force is not-space and space is not-force, but each has an equal reality. There is a relativity between the two and a consistency of each. On the side of force we have motion and sequence. On the side of space immobility and permanence.

But when we come to consider space as a cognition, an object of thought, we discover that we can only think it in terms of force which is at the same time negated. It is a reality which is not-mobile, not-sequent, not-resisting, but is still a reality, existent, felt, perceived. Our consciousness consists in successions, but succession can be only of things limited, consistent, and related to other things. Space to be thought of in reflection thus must be a consistent limited whole—that is, must have force attributes, while at the same time it negatives force. Thus sensational knowledge gives us cognition of a reality, which, when made the object of reflection, by the very process is emptied of its distinguishing characteristics. We thus seem to cognise something which we do not cognise, and we are reminded of the old puzzle of Democritus—

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, chaps. xii., xiii., xviii.



only atoms and void are real. But, at all events, the cognition is of a reality given in sensation, space as correlative to force and necessary for the idea of force, the negation of force and at the same time entering into the train of thought with force attributes.

Let us now turn to the representative order. Let us call an item of the representative train an idea as distinguished from a sensation. We can do this for the moment without fear of confusion. We see at once that an idea does not appear in consciousness save as a whole distinguishable from another idea. These ideas follow each other in succession; they come and go; but this implies along with each the idea of a something which does not come and go, but endures. Our cognition of a definite idea *a* is also a cognition of a *non-a*, an idea of a *non-idea*, a consciousness of an unconsciousness, which we think as a non-cognition, but in the very process cognise.

It will not be difficult to see that this is an exact reproduction of what occurs in cognising sensational experience. This consciousness of unconsciousness, this cognition of a duration as opposed to succession, is the analogue of the cognition of space as related to force, with primary relation to a subject ego as cognising. It is representative knowledge indeed, but its cognition has implications exactly parallel to those in the cognition of the presentative. As there is inevitably attributed to a non-ego in the latter, a reality which is not known except that it is, and that it is not what is cognised as other, so there is inevitably attributed to an ego a similar reality known and yet unknown.

From considering the necessary interaction of the presentative and the representative we are at least enabled to see how this contradiction arises. For, as before observed, we only know the mind by reflection—that is, through representative states which succeed each other. These are only known as representative of a presentation. But, to state the case as I have elsewhere stated it,<sup>1</sup> every cognition distinguished and appreciated as such is one of a succession. The cognition of space or of a space is a succession from a beginning to an end. All our cognitions are such successions, and consciousness itself is a ceaseless succession of cognitions, and without such succession there is no consciousness. So that, from whatever idea we may of space, when we come to entertain that idea as an appreciable idea of our consciousness, we have it only as one of a series in succession and itself as made up of instants of time. But

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, chap. xviii.

these mental phenomena are, after all, only described in terms of motion. *Successions* is a name given to mental experiences which are but representations of sensational experiences, and the term derives all its meaning from original experiences of sequences of mobile forces—that is, from motion of force bodies. If cognitions are always successions in a series, and we have no other means of apprehending, comprehending or describing them, then it is seen how it is that all our cognitions of space reflectively made must be in form and terms of moving body—that is, of resisting body, for such is the only body of which motion can be predicated or to which it can be attributed. All our cognitions are successions in a series, else consciousness is blank and there is no consciousness; all sensational sequences are from movements of resisting bodies; therefore, if any knowledge be obtained of anything whatsoever in a world external to the mind, that knowledge must exist in the mind in terms of motion and resistance—that is to say, in terms of force. Yet we cannot dismiss space as a distinct entity or merge it with force, because succession postulates duration and is not intelligible without it. Though when we bring before the mind anything as a mental object, we do so in terms of succession, we are all the while obliged to postulate a duration as an equal mental reality in order that the succession may be possible. In like manner we recognise that this duration is but a representation of sensational experience; that the sequences of material forces producing sensations must themselves have their own consistency; that these sequences are not perceived, except as a permanent reality is also revealed with them by which the very sequences are alone made actual to sensation. Thus both in the presentative and the representative order we have as a necessary element of the cognition of any object, the cognition of a negative reality, conditional for the cognition of the object indeed, but knowable only as such, and as a privative of whatever positive assertions may be made of that object.

Though much has been gained in the progress of that movement toward establishing a consistent theory of knowledge for which the Kantian philosophy, old and new, is entitled to credit; much has been lost by the failure to take proper note of the objective aspects of space, and by the denial of its objective reality. It has not been appreciated, nor is it now appreciated, that knowledge of space is the mental representation of a sensation, precisely as knowledge of a resisting body is the mental representation of a sensation. If I move my arm through the air, the feeling of non-

resistance is just as much a sensation as is the feeling of resistance when I strike it against the wall ; and it is only by representation of such experiences in each case that we come to have our cognition of space in general, and as opposed to it, force in general. We may say, that space is the form under which we perceive external objects, meaning resisting objects ; but it would be just as correct to say that resistance is the form under which we perceive space. For, though Kant says that one might very well imagine that there should be space without objects to fill it, we are quite unable to imagine space except in relation to myself or some other perceiving subject as located in space ; nor am I able to see how I can stop thinking of space without limiting it by a resisting object, nor, indeed, how I can think of it as extended, save under the imagination of a resisting body travelling through it. We do not and cannot obtain our general notion of space by abstracting resisting bodies unless there is space given in the original sensation.<sup>1</sup> For abstraction postulates succession and, back of that, motion ; and motion cannot be thought except as in space. On the other hand, room for motion requires motion of a resisting body as a necessary correlate. If, therefore, our knowledge is entirely of presentative and representative modes of resistance and non-resistance, giving as our experience of the so-called external world resisting bodies as in space, the idea of each necessitating the other, we see that there is no more subjectivity to space than there is to force in space, and that there is precisely the same objectivity to both. All this, however, has been expressed before, and we need not further repeat.

It is requisite to observe that the cognition of the presentative object postulates coexistence, and of the representative object simultaneity. For we could not make in each sensation the distinction between resistance and non-resistance as excluding each other without the implied assertion that they coexist. Neither could we make the distinguishing of self from not-self without postulating this. Nor in representative knowledge could we separate the representative from the presentative without an implication of simultaneity. No comparison whatever is possible without postulating the coexistence or simultaneous appearance of the objects to be compared. The fact that cognition is always of a double order of objects, related on the one hand to an ego and on the other to a non-ego, necessitates this.

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, chap. xviii.

Thus, when we regard material nature, we arrive by analysing the material object at a constitutive unit of material nature, and discover its atomic composition to be (to our cognitive faculties) an aggregation of atoms, units, or things, each of which postulates two forces reciprocally acting and reacting, coattractive and repulsive, coexistent and consecutive, in a space which contains them, and is itself immobile and non-resisting. Then by synthesis we arrive at the notion of a totality of material nature, in which is postulated always something related to some other thing by difference, something consistent or agreeing with itself, something permanent, something succeeding something, something presentative to consciousness, something acting upon something, and something receiving and resisting action.<sup>1</sup>

And when we direct our attention to mental nature, we find corresponding relations as exhibited in Chapter IV., furnishing an exact counterpart in the internal order to what we discover in the external order. Finally, when we make a synthesis of the two orders, we unite them under certain common relations, necessitated by our study of the processes (and their postulates) of knowledge itself. On the side of both the ego and the non-ego there is a substance in which as permanent all their phenomena inhere; there is a cause of all their phenomena of sequence and succession; and though we cannot identify ego substance with non-ego substance, there is a reciprocal action and reaction between them, and also of the things in the respective classes *inter sese*. Under these general relations of coexistences mutually interacting in sequence we form a synthetical whole of nature.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, chap. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* chap. xv.

## CHAPTER X.

*THE ACTUAL AND THE POSSIBLE.*

THE considerations of the preceding chapter indicate that in all cognition whatever there is, as a part of the cognition, a cognition of a negative existence with a positive ; and that the one is just as real objectively as is the other, is just as primary and as necessary. Cognition itself is the formation of a limited positive object out of an unlimited. When this object is formed there is indeed a penumbra perceived, but if followed along any line of radiation it leads into the darkness of ~~non-cognition~~. And the moment we direct the attention to this ~~negative existence~~, we erect it into a ~~positive~~ cognition, declarations respecting which are apparently self-contradictory. Such declarations must inevitably be self-contradictory because in each instance the object cognised is by the supposition *non-A*, but we can only assert of it attributes of *A*.

When mental experience is made the object of thought, this fact of limitation involving an unlimited prevents us from ever being able to think a beginning in time. Carry back our thought as far as we please and the last definite cognition is also a cognition of something beyond not cognised, and which as existing is related to the same subject as is the definite cognition. Again, the necessary idea of duration destroys the thought of a beginning ; for duration negatives succession ; it always is, ~~never was~~, ~~never becomes~~.

The same fact prevents us from ever having a cognition of completeness in regard to actual experience. Whatever I cognise, it is always with the cognition that there is something else to be known in connection with what is the object of cognition. So with regard to cognition of the external world. Whatever enters into my experience, whatever appears, whatever comes and goes, I cognise it only with the factor of cognition that there is some-

thing else in the relations of an external world which is truly existent, but does not appear to me as an object. Things I see, indeed, but there are other things which I do not see.

The course of mental life is a continuous process of presentative cognitions and of representations of them. The law of representation is, in general terms, simply the reproductions of past states with all their accompaniments. But into this order of reproduction breaks the influence of present environment, detaining the attention, arresting the flow of representation, and bringing new experiences into the mind. Moreover, the mental activity is not merely an activity of representation. It also occupies itself in associating likenesses in experience. Not all of past experience is represented, but such portions as contain similarities with present experience; presentative experiences tend to recall their likes in past states. Thus the whole course of conscious experience is a process of integration of past with present states, dropping out links here and there from the chain of representations and forging new ones, consolidating the old and consolidating also the old with the new.<sup>1</sup> The result of all this is the formation of notions, which as wholes are not representative of any past experience. We term them the mind's creations because they rise from that interaction of the presentative with the representative which makes up conscious life. Psychologically we call them *Fictions*.<sup>2</sup>

These fictions we regard as possibilities of experience. There is no centaur but a possibility of one. But we should have no room for the notion of the possible as distinguished from the actual, were it not for this postulate of negative existence of which so much has been said. The unlimited, the unknown, contain the possibilities of being and knowledge. This region we fill with constructions, and in the knowledge of them as possible to experience we have definite cognitions which move us to the extension of experience.

Our conscious life is thus made up of positive actualities of sensational experience environed by a vast negative region of substance and source which is thought as the potentiality of experience, and which we symbolise by the constructive fictions of mental activity. The experiences which were actual to us we represent with the cognition that there were other experiences which did occur to us but which we have forgotten, and that there were others which might conceivably have happened but did not. We then project the past into a future and construct possibilities of experience

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, chaps. xxxii., xxxv.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* chaps. xliii., lii.

to come, and hence strive to make experience, guided both by our cognition of what might be and what has been.

All cognition of the natural, therefore, is knowledge of positive reality and negative reality, respecting which latter we can only say that it exists as a condition and potentiality for positive reality. Its existence we are obliged to postulate, but cannot make it an object of thought save by investing it with the attributes of the positive and contradicting the supposition. But the knowledge that this dark region exists, involving limitless possibilities of experience, and the fact that the mind constructs definite forms of possible experience, enable us both to symbolise the unknown and to form hypotheses for the extension of knowledge, as well as ideals for the determination of conduct.

## CHAPTER XI.

*ELEMENTS OF THE NOTION OF A SUPERNATURAL.*

THE course of exposition of the last two chapters enables us to appreciate more clearly the necessity of the idea of a supernatural which we expressed in Chapter VIII. After we have included in a synthesis *all things*, making a whole of nature, there is still something not included. An absolutely universal concept is impossible. Neither knowledge nor experience of any sort are possible without postulating a supernatural.

The distinguishing characteristic of the notion is the negation of the natural. It is the *non-A* of which nature is the *A*. It corresponds analogically to the space which is cognised with force, to the successionless duration which is known with the successions of mental objects. If nature be the universe of things, the supernatural is the not-universe inevitably existent beyond. It is the atmosphere which surrounds the sphere of nature; and yet not that atmosphere but the space which such atmosphere fills; and yet not that space but the condition both for that space and whatever fills it. It is the duration in which all the events of nature move; and yet not that duration but the condition for that duration. It is the *Is* which never *Becomes*.

Enough has been said to show that in order to think about the supernatural at all we must somehow make it an object to a thinking subject, and that this can only be by ascribing to it the attributes of nature. We must regard it as a whole related to its own parts and also related to nature. We must thus give it a similar framework to that which we give the natural universe, although we exclude it from the latter. We are thus forced to construct a fictitious, symbolical, hypothetical, possible world of relations analogous to the world of nature.

The logical order of construction is of course not the historical.



It is the former with which we have to deal primarily in this work, for we wish to ascertain, if possible, what the nature of our knowledge of the supernatural is and what are its limitations. The natural movement of reflection upon this topic is to exclude. Inasmuch as the primary basic idea arises as a negation, things which actually are in nature we keep denying to the supernatural as in anywise constitutive of it. Our thought is thus continually pushed backward to the most general notions and relations of nature in our search for the essential elements of the psychological notion of a supernatural. Whatever attributes are assigned to supernatural existence, those upon which the reflective mind rests with the least uncertainty and the most confidence are the most general and the farthest from particular sensational experience. For two things we are always compelled to admit in our search: the one that there is a supernatural; the other that the particular thing before me is not the supernatural but natural. Out of a multitude of particulars which I know to be natural, I abstract notions of the forms of all knowledge whatsoever. These I cannot get rid of. Though given in presentative experience, they are fundamental notions with the particulars from which they are generalised, thrown aside, and left behind. They are not the presentative experiences *a, b, c, d, &c.*, which I know were natural events, but they are notions which abide when all these are rejected. I cannot think at all without implying them; they are ideas the farthest possible from the particular, being universal in knowledge. Thus, partly because we cannot avoid them if we would cognise anything whatever, and partly because they exclude all of natural experience that it is possible to exclude in making a theory of things, we carry these universal notions over to the supernatural as a form, or, as I said, a framework for the construction of its possibilities.

Thus, while excluding the supernatural from nature, we form a positive symbolical notion of the former as something existing essentially under relations the most general under which we can cognise anything, and which is itself related to nature as condition for nature, and as nature's possibility. This involves the great antithetical ideas of permanence and change which pervade our knowledge of nature. Thus the supernatural is both static and dynamic. It is the substance and source of the phenomena of nature and their cause as well. It is the condition of all persistence, both statical and dynamical.

## CHAPTER XII.

*EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE  
SUPERNATURAL.*

HENCE when we separate the supernatural from the natural world we yet think the two as related, as substance and attribute, source and event, cause and effect, action and reaction. In the world beyond the natural lies the source of all the events of the latter, the substance to which thought attributes the things perceived, the noumenon of all phenomena, the universal permanence in which all things inhere. There also is the cause of all causes, the first cause, whose effects are manifested in nature, and which constantly acts upon nature. But as soon as we begin to consider the supernatural in its integrity, and having internal relations, we are obliged to give it consistency under precisely the same conditions. Its parts must be related to each other; and these relations are possible in thought only through the idea of mutual action and reaction, which in turn is maintained only through the idea of a statical persistence. Thus the general relations of which we have just spoken are inevitably made the constitutive framework of the supernatural, considered as a whole with parts.

The constructions of the supernatural made by the minds of men are governed by their ideas of the relation of the supernatural to themselves and their interests. The belief in a supernatural as cause of events in the natural world issues among primitive men in the belief that the supernatural world is peopled with intelligent beings by whom the events of natural life are somehow shaped. These are beings of greater power than human beings, at least in some directions. They are able to accomplish what men cannot accomplish, and whatever may be their limitations, they exercise over the affairs of the mundane sphere activities of a more or less controlling influence.

Again, the supernatural universally furnishes a dwelling-place for those who are removed from the natural life by death. Interruptions of consciousness, as in sleep, swoons, and catalepsies, make me aware that my own mental life has been suspended, and leads to the thought that it has temporarily departed from my body; while the phenomena of death unfailingly suggest the idea of a removal of the soul or spirit to some other abode of life than is presented in the visible environment. Observing that death comes to all sooner or later, I believe that I too shall go to that unknown land to which so many I have known have already departed.

Hence, we observe, that the central notion which the mind entertains of the supernatural world comes to be the idea of such a world as a habitat for intelligence. A supernatural inanimate cosmos there may be, but the mind never rests content with this. And the existence of intelligence, as we know it, involves life, and life in turn material conditions suitable for life. Thus from the necessity our thought is under, in forming a notion of a supernatural order, of reproducing the essential elements of the natural world, so in the development of the notion, the leading divisions of natural existence are repeated, and we come to ascribe to supernatural existence an inorganic, an organic, and a superorganic order, and internal relations of a cosmological, biological, and sociological character—all of which are themselves variously related to the natural world.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*THE FACTORS OF CONSTRUCTION.*

WE are now in a position to understand not only the possibility but also the natural necessity of an immense variety in the constructions which men's minds make regarding a supernatural world. It will be as marked as the variety in nature itself. Men's ideas on that topic will be as different as are their environments and the constitutions of their minds. It is now, however, of importance to discover if we can the leading determinative influences in the formation of those notions, and trace them a little more specifically to their natural issues. In attempting this we immediately observe a double order of influences controlling the mind's constructions of the supernatural and its relations. These appear from the considerations of the last chapter.

Since the supernatural is regarded as cause or as furnishing causes of natural events; whatever is, continually impresses itself upon that formative thought which builds up beliefs respecting a world beyond what is not visible and tangible. But since this same world is looked forward to as furnishing opportunity for the realisation of that which is not actual (objectively) but only possible, modifications of the actual order are made by the constructive imagination in establishing its notions of the supernatural.

These modifications are determined by ideals of good, which themselves arise from human experience of pleasure and pain. Of this pair, the former we seek to conserve and perpetuate; the latter to eliminate and avoid, and, as a result, we hold up before the mind pleasurable experiences as ends of attainment. Thus, when we form constructions of a supernatural world, by the laws of mental action itself it is of such a world as we would like to have it. There is a tendency to reduce the painful, the disagreeable, to a minimum. But whatever fictions we may form of a desired condi-

tion of things, there still remains the possibility of something we would avoid. For, in the present life, there is always pain to some degree, and if pain when it occurs is to be attributed to supernatural agency, in the world beyond we may meet with the effects of that same pain-producing cause.

Thus experiences of what is, as effects ascribed to supernatural causes and ideals of what we would desire and choose, reciprocally modifying each other, are the prime factors of our constructions of a supernatural world.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTION.*

THERE is no doubt that the primitive conceptions of the human race respecting a supernatural world people that world with beings having intelligence, feeling, and will. This is abundantly shown by historical evidence. It is true also that the primitive notion of evil as caused by the supernatural is of evil as resulting from the action of intelligent beings in consequence of their displeasure at the objects upon which pain is inflicted. To remove, prevent, or avoid such displeasure, therefore, becomes an object of effort. This involves ascribing some sort of character to the supernatural beings. There must be some uniformity in their likes and dislikes, else to propitiate them would be a vain attempt. Having determined their dispositions and concluded what will win their favour, conduct may be regulated accordingly. And, so far as we look forward to a future existence, we may expect that the same course of conduct, if continued, will secure for us beneficial advantages there.

If we ascribe personality to supernatural beings, our conception of such beings must be anthropomorphic. Though there may be enlargements of particular traits or improvements upon them, the human character is after all the foundation. Consequently our estimates of the dispositions of these beings are made from our observation and knowledge of human dispositions. But here we must emphasise the modifying effects of the second set of influences to which we adverted in the last chapter. The constructive power is continually attempting to improve on present conditions. We form judgments about men according to our experiences with them, and esteem some better than others; at the same time we compare our best men with ideals of a still greater superiority. In one mind such ideals may not be very far in advance of what appears in actual life, while in another's thought they may be a long

distance removed. But whatever they are, we clothe supernatural beings with those ideals. Such beings are not free from earthly conditions, but they exhibit those conditions modified according to our desires and thoughts of what is desirable. Our spirit may be a warrior, like an ancestor slain in battle, but we leave out, in imagination, those traits which seem to us to detract from the character of a great warrior. He will fight and slay, but he is generous and magnanimous, not cruel and pitiless. On the other hand, in a state of society where the warrior is not esteemed a model of virtue, we should not invest a supernatural spirit with the traits of a combatant at all, but rather with those excellences of character which pertain to the man of peace.

We are thus led to the conclusion that the development of imaginative constructions of supernatural beings is governed by precisely the same laws that control the development of ideals of excellence of character in general, as modified, however, by the ascription of particular events and conditions to such beings as caused or supported by them. I may set up as my household god a very noble, admirable character; but if my house burns down, and I attribute the burning either to the purpose or the negligence of this being, my ideal of him is straightway affected. Although, in such case, I may esteem the spirit good, and myself suffering punishment because I am bad, it is much more natural and more common to consider the spirit as the evil-doer. I am prone to banish him, regard him as a wicked spirit, and to rest my hopes and bestow my homage upon another if I can find one. Men do not like to have their gods accused of actions toward them which they esteem wicked. And that there may be such evil spirits is evident from the fact that men are both good and evil. Moreover, if the dead inhabit the supernatural world, the evil are there as well as the good.

Consequently, there proceeds in the formation of ideas of a supernatural world a differentiation of good from evil, and evil from good, as characterising the beings inhabiting that world. But this necessitates a limitation of the powers of those beings and an opposition between them. The good and the bad are antagonistic. What one would do the other would prevent; what one has done the other would undo. Warfare and conflict are thus carried over into the supernatural region.

When once this separation begins in thought, there commences also integration of each group. The good have their points of

resemblance and affinity, as have also the bad. Whatever we learn to consider good in human beings is assigned to perfect the character of good spirits, while anything that we come to regard as bad is added unto the bad spirits. There is a progressive development in our ideas both of evil spirits and of good. So also in their relations to each other. The society of the good is organised and integrated, and also the society of the bad. There is supereminence in goodness and in badness, with refinements of each in all possible varieties.

Hence, from the interaction of the two prime factors of construction which we noted in the last chapter, we first find in the process of construction a supernatural world, a differentiation of good from evil, and a progressive integration of the ideas of each.

In the second place, we notice a remarkable fact universally appertaining to the advancement of knowledge. In the primitive conditions of mankind natural events are considered as directly produced by supernatural beings. There is a spirit in every wind and every fall of rain. The mountains, the meadows, the floods, and the forests are tenanted with deities who accomplish the various effects seen in the course of nature's operations. The intercourse of the supernatural with the natural is thus immediate, continuous, and omnipresent, and thoughts of supernatural action are in the mind of every one. These thoughts are more prominently in the direction of inquiring how to avoid the wrath of these spirits so near and so liable to affect human interests, for pain inflicted or suffered is a greater stimulus to action than hopes of reward beyond immunity from evil. But these latter hopes do arise and have their influence. As knowledge progresses, however, the discovery of uniformities in the action of physical forces taking place independently of any direct agency of spirits, and the synthesis of these uniformities into laws of material nature, tend to expel supernatural agents from their immediate connection with natural events of human experience, and to remove them farther and farther away. The wrath of a deity is no longer supposed to be the explanation of a lightning stroke or of a flood. The irregular interference of a personal will with the operation of natural causes is no longer dreaded. Thus the direct connection of certain human actions with the anger or approval of supernatural spirits is weakened. The course of nature is unaltered by worship and supplication. It is left for men only to ascertain and depend upon nature's uniformities. Natural causes occupy thought, and the supernatural is removed backward.



The effect of this is to give freer scope for the development of ideals of excellence in our constructions of the supernatural world. No longer troubled by fears of a present and immediately avenging spirit to inflict punishment for conduct, the tendency is to ascribe to deities such attributes as we would like them to have, embodying in our conceptions of them our highest ideals of beauty and goodness. The deity becomes a being to whom we are drawn, no longer a being by whom we are compelled.

Thus the development of notions of a supernatural world as knowledge increases exhibits ideas of a deity or deities with amiable characteristics, progressively superseding ideas of such deities with harm-producing dispositions. And yet the domination of fear is not wholly destroyed. The presence of evil in nature obliges us to seek a first cause of that evil. Hence evil supernatural beings are not dispensed with, but the belief in the ultimate triumph of good over evil strengthens; and with this goes an increased tendency to centre the religious sentiments about an ideal of supernatural being or beings invested with all those attributes we term good. Men build their faith more upon the benevolent and beneficent and less upon the wrathful and revengeful deities.

As a further consequence the divorcement of morality from religion is made more fixed and certain. With the direct and frequent or constant providential control of supernatural beings over the world conduct is governed by the supposed will of those beings, or some of them, and, as just stated, propitiation is of the utmost consequence. Conduct thus tends to receive its laws from assumed divine commands, communicated with authority either directly or through favoured individuals. But when the supernatural as cause is thrown back, and events found to take place according to natural uniformities, conduct becomes founded on natural circumstances and regulated by natural laws. Morality thus tends to become solely a matter of social conditions, and conduct so far as affected by the supernatural becomes governed more and more by ideals freely constructed. There is fear, to be sure, regarding the future existence, with the idea of pains and penalties for bad actions and rewards for good, but the standard of goodness is permanently changed from obedience to authority to the demands of life in an organic society. And out of this recognition of an organic social development according to which the laws of moral conduct shape themselves, grow also ideals of improvement over existing conditions. These are carried on to the supernatural

world as ideals of perfection, to be realised by effort, and instead of morality deriving its rules from religion, the latter receives its form and distinguishing character from morality itself.

The constructive activity is characteristically æsthetic; and the predominant feature of æsthetic interests is the avoidance or minimising of the disagreeable. The ideal formed is a pleasurable one for contemplation. Ideals of the ugly we do not have, but of the beautiful, the true, and the good, as they are to us. Hence the development of ideals follows the course of the development of pleasurable interests, and this is concurrent with the course of evolution, which is all the while changing the objects of those interests in the progress of adaptation of organism to environment. Heredity furnishes a constitution exhibiting certain fundamental appetites and instincts; education and circumstances modify these. The mind in forecasting ends of activity is governed by its experiences of pleasure and pain, and though in its constructions of possible pleasure it improves upon past experience, it nevertheless deals solely with objects which experience has taught it to appreciate as pleasurable. Obviously, then, one man's ideals will be different from another's, even at the same time and in the same community; much more at different times and under a different environment. What a person considers beautiful and good will depend upon his character, that is upon his sentiments, that is upon his intellectual, emotional, and volitional development.

The law of evolution thus furnishes the key to the progressive changes exhibited in the conceptions men have of a supernatural. Again we are relegated to the natural. In nature we always find our point of departure for all acquisition of knowledge as to a supernatural, and for all explanations of how men come to entertain the ideas of such a supernatural which they actually do entertain.

## CHAPTER XV.

*COSMOLOGICAL, BIOLOGICAL, AND SOCIOLOGICAL NOTIONS.*

WE have already remarked that the cosmology of the supernatural world is almost invariably constructed with reference to biological needs. Living beings are first supposed, and then a habitat made for them. An uninhabited supernatural universe is not of enough consequence to trouble men's minds either in primitive or highly developed conditions. But with ideas of life in such a world come correspondent beliefs as to the environment in which life is sustained. In all these constructions of another sphere of existence, we first notice the removal of the limitations which we originally saw were the generating causes of religious sentiments—namely, the limitation of activity and of knowledge. Beings in the supernatural world have more power and they know more. Their chains are removed, and mystery is abolished in greater or less degree. So far as power is concerned, the thought of a removal of the clogs and hindrances which the body imposes upon the mind is a prominent feature. Locomotion for the most part is made easier and more certain. Considerations of space are of no importance to spirits. Nourishment is unnecessary, or, if not so, nectar and ambrosia, refined articles of food and drink, furnish what subsistence is needed. Even where the supernatural life is pictured as very realistic, still this idea of a release from plaguing and hindering obstacles to activity is always present. And with this goes the hope of a throwing down of the barriers to knowledge. The secrets of the universe, the causes of things, the purposes of nature and nature's movements, are believed to be known to those who live in this world beyond the natural.

It is really the same thing in other words, to say that the ideal formed is of a life wherein all desires are satisfied and there is no

pain. Not only sickness and death are thrown out, but the positive aspirations, inclinations, and purposes formed by the soul are gratified and realised. Life is a continued joy and peace. Thus, whatever things at different times and with different individuals have been deemed as important constituents of such an existence, have been placed among the phenomena and laws of supernatural life, without very much regard to consistency or even harmony with other supposed laws.

The differentiation of good from evil is not an exception to the method of construction just indicated. For it is a part of the desire of men that those they deem to be guilty or wicked should suffer punishment. There would be no peace in heaven if the evil-minded were not safely confined in hell. But even in the ideas of an abode of the damned, this notion of a removal of limitation is conspicuous. The torment is eternal, the inhabitants see things in their true relations, they know their own wickedness and the happy lot of the good. Even their susceptibilities to pain are heightened. Their vitals, torn out by vultures, speedily are restored for renewed torture. Ixion has new vitality, and Sisyphus receives new strength for his endless task.

Under these two laws, the one of elimination of pain and the other of positive satisfaction of desires, the cosmology and biology of the supernatural world has been developed in great diversities. Conditions of the existence of things that please the eye and satisfy the organic appetites of human beings are everywhere supposed. Light and heat are supplied, atmosphere, flowers, fields, songs of birds, fruits, delicacies to eat and drink, satisfaction of the appetite for rest and that of sex, objects of æsthetic interest in the surroundings—just according to the idiosyncrasies of individuals modified by the declarations of authority, embodied in a priesthood or in common sentiment. It may be safely said that, according to a man's ruling desires will his heaven be, save the changes produced by authority as just remarked.

Peopling the supernatural world with beings of defined personality, involving ideas of a supernatural society, as was pointed out in Chapter XII., necessitates some notion of government of such a society. But this idea of social government brings back the restrictions which the constructive power seeks to do away with. There must be some constraint, some law, some power to enforce law. It is natural for every man to desire that his own will may become law for others, but he knows full well that others

may not submit to this. Coercive power he thus believes in as against other people, and after a time learns to submit himself also to such power. Consequently the idea of law in the supernatural society is inevitable in the very notion of such a society.

The idealising capacity which is always improving on present conditions is content with nothing less than the perfection of power. And thus the tendency is to create some sort of controlling authority in the society of the higher world. But the same capacity exercises itself in the direction of eliminating the painful, the disagreeable, the evil. So that ideals of supernatural power and goodness arise and tend to approach each other, the endeavour being to identify the administration of law with the perfection of goodness.

The existence of evil makes this last a matter of extreme difficulty. That evil happens in this world we all concede. Bad people exist. Why are they so? And what becomes of them? Connecting untoward events with supernatural agencies, there seem to be bad spirits as well as bad men. What is their source and what is their power? As we build up our supernatural universe we find that we enlarge power at the expense of goodness. The fact that things are as they are, and must have their causes, comes back and stands for ever in our way as obstructing that course of thought which is eternally aiming to create, sustain, and realise an ideal of a perfect state.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*ANIMISM, POLYTHEISM, MONOTHEISM, AND PANTHEISM.*

IT is not the purpose of this work to discuss at length the historical evidences of the rise of religious beliefs among primitive men, but I deem the weight of evidence to be in favour of the doctrine of ancestor worship as furnishing the archaic form of religion. Whatever conclusion may eventually be reached upon this point, it is certain that the statement made in previous chapters, to the effect that the constitution of men's minds is such that they always people the supernatural world with intelligent souls or spirits, is fully confirmed by historical and sociological researches. And whether or not deities took their rise from exaggerations of departed family chiefs, it is clear that the chieftainship idea is the foundation one in the idea of deity. There is undoubtedly a tendency to magnify a deceased ancestor; and if there be spirits in communication with each other in another world, the notion of a society of these beings is inevitable. It is very natural, therefore, for the descendant to regard the prowess or excellence of any sort of his ancestor as sufficient to entitle the latter to, and actually secure for him, the position of a ruler in such a society. Be that as it may, the fact of a society of such beings necessitates the social order referred to at the close of the last chapter.

Thus having given animism, polytheism in its various forms is an inevitable development. And, if there be polytheism, there must be a government of the gods themselves. The differentiation of good from evil of which we spoke in a preceding chapter (Chapter XIV.) is necessitated, and with this the limitations of power, to which also allusion was made. Hence the supernatural society of polytheism tends to become an aristocracy wherein human beings after death constitute the populace, not indeed of

equal rank but one above another according to merit, and now and then one raised to the position of a deity, while beings of original supernatural standing rule within certain spheres or departments, and preside over the destinies of mortals under limitations arising from the existence of fellow deities of various grades of power.

But the existence of such limitations requires a further elaboration of ideas by the constructive power, in order to complete the notion of a divine social order. The government of the gods demands the establishment of a higher unity to control these divine principalities. Thus the Greek religion derived all the gods from Oceanus and Tethys, and, not content with setting up Zeus as the God of gods, made even him dependent upon and obedient to Fate. And so in the systematisation of divine powers and functions necessitated by polytheism, there goes along a subordination and a superordination, resulting in the establishment of a supernatural hierarchy with some supreme Head. The process of integration and unification continues until we have the conception of a Divine Monarch, with the lesser deities reduced to the rank of ministers and agents. This one God is the ruler of the supernatural society, the absolute arbiter of the destinies of mortals. Moreover, he is considered as the source and cause of everything. Not only is there a synthesis of social powers but also of physical forces, so that in Him the laws of nature find a unity as in One from whom all things proceed. And again—not only in such a being are united the notions of source and cause, but also the idea of Him as security for the realisation of the possible and the desirable. Men regard this deity as author and sustainer of everything, and also esteem Him to be the pattern of everything that their constructive activity projects as desirable to be realised.

The monotheistic conception of supernatural society is characteristically monarchical and autocratic; the polytheistic is in like manner aristocratic. There is another view, much less common, but which is sure to have a greater development in the future if democratic political ideas continue increasingly to prevail. This is the conception of a democratic supernatural social order. It is naturally affiliated with some forms of what is called pantheism. The universe is one of which all the parts are self-existent and uncreated. Nature and the ego are alike, in each distinct individuality, portions of a divine unity. The development of nature is the development of the divine substance of which

matter and mind are but modes. The supernatural then is an extension of nature, and nature is not different in kind from the supernatural, but is, to speak paradoxically, a part of that supernatural.

Such doctrine has frequently tended to the abolition (in thought) both of divine or supernatural personality, and of human personality as continuing after death. Though nothing in the universe is destroyed in its substance, life and human personality exhibit but phases of being which pass away. Fate rules, and the order of events is determined by unintelligent law. And yet the pantheistic principles do not necessarily exclude the idea of a society of persons existing in another world. But where such a society is recognised under those principles, the logical outcome is that the ruling power is within the individuals, and not in a person without set over the others. There is, indeed, a supernatural force or power, which sustains all things, and manifests itself in all things; but whose presence in each person forbids the claim to a personally ruling, supreme, divine headship upon the part of any other.

We have now followed the process of construction of the supernatural into its leading conceptions of a world furnishing a dwelling-place for intelligent beings, and of the relations of mankind to such a world. We have not, of course, specified all the varieties of such conceptions, nor have we discussed at all, or even indicated, the difficulties in the way of a rational belief in any one of them. We have, however, gone far enough to see the general course of development of human ideas on these subjects. It is now important for us to make some inquiry into the truth of these beliefs, and to ascertain, if we are able, what grounds there are for any judgment as to the truth or untruth of conceptions of the supernatural as they are elaborated by the constructive powers of the human mind.



## CHAPTER XVII.

*TRUTH.*

TRUTH is a body of true propositions. A truth is a true proposition. A proposition is the expression in words of a judgment. A judgment is a cognition that two or more objects before the mind agree or differ. All the elaborations of knowledge are the results of acts of judgment. True judgments are those which are in congruity with general experience. False judgments are those not in such congruity. Doubtful judgments are those whose truth or falsity is in suspense.<sup>1</sup>

Referring judgments to the most general classes which we can form, we are able to say that all judgments are included within the categories of quantity, existence or quality, coexistence and succession. The whole process of the mind is one of detecting and establishing uniformities. Truths then are truths of one of these four varieties.

As to whether or not I have at present a given cognition, the question of truth or falsity is irrelevant. If I have the cognition I have it, and know that I have it. Truth or untruth appertains to this cognition with reference to something else. So far as the individual experience is concerned, a past or a future is taken into the account. I may judge that a certain experience happened to me in the past. This judgment may be true or false. I am liable to be mistaken; my memory may fail me in this instance; I may confound my own experience with that of some one else. In order to obtain certitude I must verify the judgment by comparisons with other experiences of my own represented or with the experiences of others. I may also judge that a certain experience will happen to me in the future. Strictly speaking, there is no way of determining the truth or falsity of this judgment, for there

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, chap. li.

has been no experience of the objects involved. Our guaranty of its truth is the uniformity of nature. What has been in the past under like conditions will recur. The accuracy of the judgment depends upon the accuracy of our estimates of conditions. Based upon ascertained uniformities we predicate truth or falsity of propositions respecting future occurrences.

Judgments of truth or falsity involve that form of cognition termed belief. This relates to representative cognition. I do not *believe* that I feel cold ; I *feel* cold. I believe that I did feel cold yesterday or that I shall feel cold to-morrow. The question of truth or falsity, then, is to the individual mind a question of belief. I say 'It is true,' meaning 'I believe that it is true.' My belief is itself determined by represented experiences. When these representations establish a congruity between past experiences and a present judgment, the latter is esteemed to be true ; otherwise false.

We believe in many things of which we have had no presentative experience. This belief in existences and events not cognised immediately is substantially that in a given condition of circumstances we should have had certain experiences or that in a given condition we shall have them. Here belief requires an idea of the object, event, or fact to be believed ; an idea of certain other objects, events, or facts existing antecedently to the first idea ; and an expectation that certain experiences will occur. The idea both of the object and of the antecedent or conditional circumstance is a reproduction as a whole or in its parts of past experiences. The belief, therefore, resolves itself into memory and expectation, and, as before, depends for its validity upon the uniformity of nature.

Belief in existences and events not within our immediate experience depends largely upon the testimony of others. But this necessitates the prior belief that the testimony is credible. This last again is dependent upon ascertained uniformities. Experience has taught me that certain kinds of testimony, or testimony given under certain circumstances, is credible, and I include the particular case under this generalisation and accept the testimony as true.<sup>1</sup>

The basis of all truth, then, is the presentative experience of the individual as connected with a past and a future of time. As to past experience, truth is primarily determined by memory. This is supported by the testimony of others. As to the future, truth is

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, chap. xxxvi.

fixed by uniformities of past experience. As to coexisting facts, beyond immediate experience, we estimate truth upon testimony according to our idea of credibility, which is itself determined by the uniformities of our own past, made available by the representative power.

It is thus obvious that all our knowledge postulates and requires belief; and that the great body of truth is a collection of inferences, which, nevertheless, have meaning only in a consciousness having an intuitive experience. The validity of inferences is the subject of the science of logic, which has been carried to a high degree of perfection.

There are two or three common errors *à propos* of the theme of this chapter which it may be well for us to notice. The first is that there is a higher order of certitude in what is termed our knowledge than in what we call our beliefs. This implies a distinction for which there is no foundation, and which is mischievous. No antithesis can properly be made between knowledge and belief. It is just as true that I breathed yesterday as that I breathe at this moment; and if I am less certain that an event happened yesterday which I know as now happening, it is not because I know the latter and believe the former, but because the associations are such in the former case as to induce a weaker belief, that is, they tend to *disbelief*, which, however, is still belief.<sup>1</sup> There is no cognition whatever without belief. Belief is a constituent of the process of knowing.

The second error I propose to mention here is the proneness to consider that those primordial judgments and expressions of them upon which all reasoning depends, since they are involved in all cognition, are either doubtful as to truth or of a lower degree of certainty than the inferences which are only made by means of them. Assuming that the propositions which have been set forth in the preceding chapters as postulates are correctly set forth, the fact that they are postulates gives them a truth of the very highest degree of certitude. Since they are implied in all knowledge they are universally true, and hence called necessary truths. They are reached in their express form through generalisation, but they are found in every cognition, in all mental experience. It would be strange, indeed, if expressions of the constitutive elements of all cognition were not themselves true.

In this connection occurs the third remark to be made upon

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, chap. xxxvi.

common misunderstandings of the limitations with respect to the truth of universal propositions. The misunderstanding of which we complain grows out of a misapplication of some of the principles of logic. For instance, there is the fundamental rule, 'Of contradictions both cannot be true; one must be true and the other false.' So also contraries mutually exclude each other, though both may be false. We may not affirm, at the same time, that All A is B, and Some A is not B, nor that All A is B, and No A is B. This doctrine means that whatever we may make the terms of a judgment it must have consistency. If A exist,  $A=A$ . If we form a cognition we must abide by it as formed and not substitute another in the process of inference. But no process of deductive reasoning will tell us whether or not A exists. For this we must appeal to direct experience, and to establish the truth that A exists we must reason inductively. When we make this appeal to presentative experience we have A given as existing but always with non-A. It seems no contradiction, therefore, to say that both A and non-A exist. But the universal contradiction arises in the process of representation and integration. As before pointed out, we are obliged to associate A and non-A in reproducing the latter in terms of the former. And, by-and-by, when we have got a general notion *existence* we find that its common character is attributes that belong to A. If then we declare that  $A=All$  that exists, to assert that non-A exists is a contradiction. The difficulty is that the first of these propositions is not true. Assuming its truth, the latter is of course false. But no proposition which predicates the exclusive existence of any subject is true; it is itself a contradiction. No absolutely universal concept can be formed. In assuming to form such and to make affirmations from it of exclusive existence, or implying this, we invariably contradict ourselves. Now that such contradiction exists is a fact of which science must take account. But it is not, therefore, true that there is no truth. It is only true that knowledge is limited and solely valid within those limitations. We deal in logic with positive judgments; but logic teaches us also that all positive judgments imply corresponding judgments between privative cognitions. Every X implies its not-X, every Y its not-Y. But if we reason about X or not-X as a universal, we are involved in a contradiction because an absolutely universal cannot be thought.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

*THE TRUTH OF CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE  
SUPERNATURAL.*

IF our exposition of the nature of truth be correct, it will be seen that all propositions, in order to be susceptible of truth or its opposite, must be in their nature at least susceptible of verification by observation and experiment; otherwise the term 'truth' has no relevancy. We may not be able to verify, but the possibility of verification must be there. Whether a proposition be actually true or not depends upon the verification, and this verification is in the last resort the presentative experience of the individual. As to many things we have this last, and thus have the highest kind of proof. Proceeding from this, we have all degrees of probable evidence, from the testimony of others and from deductions and inductions made on the basis of our own past experience of one sort or another. It is certain that knowledge grows; that we can make discoveries, that something of what is known to-day was not known yesterday. Hence we conclude that more truth remains to be found, and by the formation of hypotheses and ideals feel our way into the unknown. By the various kinds and degrees of evidence we come to believe that, if we were present under certain circumstances, certain particular experiences would happen to us presentatively. Propositions which indicate those experiences we then say are true, or we believe them to be true, the certitude varying according to our own mental constitution with respect to requisites for conviction.

It is obvious that not every construction of the supernatural made by the human mind is one faithful to truth. For the most diverse and indeed contradictory affirmations have been made regarding the world beyond nature and its relations to natural existence. Hence, the mere fact that a person forms pictures or

theories in his own mind upon the subject is no evidence of the truth of the same. We may go farther than this, and say that the fact that a person forms such ideas and believes them to express truth is not proof in itself of their accuracy. The human mind is so constituted that it may readily believe that to be true which is not true at all. There must be some further confirmation before we are entitled to rest.

Men might ascertain the truth of their notions of a supernatural world if they could have direct experience of such a world. This would be the best and most complete proof. I form an idea that there is a city Vienna, and have certain particular notions about that city. I mentally construct the town. Now when I go to Vienna I have proof or disproof of the truth of my construction. In like manner, if I could visit a supernatural community, I could verify my own imaginings with reference to it, and have a surer foundation for my beliefs.

If I have not visited or cannot visit the supernatural world, in case any one else has visited it, I can examine his statements and accept them if I deem them to be credible. I may thus find confirmation or disproof of my theories.

In like manner I may be informed by some communication from supernatural beings of the features of extra-natural life, or, if I am not so informed, I may receive testimony from others who say they have been so enlightened.

Beyond these proofs, which may be styled Direct, we may form hypotheses based upon our knowledge of nature and the progress of natural events, including therein the constitution and development of the human mind both individually and socially considered. These hypotheses cannot be directly verified, but to support them there may be found many probable arguments, varying greatly in the degree of probability to be attached to them.

It will not be denied that whatever may have been the fortune of some, the vast majority of the human race has had no direct presentative experience of a supernatural world, and no direct recognisable communication from any supernatural being of known personality.

It is also the fact that no way has been indicated by which mankind generally can in this life, if any one desires to do so, have direct communication with a supernatural world. No rule has been laid down the observance or pursuit of which brings this presentative knowledge with anything like general certainty.

This being allowed, it is necessary to accept the testimony of the favoured few who assert that they have had the experience in question as furnishing the data for whatever direct knowledge we possess upon the subject. But before accepting this testimony as expressing truth, we must both consider the witness and examine the testimony with a view to determining antecedently the credibility of the latter.

This credibility, as was observed in another chapter (chapter xvii.), itself depends upon ascertained uniformities of experience. There are no different rules for this class of testimony from those obtaining with any other class ; and these rules are made up from human experience of the order of nature.

In the first place it is necessary to understand how such direct experience of a supernatural world is possible upon our knowledge of the constitution and capacities of man. It has sometimes been claimed that particular persons have in the body before death been removed to supernatural regions and have returned therefrom ; but it is not assuming too much to say that such claims are no longer esteemed of any validity, and are not urged as furnishing a foundation for assertions about the supernatural. The known conditions of physical life are such as to preclude belief in such a claim in the absence of some explanation of the cosmological location and constituents of such a world, and the means by which the translation took place, or at least appeared to take place. No explanation of this character is ever afforded.

But it is frequently urged that there is a spiritual communication with the supernatural which does give direct information, and that the witness of this is credible. While there are differences in men with regard to the degree of their knowledge and of their ability to gain knowledge, no examination of the human mental constitution has ever disclosed any difference in the modes or faculties of knowing. The process of cognition is the same for all men. So that, in order to understand the spiritual communication we are obliged to resort to psychological science to ascertain how, if at all, it is possible. Psychological science discloses that the only way in which the mind attains knowledge of objects outside of itself is by sensations which arise in connection somehow with movements of the nervous matter : that is to say, in natural modes and under natural laws. That there do arise in the mind ideas which, though representative of past sensations, are yet as wholes not copies of any precedent experience we have been endeavouring

to make plain. The problem is to verify these, or any one of them, as having actual objective correspondents in any external world.

There are indeed those who claim that, as a part of the psychological constitution of man, a Reason exists which sees the supernatural and the divine as the sense perception beholds its objects. I have elsewhere discussed this claim in full,<sup>1</sup> with the conclusion that there is no such faculty. The discussion need not be repeated here. If, however, there be no such intuition, then this knowledge of a supernatural must arise through the constructive power working upon the materials furnished by sensation. From such a power and its exercise we may infer the truth of statements relating to a supernatural, but we do not have therein a direct proof of it. So that, in order to obtain the highest degree of certitude, we must have a recognisable communication through the senses from some supernatural being.

If we suppose that such a communication is made it is still given under natural laws. If it is a voice heard it delivers a message which is itself but testimony. The circumstances may be such as to excite awe, if we please, and impress the belief in the truthfulness of the utterances, but if the experience is not an hallucination, it is testimony coming through nature in some way, but the truth of which it is beyond the individual's power to verify, at least until after death.

If the communication of alleged knowledge of the supernatural comes through trances and in dreams, it is equally unverifiable in this life. The person having the experience may believe, but he has not himself any mode of justifying his belief.

Thus upon considering the subject we see that the direct communication with the supernatural world had by any person, upon the basis of which we are asked to build up our beliefs, must either be :—

(a) Audible testimony ; (b) visions in sleep or trance ; or (c) direct intuition by a reason. Leaving out the last, for the reasons above-mentioned, we are unable to discover any way in which even the person having the experience can have any certainty as to the truth conveyed. For if the information comes in a dream or trance, there is no way of determining that the whole experience is not as deceptive as any hallucination. Many dreams and visions are grossly deceptive. How is it possible to know that these are not? In like manner, whatever the audible testimony may be,

<sup>1</sup> *System of Psychology*, chap. lvii.



there is nothing to enable the mind to establish its credibility. The voice may be an hallucination; if not, it is a voice saying words of the truth of which from the nature of the case no inferences whatever can be drawn from any data establishing a reasonable conviction that what is said is true.

But whatever beliefs may be generated in the mind of a person who has had experiences of the character which we have been considering, they cannot be assured to those who have not had them. The final test of truth is universal agreement, and there is no agreement whatever of experiences of this kind. Even if the person reporting be honest and intelligent there is no ground for certainty, because no means of verification; while there is a very general experience of both the inaccuracy and self-deception of men on the one hand and of their mendacity on the other.

The case is not strengthened by any averments of alleged miracles to support divine communication. The reception of miracles upon testimony is open to all the objections just mentioned. There is no ground for the one witnessing the miracle to predicate anything upon its occurrence, nor is there any power of verifying the accounts of a miracle which are received upon testimony. In this view the accounts of alleged resurrections from the dead are not credible. And quite independently of the foregoing remarks, it must be said that no one of these accounts has any historical support which will bear thorough examination. Few persons of even ordinary intelligence, who are unbiassed by religious authority, will find as a result of careful study any warrant whatever for the belief that such a resurrection ever transpired.

The result of all these considerations is that there are no direct proofs which can support any construction whatever of the supernatural so as to enable us to affirm anything more than its possibility. The fact that we entertain such a given construction is evidence of its possibility under appropriate conditions. More than this we cannot say. For any further ground of belief we are relegated to the region of probability and hypothesis. The absence of any general method by which the supernatural sphere may be visited by human beings according to some uniformity of law, universal experience being that there is no such method, the preponderance of rational evidence against the credibility of any one who claims that he has visited and seen the supernatural world is utterly overwhelming. In like manner the lack of any general method of recognisable communication in this life with those who live under

supernatural conditions finally compels us to reaffirm the statement at the head of this paragraph, with the certainty that it expresses the present scientific truth of the matter.

It will now be seen that the determination of the probabilities of the truth of any hypothesis we may form with respect to the supernatural depends primarily upon the antecedent probability or improbability of a continuity of personal existence after the change we call death. The truth of any definite construction of the supernatural can never be verified except upon a projection of experience itself into the supernatural world. If we may suppose a power to enter this region in life or to occupy it after death in our conscious personality, we have, or may have, an opportunity to prove or disprove the affirmations we may be led to make. The former of these suppositions we have just seen to be negatived by universal experience. Interest then centres around the latter. Before we can by indirect proofs, inductive or deductive, find any tenable basis for asserting the probable truth of any of our hypotheses, cosmological, biological, or sociological, we must investigate the question of personal immortality.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*THE CONTINUITY OF PERSONALITY.*

THERE are two directions in which the methods of science can be employed with reference to this subject. Both are methods of observation and experiment, principally the former. One is introspective observation of the facts and laws of the human mind, the other is extrinsic observation of what we are accustomed to call the external world. From the latter we get all the knowledge we have of death. What conscious life is we only know by subjective experience. Regarding consciousness introspectively, we find ourselves unable to think even an interruption of consciousness, much less its total and final destruction. It will at once be allowed that the individual cannot remember the time when I was not I. Closer examination reveals that I cannot even suppose a time when I was not, nor am I able to conceive that I can cease to be. To declare either involves a contradiction in my thought. If we had none of the evidence of disappearance and disintegration which is involved in the death of others, we should never have the thought that our conscious mental life could cease, nor even if one were at the point of death would such an idea be possible for him to entertain.

When, however, we look upon the world about us, we see beings seemingly endowed with consciousness like our own. Thus we are compelled to infer and we reason accordingly. In the first place, we notice with all these beings that the signs of conscious life are periodically absent as in sleep, or irregularly suspended as in swoons. Consciousness is interrupted. We even infer this with respect to ourselves by the observation of changes for which we cannot account upon any other supposition. Secondly, we frequently behold an enfeeblement of mental powers, proceeding concomitantly with bodily decay and tending toward a total

extinguishment. Memory is often lost, the power of ratiocination likewise, and also self-control. Then come the extremes of mania and idiocy. All these diseased conditions indicate diseased conditions of the nervous system. As just pointed out, we learn that consciousness can be interrupted. Now we are forced to ask, if mind is progressively impaired as the nervous structure is disintegrated, does not the total disintegration of the latter irresistibly argue the total destruction of the former? And as a matter of fact, when death arrives, the evidences of conscious personality all disappear, the flame goes out and is not relighted. Then follows a complete disintegration of the organised body, in connection with which we knew this personality. We are not able to trace any dissolution of mind, further than just stated—that is, its evidences disappear. Life ceases, and with it mind ceases to be manifest to us; the body is disintegrated, and the processes of this disintegration we can follow to a considerable extent.

The phenomena of the so-called external world are interpreted by the best scientific intelligence under those laws which have for a nucleus the persistence of force of Mr. Herbert Spencer. Technical physical science having attached a more specific and limited meaning to the term *force*, many would prefer the expression *conservation of energy* to the one above employed. This latter doctrine is that when one kind of energy disappears, energy of some other kind is produced, and that in the transformation nothing is lost quantitatively; or, in words of the other formula, forces are mutually convertible at given rates, and in the conversion no force is lost. Involved with this truth are the truths that force is persistent, matter is indestructible, and motion is consecutive or persistent. When, for instance, the ball strikes the rock, the mechanical motion, or some of it, is changed into thermal motion. Mechanical force ceases and heat is evolved. Now, in the progress of scientific knowledge, we give a name to each definite unanalysable form of force or energy, and assign to it an indestructible reality which we express in such ways as just remarked. We are compelled to do this by the conditions of all knowledge. If, then, mechanical force, A, disappears, and energy as heat, B, appears, in the disappearance of A we cannot put it out of existence. We say A and B are correlated; this means that they coexist and under proper conditions A can be made to reappear. If this were not so, something could become nothing, matter could be destroyed, motion could be annihilated, and force

would not be persistent. Suppose, then, that the form of organising energy, which we call life, be indicated by C, while A and B symbolise the mechanical and chemical forces of the inorganic world: if A and B are correlated with C, the conversion of A and B or either of them into C, or of C into A or B, means in the one case the disappearance of A or B and the appearance of C, in the other the converse. When C disappears we cannot by any possibility of thought annihilate it. If it be a distinct reality, it co-exists with A and B, is persistent, abides somehow and somewhere. Then, by parity of reasoning, if consciousness is a form of physical energy, D, and is correlated with C, B, A, or any or all of them, we have no more power of thinking of its destruction than we have of the destruction of any other form of energy. D disappears, but if in any wise dependent upon C, or B, or A, under the laws of persistence or transformation of energy it still exists. It has disappeared, but under proper conditions it will come back and be manifested as before. So far forth, then, as consciousness is to be interpreted by the phenomena of the world external to the ego, it must be interpreted by the laws of the conservation of energy, and so far forth as explained by those laws it must be held as indestructible. Certainly if consciousness be material, it is for ever persistent. The necessity of correlated forces being coexistent has been overlooked by philosophers and scientists.<sup>1</sup> If force A is transformed into force B, either A still exists, though it has disappeared, and can under appropriate conditions be made to reappear, or an act of annihilation and special creation has been performed as inexplicable as any that theologian ever asserted.

However much information we may derive from a study of the world outside consciousness, it is clear we cannot get along without introspection even in attaining a scientific knowledge of external objects. Indeed, if we reflect carefully, we shall soon find the idea suggesting itself that there are in strictness no 'external' objects, but I do not think the use of the term is upon the whole objectionable. At all events when we come to inquire what constitutes an ultimate form of energy, we discover that it is determined entirely by the answer that is given to the question, What are the ultimate modes of sensibility? Heat, we say, is a mode of motion. Motion, however, is understood only with reference to the muscular sense. Certain vibrations there are, to be sure, antecedent to the sensation of warmth; but all the vibrations in the world will not give heat

<sup>1</sup> *System of Psychology*, vol. i. chap. xvii.

unless there is contact with certain nerves so formed as to develop that sensation. And though we may try to explain heat in terms of motion according to the law of correlation, we can in fact only explain it by itself. It may be produced by material motions, but in last resort, heat is heat, and not the sensation of the muscular sense. Similarly with light and with sound. We are in each case driven back to certain ultimate varieties of sensation. And this is our court of last resort.

Our course of investigation thus must needs pass from the material to the mental sphere. Here we at once discover that a state of consciousness is only to be explained by itself in any of its aspects. A feeling is a feeling, a cognition is a cognition. But though each of these is an ultimate and unanalysable aspect of consciousness, which itself can be resolved into nothing but consciousness, we can observe how states of consciousness are related, and propose to ourselves the problem—How is knowledge possible? One thing is speedily disclosed; that is, there can be no consciousness without representation. It is necessary for perception even. Equally is it indispensable for all purposes of comparison. A sensation occurs and is followed by another; we are wholly unable to make any comparison between the two without reproducing the first; we can say that B, which is present, is unlike A, which has departed, only representing A in fainter form *a* for comparison. Memory is everywhere necessary to conscious mental life.

How we know an experience as representative is the mystery of mysteries. Stuart Mill thought it inexplicable, and no one has succeeded in resolving the experience into anything more ultimate. How do I know that the cognition *a* is representative of a sensation A, which once occurred to me? How do I know I saw a horse running away while I was walking yesterday? There is no answer save that I remember it. In other words, representative experience is primordial and ultimate, in the same meaning that sensational experience is ultimate.

But see what this involves. It implies not merely a continuity but a unity of personal existence. In recognising a feeling as the same feeling I had yesterday I have the idea of self present; of self having a feeling yesterday; consciousness of agreement between the two selves and the two feelings. I cannot distinguish the presentations to my mind as having been made before, or, in other words, I cannot distinguish a past experience actual, from a simple thought of that experience as possible, except by postulating that

the experience actually occurred to me—an ego enduring through all change, and itself conditional for all successions.<sup>1</sup> Thus consciousness universally implies a synthetical unity without whose permanence no coming and going of phenomena in experience can be thought as possible.

The correspondence between the train of presentations and that of representations, or, as the old psychologists used to say, of sensations and ideas, is perfectly well marked. The succession of representative objects is governed by a series of laws similar to those which govern the determination of presentative objects. And these same dicta, that force is persistent, matter is indestructible, motion is consecutive, and energy is conserved, find their exact parallel in the science of mind, though there is no power of thought to identify matter with mind, the presentative with the representative. Memory brings these trains of representative objects, each involving a knower, a knowing, and a known. They disappear, but so far forth as they have a distinct unity so as to be objects to consciousness at all, they cannot be thought out of existence. They coexist with the presentative experiences, and when they are thought of, they are, of course, thought of as existent, this thought as just seen postulating personal identity of a present self with a self as existing in the past; and as for a beginning or an end of the series, as before remarked, it is quite impossible to think it.

Thus a reference to mental phenomena, in order to understand material, forces us to a doctrine of the persistence of the individual consciousness. And such a reference appears inevitable. We can have no knowledge of matter, force, motion, or energy without representation; and this last is conceded to be purely mental; but it involves persistence of the ego.

It may be well to consider, for a moment, what we mean by destruction. A bird appears in the air before our eyes, and then disappears. We do not say that he is destroyed. On the other hand, when a blackbeetle is crushed by the foot of the passer-by, and life is extinguished, followed by complete disintegration of structure, we speak of the destruction of the insect. But, even in this case, as we are accustomed to reason, we do not allow that the *matter* composing the insect's organism is destroyed. Dust it was, and to dust it simply returns. What, then, is destroyed? The form, if you please; the something that made the beetle what it was—the life—is gone. Gone to be sure; but how are we going to

<sup>1</sup> *System of Psychology*, chap. ix.

annihilate life any more than the particles of dust? And in view of what we have just been noticing in regard to representation, how is it possible that the form, the mental element, shall be destroyed either? So far forth as this insect is composed of particles of matter, so far forth as its life is force or energy, its destruction is unthinkable. So far forth as its form is concerned, this being merely the mental apprehension of a subjective combining power, which is itself indestructible, we are unable to find destruction there; for we cannot think anything into nothing. It would thus seem that the disintegration, which we are wont to call destruction, is, after all, nothing but disappearance. We may not in experience meet with a reappearance, but we are bound to consider it, not only as possible, but as inevitable under appropriate conditions. In other words, what once *was, is*, somehow or somewhere, and does not pass into nothingness.

Then it must be asked, how does it happen that if we cannot think of anything becoming annihilated, people are all the while seemingly doing so, and there exists a necessity of argument to show their error? How come we to have the idea of something becoming nothing? A vacuum may be an impossibility, but how then have we the notion of a vacuum? The answer is found in the Universal Paradox of Knowledge—that paradox which is nevertheless the foundation of all cognition. Let us review what has been said in our former chapters. Every positive implies a negative, which can only be thought in positive terms, which excludes the positive and is excluded from it, but whose existence is equally necessary with that of the positive. The existence of the negative is conditional for the reality of the positive. For every A there is a not-A; for every finite an infinite; for every known an unknown. This truth is constantly lost sight of. Mistaken notions as to space are largely responsible for this; space is given in sensation as much as force, space and force being correlative sensations; space is a reality as much as is force. Similar errors are made with regard to time; duration is not considered, the attention of thinkers being concentrated upon succession. The reality and the certainty of unconscious mind are conditional for conscious mind. If this were not so, we should never be able to say that we have forgotten anything. By reason of this paradox, we are compelled to aver that a vacuum is a thing as much as a plenum; the former exists as much as the latter. But in the process of generalisation, we make a universal 'all things,' which



excludes 'vacuum,' but in this very exclusion we imply reality and positiveness in the latter. 'Nothing' is the negative which is left in the mind when generalisation and integration are carried to their farthest point. When, therefore, we say that something is nothing, we indeed contradict ourselves, since in forming the notion 'something' we already exclude it from 'nothing'; and when we declare that a 'vacuum' exists, we seek to include it within a class of objects which have in their idea excluded it. But, nevertheless, we cannot get rid of the conclusion that when we have found our universal concept inclusive of everything, there is still a something real and positive beyond. Thus, when we declare that something has become annihilated, all we can mean is that it has passed from the perceptible into the imperceptible. When we propose to annihilate anything we can chase it away, and away, and away, till our mind gets tired; but the moment we stop, as stop we must, it is there at the end mocking us. To think a 'vacuum' is thus an impossibility as a process of endless centrifugal mental motion. But if we mean by annihilation a disappearance, which is all that can be meant, it is possible to conceive of it. This is not, however, the meaning of terms as usually employed. They refer to this endless motion, and the conditions of logical thought necessitate this universal paradox.

The truth is, we are forced by the laws of cognition to postulate an unknown reality behind the known reality, both of matter and mind, a dark side of the material world and of intelligence, an imperceptible substantive being, out of which somehow comes the perceptible, and into which it disappears, a source of both material and mental phenomena, a cause of their effects, a permanent in which alone change is possible, a possibility for all actualities, and a power which transcends knowledge but which is presupposed in all knowledge. This is the meaning of the paradox.

The lines of argument as to the question of personal immortality thus converge. Whether we look without or within the mind, we come to substantially the same result. If conscious mind be a higher force superinduced upon the vital energies, then we must believe in conscious existence after death. If force be persistent, if energy be conserved, if motion is continuous, if matter is indestructible, then the conscious ego is indestructible, the mental processes are continuous, the power of apperception is conserved and persistent. On the other hand, if we look introspectively, we find it impossible to think even of an interruption of consciousness,

while all the considerations derived from an observation of external nature have increased strength when we consider the trains of states of consciousness as mental objects. The conscious ego persists—that is the self-conscious ego—the knowing, feeling, willing ego, for we know no other. That is what mind means.

It is no harder to understand the continued existence of personal existence after death than to comprehend its occultation in sleep and restoration afterward. As before said, the sleeper knows, subjectively, no interruption; he infers it from changes in his environment. Its occurrence, however, is quite inexplicable; yet no one speaks of any impairment of personal identity because of it.

The greatest perplexity arises, perhaps, over the fact of the failure of memory. Without memory there is no personal consciousness, and we often observe a progressive impairment of the representative power. Memory waxes and wanes according to bodily conditions. If, then, alterations of the nerve-structure in disease will abrogate memory, the total disintegration of that structure, it may be said, will remove the possibility of representation—at any rate until some reintegration takes place. If while life continues mind may fail, how much more when life is extinguished must we be compelled to the belief that the individual consciousness has irrecoverably passed away. But, after all, this deterioration of memory is only concomitant with degeneration of vitality. Vital force wanes, and, perhaps, there may be by-and-by just this reintegration of which we spoke. Vital force, though it has disappeared, exists somewhere. There may be a lacuna in conscious existence as in sleep; but do not the considerations before adduced impel us to the belief that there may be an awakening even after death to the conscious identity which says I am I, I was and I am?

On every side, from beginning to end, this subject is beset with difficulties; but altogether I am inclined to the opinion that the ground for the assertion of post-mortem personal self-consciousness in identity with ante-mortem self-consciousness is firmer than for the contrary belief.

But one thing more ought to be said before we close. The same arguments that support the belief in continued personal existence after death tend also to prove an existence before birth. Is it possible that we must return to the pre-existence doctrines of the ancient philosophers? Is it possible that we must each say, I am; therefore I always was and always shall be?

## CHAPTER XX.

*THE HYPOTHESIS OF A SOCIETY.*

IF we assume a continuity of personality after death as to ourselves individually, we must allow this continuity to others. Hence the belief in a society in the world beyond properly follows upon the acceptance of the belief in personal immortality. We might, of course, suppose an isolation of individuals, but such an isolation is so contrary to the status of human beings in the present life that, in the absence of any reason for it, we should not be warranted in forming such hypothesis.

Society is an organic connection of minds. There is to a greater or less degree a community of thoughts, feelings, and purposes. If man is to live in society, he must conform himself to social ends. He must make his development coincident with the development of the organism. He must take his pleasure in the good of the whole. In the degree that every one does that, the society becomes more perfect; in the degree that they fail to accomplish this, the social organism is defective.

Thus, if there be a social interdependence of persons, there is also a moral relationship, for society makes and necessitates a moral order. Morality consists in the subordination of individual to social ends. If society is a fact, there must be some sort of a moral law.

Since our only conception of existence involves change, and life is a progressive development, so the life beyond this world is a series of changes in the individual and the society of which he is a member. Thus there is action and reaction of minds upon each other.

The notion of society brings up inevitably the idea of government. If society were perfect there would be no need of any government. If every one had a full disposition to follow the

social ideal, there might, indeed, be occasion for enlightenment, but none for authority to compel obedience. But, as a matter of fact, in this world there is an anti-social spirit as well as a social. Men prefer their own wills to the common good. Since many having wicked dispositions pass from this life with unchanged character, we must then suppose either that there is a separation of the good from the bad ; or that the society beyond is made up in the same way as human society is here—having its faithful citizens and its malevolents and malefactors intermingled ; or that the bad become good. Out of these alternative suppositions arise the ideas of heaven, hell, purgatory, and universal purification and salvation. It does not seem possible for us in the present state of knowledge to be able to indicate which one of such theories probability favours. The utmost we can say is that, if individual personality continues, there is the probability of a social union of individuals, carrying with it a moral order of rights and obligations. We observe in mankind as a whole an increase of the social, that is of the altruistic, spirit. There is also a necessary segregation of the social from the anti-social, since the latter cannot live in society, being perpetually at war with their fellows. If then we resort to conjecture with regard to the society in a future world, the idea of a separation of the good from the bad, together with a final reclamation of the latter, would best fulfil our notions of the fitness of things.



## CHAPTER XXI.

*THE HYPOTHESIS OF PERSONAL DEITIES.*

At least the polytheistic ideas of deity are those of a ruler, a chief, a king. In the cruder monotheism, certainly the same notion is palpable and undeniable. If the world had not had examples of self-governed societies, we should not have seen the monarchical conception of deity seriously questioned. If we believe that there is a future state of social intercommunication between intelligent beings, we are forced to form our ideas of such a state upon human experience. But where the notions of liberty and autonomy for the individual obtain wider sway in the mind, the monotheistic theories of deity undergo important modification. And this change is in the direction of eliminating anthropomorphism, and often goes as far as the denial of personality.

It is quite possible, of course, to conceive of a supernatural society ruled over by gods and demi-gods of great powers and enlarged perfections of character. But this does not satisfy the idea of the supernatural, as it is presented to the intelligent mind. There is still the necessity of some power behind or over the gods, as already mentioned, which is recognised even in the midst of a polytheistic worship, and illustrated in the Greek religion in the manner already referred to.<sup>1</sup>

We may, therefore, dismiss the old polytheistic hypothesis, of which the Greeks and Romans have furnished the common type, as having no probability, and as exhibiting for the present times only the mark of inferior intellectual development upon matters concerned with religion. And if, improving on the old polytheism, we conclude that there is another world in which there is an aristocratic society, and in which superior beings rule, these beings are none of them the ultimate supernatural we are seeking. We are compelled to look beyond.

<sup>1</sup> Chap xvi.

We are not much better off when we adopt the hypothesis of the monotheistic hierarchy. The divine ruler and governor is but an enlarged human being, who is served by obedience. The vital question of all then presents itself at once, whether the idea of personality itself, however enlarged, does not necessarily involve limitation, and thus fail to fulfil our conception of the supernatural.

Professor George P. Fisher, of Yale College (U.S.A.), in a work entitled 'The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief,' affirms (Chapter I.) that 'the essential characteristics of personality are self-consciousness and self-determination.' The term *self-consciousness* is sufficient, for it really involves the other. Unquestionably in self-consciousness, as we know it, there is involved a limitation by that which is not self: does personality mean anything without such a limitation?

I need scarcely say to any philosophical student that it does not. The reader of the 'Critique of Pure Reason' and of Spencer's 'First Principles' alike will come to this conclusion, if his thought will carefully and candidly follow the argument. Indeed, Dean Mansel has conclusively stated the positions leading to the same result.<sup>1</sup> Analysis of personal consciousness inevitably shows elements necessarily postulating limitation, without which there is only the negation of such consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, such analysis discloses the fact that we postulate a subject-ego behind consciousness as conditional for consciousness; a synthetical power, without which conscious experience is not possible, and which does not come into consciousness as an object; but this subject we can only construct in thought by objectifying it under conditions of limitation. So that even if we concede the existence in some invisible world of the subject-ego, or of multitudes of individualities, the idea of deity is not satisfied.

To be sure, the existence of intelligence argues a source and a cause of that intelligence; an unlimited condition for conscious existence; the potentiality of knowledge, feeling, will. We may say that it must be an intelligent as opposed to a material principle; it must be mind as distinguished from body. But we know nothing of mind except as conscious personal existence, which we cannot conceive as absolute. Thus while we may not deny personality or intelligence, feeling and will, to the supernatural considered as an ultimate unity, we cannot affirm it.

<sup>1</sup> *Limits of Religious Thought*, Lect. ii. and iii.

<sup>2</sup> *System of Psychology*, Part ii.

The result is that, however far we may carry the synthetical process of unifying our ideas of a supernatural world in the conception of a monotheistic personal deity, we never can get beyond a limited being, himself postulating some unknown source and cause, by which he is conditioned. The most we can say is that there may be in a society, to be known after death, one or more anthropomorphic beings of greater powers or of higher developments of character than human beings in this world, with whom relations of personal society may be entered into. But whether or not this be so we have no data upon which to found even a probable argument.

## CHAPTER XXII.

*COSMOLOGICAL HYPOTHESES.*

THE existence of an individual mind implies a not-mind. The ego postulates a non-ego. The continuance of mental life beyond death requires us to carry over also with this mental life an environment of some sort. There is some medium through which a knowledge of objects as things external must be obtained. There must be a presentative order of states of consciousness. Thus much is clear.

But here we have less basis to reason from than with regard to sociological relations. For we know what conscious life means, and what are its facts and laws. If we carry consciousness into post-mortem existence and allow that there is a society, we can reasonably indicate what must be the general conditions. But as to the cosmological environment we can say nothing, because we do not transfer into the farther world the bodies of which we are possessed in this. They are disintegrated to all appearance. Eyes, ears, and other sources of knowledge and feeling we do not have. The bodily organism being broken up, can there be any appetites? And yet all these things go to make up conscious life in this world—our pleasures and pains, the motives of all our action. Some environment there must be. Is there a spiritual body, a finer, more rarefied copy of our present bodies, which by reason of its tenuity would be imperceptible to those still in the flesh, but which is evident to those who have passed the gates of death? The so-called ‘spiritualists’ believe this, and claim that under some circumstances these ‘spirits’ can be seen. A similar doctrine seems to be countenanced in the New Testament Scriptures.

Then as to the conditions of existence of such a spiritual body—what are they? Is there an ether? Is there material motion?



Is there light? Is there heat? In truth, we seem to be obliged, if we allow post-mortem existence, to project into the remote life all those experiences which, so far as we can determine, are inseparably connected with a physical organism, but yet leave this latter behind.

Human investigation has not discovered anything upon which we can predicate even reasonable probabilities as to the cosmology or biology of a future world. But it is by no means impossible that study and research may yield positive results. A careful scientific examination of these very 'spiritualistic' phenomena may yield something; while the general possibilities of investigation are admirably set before us in such works as the 'Unseen Universe' by Stewart and Tait. At present all we can do is to affirm for the supernatural the general relations of things in the material world which we declared in a former chapter (Chapter XII.) There must be relations of substance and attribute, cause and effect, action and reaction. There must be resistance and non-resistance, relativity, consistency, permanence, and motion. In other words, we must, even for the purposes of forming an hypothesis, posit those general relations of things which are our postulates of all knowledge whatever.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*A RETURN TO THE POSTULATES.*

IN Chapter XXII. our attention was called to the fact that, whatever may be our constructions of the supernatural world, we can make them only in terms of nature. Carrying out this idea we see, in addition, that whatever may be true as to the cosmology of such a world, and whatever may be conceived or imagined in regard to it, generally or particularly, we have only another natural system. Make the supernatural as different from the natural as possible; nevertheless it is only to be conceived as under general conditions similar to those necessary in understanding nature as it is. There is still a limitation with an unlimited beyond. There is still the veil through which we cannot see. There is still a source, a cause, a substance, a power which we must needs postulate but can never reach. Our idea of existence after death, however much we may enlarge the notion of our capabilities for knowledge or enjoyment, carries with it, inevitably and necessarily, the idea of a something beyond not known, and of a power the nature of which we cannot know.

Thus every conception we can have of a supernatural world is a symbolical or hypothetical image of another natural world with a supernatural unknown behind. We can picture a heaven and a hell, we can suppose angels, devils, and deities, with varying characteristics and different degrees of power, but still above these is a greater power, which causes and sustains the world which we have styled supernatural.

This unknown supernatural we can symbolise as before, but with precisely the same results. The moment we begin we have the old antithesis of intelligence set over against non-intelligence, evolving nature as mind and evolving nature as matter, with always a negative behind. And even if we develop conceptions so far as

to form an image of a sole personal God, whom we call the Creator and Sustainer of all things, we limit and condition Him by a power beyond.

This power or energy has been called unknowable. In a sense it is so, and in a sense it is not. It certainly is postulated as conditional for knowledge. It is a first datum of knowledge. That it exists is assumed in all thought. We say we know that it is, but never can know what it is. But, on the other hand, to make it a defined object of knowledge robs it of all its distinctive character. This is the paradox. Some of the same objections, however, which apply to the term *unknowable* apply also to *unknown*. The unknown is not unknown so far as it is an object of cognition. In the same way and to the same degree the unknowable is known. The term *unknowable* means something beyond the reach of objectification, of cognition by human intelligence as we know it. Of course in this sense there is a difference between the unknowable and the merely unknown, and this difference it is important to indicate. There is justice, however, in the criticism that we do know the unknowable to a certain extent if we postulate it. On the whole, I think the better expressions are positive reality and negative reality, positively-known being and negatively-known being; and, on the other side, positive knowledge and negative knowledge. Such terms indicate the contradiction which we cannot escape, which is always a contradiction, but yet is the foundation of all cognition, and from which we are compelled to acknowledge the limitation and relativity of all knowledge.

An examination into the truth of constructions of the supernatural made by the human mind thus brings us back inevitably to the postulates from which we started out, with only some additions in the way of probable truth; which additions, however, it must be allowed are of importance, and will be found to be deserving of further consideration. But let us now sum up the results of our inquiry, and see what conclusions we can draw therefrom.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*CONCLUSIONS.*

WE have learned that all knowledge postulates a negative reality as well as a positive ; an infinite beyond the finite, a supernatural behind the natural. This supernatural is a negative reality, any definite cognitive construction of which involves a contradiction. We can give consistency to this supernatural in positive terms only by contradicting the supposition. Nevertheless, we must assign it some form if we make it an object of thought at all. We are hence obliged to create symbolical fictitious constructions of a supernatural world according to various analogies of the natural world. In doing this we are moved by the necessity of ascribing causes to all natural events, and tracing them back to a first cause ; and also by the desire to realise ideals of happiness. As to the truth of such constructions there is no direct proof. The only evidence we can have is evidence of the probable truth of an hypothesis, and this evidence runs only within very narrow limits. The primary hypothesis, and the foundation of all others respecting the supernatural, is that of the existence of the personal ego after death. Without this supposition there can be no interest in any inquiry. That there is a continuity of personal existence after this change we call death is more probable than the contrary hypothesis. If there be such immortality, it is not confined to one human being. The conclusion that there is a society of conscious beings must hence follow ; and if a society, a moral order of some sort. As to any biological or cosmological environment for this social existence we can as yet frame no probable hypothesis. Our only hope of an increase of knowledge both as to mind and any material conditions in such a world lies in the persistent study of nature as it is in this. From the known we reach to the unknown.

It is not intrinsically absurd to imagine a society in the world

beyond, ruled over by supernatural beings. Polytheism is possible. Monotheism also involves a possible supposition. We can eliminate other deities and form the idea of a personal God as supreme. But if we do form any idea of such a personal deity as at the head of a supernatural society, and, indeed, however we may construct such a society, we have only a new order of nature with just as much need of a supernatural as before. Our gods and our God are limited and in need of a cause and a source. We have only constructed another natural world under what we consider improved conditions, but conditions are still there, and the supernatural, in strictness and in truth, is still beyond the reach of our thought.

We are thus compelled to postulate something beyond the natural, and esteem it probable that our individual lives will extend beyond death. At the very least we cannot say that they will not. If our lives do thus continue, we must suppose a society of some sort, and hence a moral relationship between its members, for this is involved in the idea of society between intelligent beings. As to the conditions of such social and moral relationships we cannot even declare probabilities.

Nevertheless, we must have ideals and empirical hypotheses more or less definite of what is and what will be in this supernatural world. And the laws of the genesis of ideals compel us ever to be seeking to improve on the present, to minimise pain and to increase happiness, and attain greater perfection. Human society and human life we have before us. If there be a society beyond the grave, ideals of improvement will be of improvement upon present conditions, and can only be intelligently found after a study of those conditions; we can only be taught for the future by our experience here. Hence, inasmuch as ideals are ends of action and determine conduct in no inconsiderable degree, the rational method of procedure is to form such ideals and hypotheses of a future life as consist with the notions of the best moral and social order which a scientific examination of human experience, as it is and has been, will yield. And for the individual it will be of importance to mould his own character upon the model of such ideals, so that he may derive happiness from and in their realisation. It is certain that this course will be better for the life that now is, and from this fact we can legitimately infer that it will be better for the life to come. We can form an intelligent judgment of what is a better life and a better society for a world beyond only by ascertaining what would be a better life and a better society in

this world. Our ideals of attainment may reach beyond what seems attainable here, but they must be along the same lines of improvement that are confirmed as such by human experience. They may outstrip but they must not contradict the latter.

Such considerations reveal the necessity of testing all ideals and hypotheses respecting the supernatural by the canons of utility. Their effect upon character and upon society must be made clear, and by this effect they must be approved or condemned. They cease to be declarations of truth and become standards of conduct, stimuli to development, formulations of hopes and purposes, regulators of mental life. Hence their morality or immorality, as settled by the natural organic laws of human society, is a matter of prime importance. It is also of consequence to ascertain their influences upon individual development, whether by their vitalising or their blighting and destroying power. It thus becomes our duty to examine the bearing of the different leading constructions of the supernatural upon human life and conduct.

PART III.

RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS IN RELATION TO  
FEELING AND CONDUCT





## CHAPTER XXV.

*THE RELIGIOUS EMOTIONS.*

THE examination in the preceding chapters has indicated that the distinctively religious ideas may be grouped under two chief heads; namely, a Future State and God. Of course ideas of the one group are not independent of those of the other, but this division can be made with advantage as broadly marking segregations. The emotions that develop around these two classes are very powerful. They are primarily growths dependent upon the relations which are believed to subsist between the individual and deity, both as regards a present life and also a future state. The most fundamental of them all is Fear. This is doubtless the most primitive and the most controlling until a high degree of intelligence is reached.

It is obvious that the notion of supernatural power first excites terror in the mind of the savage. It is the wrath of his deity that he dreads and seeks to avoid. And it is the ~~fear-inspiring~~ in nature that awakens religious ideas in his mind. The fact that in all primitive cults the idea of propitiation occupies so prominent a place is sufficient evidence of this. Even in ancestor-worship religious rites are observed because the devotee is afraid of the harm which the departed spirit may do him or some of his interests.

The savage expects direct interference of supernatural beings with his course of life. If misfortune happens to him, he attributes it to malevolence of some spirit whom he has failed properly to recognise with worship. The custom of sacrifice in all its forms, from presents left at the tomb of a departed ancestor to human offerings upon the altar, indicates dread of powers above the natural order of things.

When the idea of a future existence becomes prominent, fear of the harm which may befall one in a future state at the hands of an offended deity is always conspicuous. A hell is rarely found

wanting in theological systems ; and it is not too much to assert that the dread of its torments has been, and is, the most potent factor in establishing such systems and the ecclesiastical authority connected with them.

Religious fear takes all forms, from abject terror to the milder varieties which are expressed in the terms anxiety, dread, apprehension. It is also the groundwork of emotions of awe, reverence, and the like. Into these last modifying elements enter, but fear as a prominent constituent belongs to them. But we shall presently recur to this class of feelings in referring to the æsthetic and ethical emotions.

If the painful emotion of fear makes up so largely the body of fundamental feeling which exists in connection with religious ideas, the escape from apprehended evil at the hands of supernatural powers gives rise to much pleasurable anticipation. Pain stimulates action to avoid the pain, but action toward some ideal end of pleasure. If then a god be propitiated, the escape from wrath which might otherwise have come is in itself no mean source of joy. But this involves a bright side of the character of deity and of the nature of a future state. There is a positive pleasure in the smiles of deity, and many supposable advantages from his favour. Such pleasurable feeling leads to the development of controlling emotions.

So far as the idea of deity is concerned, there is the primary pleasure of society which man takes in the amicable presence of a being with whom there can be mental communion. And this is enhanced in the ratio that such being is of a character with which man can sympathise. Love begets love, sympathy produces sympathy, and friendship awakens friendship. When, therefore, the deity is conceived as amiable or as approving, there is an appetitive pleasure in the ideal contemplation of such a being alone ; and when the idea of deity as a friend is evolved, the satisfaction is much increased. The emotions of sympathy, friendship, love, thus come to play a part in the religious life, and to characterise religious sentiments in degrees varying as the emotions of the other great class of religious feelings—namely, those of fear—arise and subside.

In addition there are strong selfish desires to reap whatever advantages the favour of deity may bestow. All the blessings which are believed or imagined to be connected with a heavenly life, ensuring happiness to the recipient, furnish ends of attainment the contemplation of which is highly pleasurable and stimulating

to activity. And wherever there is a prevalence of the altruistic feeling it is carried forward, and awakens also agreeable feelings at the idea of meeting and dwelling with friends, or honoured men and women not known before, in a social world where all shall be happy. non 22

It thus happens that, as the domination of fear becomes lessened, ideas both of a deity and a future state tend to generate æsthetic emotions. In forming ideals the mind seeks to eliminate the painful. The idea of a God thus comes more readily to involve a divine character in which beauty and goodness are the leading traits. God is no longer the avenger, but the embodiment of all that is excellent and admirable. While, with respect to a future state, heaven is dwelt upon, beautified, and conceived of more and more completely as affording opportunity for realising all ideals. But yet, even in æsthetic creations, a tincture of fear is not wanting whenever emotions of sublimity, awe, grandeur, majesty are aroused. These all contain an element of fear, which is sometimes quite overpowering.

The emotions of anger and antipathy generally also enter into religious sentiments, though not primarily. Fear will generate hatred, and where it is apprehended that a deity will inflict harm, feelings of animosity must be produced. One god may be hated while another is loved; or a monotheistic deity even may be abhorred, the abhorrence being intense in proportion to the definiteness of belief in the existence of the being with traits or purposes that excite the animosity. Of course the emotion is one of noticeable tenuity as compared with the anger which is often aroused toward a fellow human being, but it exists in a degree. If one has the belief of a savage, that in striking a tree he is wounding the spirit in that tree, the feeling may be strong, but as the supernatural is removed farther and farther away in the progress of intelligence, the capacity for such feeling is diminished.

When the ideas of God and a future state are connected with an ethical system, there is often exemplified a formidable growth of antipathies arising partly out of a principle of sympathy and partly out of egoistic considerations. If God's favour is to be obtained by certain courses of conduct, omitting or defying which God's wrath and condemnation follow, a true friend of God, and one who wishes to preserve God's favour, will likewise condemn those who disregard God's law. (He that does not believe is accursed.) (Heretics are worthy of the highest antipathy.) It is not only fitting but a matter

to be rejoiced over that the wicked be discomfited and perish for the glory of God. When a priesthood and an organised ecclesiastical system appears in which the will of God is interpreted by authority, the most terrible exhibitions of antipathetic passion have been exhibited. These are always fostered by the natural predatory instincts of men which are developed by the struggle for life; and these last in their turn are intensified by religious considerations. We shall have occasion to speak of this fact more fully in a subsequent chapter.

So far as notions of what is right and what is wrong are connected with ideas of God and immortality, love of God, desire for his approbation, and expectation of reward for fulfilling his will on the one hand, with fear of disapprobation and punishment for doing wrong on the other, will control the emotional life of individuals in high degrees. Not only will there be sympathies and antipathies arising from the conduct of others, but also acute discriminations respecting one's own conduct and a sense of one's own good and ill deserts. A moral sense may not be a religious sense, but in the world generally it has usually been more or less closely identified with the latter. Feelings of duty and conscience, self-approval and self-condemnation, are intimately associated with ideas of the supernatural. They produce emotional peace and self-contentment if there be self-approval, and if the reverse the emotions of remorse and despair, the basis of which again is fear.

There is a higher emotional life of joy in what are called 'spiritual' objects, such as God, heaven, immortality, God's law and obedience to it, which belongs often to religious contemplation. I have elsewhere analysed the sentiments attached to this experience,<sup>1</sup> and hence do not stay to discuss them fully in this place; but the results of such analysis go to show that the emotions in question are æsthetic or ethical, or a mixture of the two, and hence are compounds of primary pleasures and pains or derivatives from them. The appetitive pleasure of society is the chief foundation.

For a similar reason, I do not dwell upon the pleasures involved in our ideas of heaven and the pains connected with the idea of hell. These I have delineated in another work;<sup>2</sup> and having therein endeavoured to describe and illustrate all the leading emotions of the human mind, I should hardly be excused for repetition in this chapter. It will be enough to indicate the principal feelings

<sup>1</sup> *Problem of Evil*, chap. xvii.

<sup>2</sup> *System of Psychology*, chap. lxii.

involved in religious sentiments without entering upon a full psychological analysis of them.

To conclude, then, with a summary of what an examination of religious sentiments reveals as to their emotional characteristics—it appears that the original religious emotion is some form of fear with more or less antipathy associated. Then follows closely the hope of favour and reward for praiseworthy conduct. This develops sympathy and progressively the forms of tender emotion. As the beliefs in a future life obtain, there is maintained on the one side, fear, and on the other pleasurable anticipation of realising ideals of happiness. As these ideals possess the mind more pervasively, the æsthetic rises into prominence among the emotions of religion. Finally, as the ideas of the supernatural are connected with human life and conduct, the ethical element waxes, giving rise subjectively to feelings of conscience, duty, and remorse, and objectively to sympathies and antipathies respecting the conduct of others.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

*THE SPRINGS OF HUMAN ACTION.*

A CONSIDERABLE portion of man's action is instinctive. A great deal is appetitive—that is, induced by powerful cravings. There is, however, a region within which action seems subject to deliberation, choice, intention, and resolution. The connection between feeling and action is not certain and mechanical, but sufficiently slow to allow of the operation of counter-motives. This is the region of what is usually called volition.

Life requires some degree of activity. The only way in which the vital forces can be maintained is by a process of continuous adaptation of organism to environment. Man must eat and drink, or he dies. And the pain which he suffers from hunger and thirst necessitates some activity. His nature is such that he must at least do what is necessary to gratify those appetites which minister to the preservation of life.

Thus the primary cause of action is unrest, uneasiness, distress—some form of pain. Effort is always to relieve this pain. It is a general law of mental life that action is toward pleasure and away from pain. Action is thus toward a betterment of present conditions. And since the representative powers enable us to remember what courses of action have led to relief in the presence of pain, ends of attainment rise before the mind, which it is believed will, if attained, assuage the felt want.

Life demands change; hence unrest or more positive pain, and then action to relieve the pain—that is, action toward something conceived of as pleasurable. This necessity for change in order to sustain life is one aspect of a law which pervades all nature—namely, the instability of the homogeneous. This is one of the truths involved in the law of evolution. The homogeneous everywhere tends to lapse into heterogeneity. Nature abhors monotony. The

course of evolution, the persistence of force, the indestructibility of motion necessitate this; the very idea of existence itself postulates it. And on the mental side this law appears in the presence of pain in some form, and of ends proposed by attaining which relief will come and satisfaction be found.

All the pleasures which appertain to human nature, and thus all the ends which can be proposed by the mind, can be shown to bear relation to one of three functions—Growth, Preservation of Integrity (or Wholeness), and Reproduction. Human ends are (1) to acquire; (2) to possess and conserve; (3) to perpetuate. All of these postulate conscious existence as continuing—that is, mental life. The most general end which can be proposed then, and the one which is of the strongest force, controlling and absorbing all others, is that of the continuance of personal conscious life. To this all the appetites and instincts minister; even the reproductive appetences are only an extension of the same desires. The conservation of life on its mental side, and the perpetuation of its pleasurable experiences, are the ideas which explain human activity.

The opponent of this conservation is pain. It is identified with disintegration and dissolution. It is that which we seek always to avoid and eliminate. It is a stimulus to action, to be sure, but as a scourge. If we do not flee from it, death follows. Thus the course of our action being to escape from pain, the ends of action which we set before us are ends for the avoidance or counteraction of pain. When, therefore, we generalise the ends which men propose to themselves, we say that they seek happiness—that is, the greatest excess of pleasure over pain—which is the same thing as to say they seek life, its conservation and perpetuation, with the disquieting and destroying powers conquered, and vitality always triumphant.

Every man, knowing that he has had a past, must believe that he has a future, however short. He finds that certain actions yield pleasure and others pain. In the development of representative intelligence, he discovers that he can influence his own future in some degree. Since all his experience is of the evolution of a life which proceeds by progressive mutual interaction of organism and environment, he can affect his future only by modifying either his environment or his own volitional nature. But the environment cannot be modified without at least having an end and a purpose to modify, and the formation of such ends and purposes tends also to establish and determine character. Besides, the formation and

pursuit of ends gratifies one of the most important appetites, one which is essential to the maintenance of life—namely, that for movement and exercise, activity, change. To form definite ends of happiness, involving the formation of favouring and contributory dispositions and habits of action, thus becomes a requisite of conscious life.

From these considerations we see that the primary springs of human action lie in the necessity of change for the conservation of life, and that this conservation and perpetuation of life through differentiating and integrating processes of growth is the most general end of all individual effort. The ultimate end we call happiness, and all our ideals of happiness postulate the conservation of mental life. This is an egoistic end, but it is qualified in a very remarkable manner.

There is a very complete parallelism between the course of physical and mental evolution. To take the illustration most in point at once, as the human body grows by introsusception and assimilation from its environment, so also proceeds the development of the mind. The enjoyment of one person's presence by another being appetitive, as intelligence becomes more complex, upon this basis of an appetite for society the ideal life is constantly fed by communication with other minds. And it is even true that in many circumstances, and to a large extent, the maintenance of physical life is dependent upon the amicable offices of others. This remark is especially applicable to the period of infancy. But in general, and throughout all periods of life, the want of association with other minds makes itself felt as an appetitive craving.

If, then, to sustain and promote the growth of the intellectual and emotional life of man, assimilation from the minds of others is required, and the appetite for society is deep-seated and ineradicable, we discover how the altruistic sentiment takes its rise. For the condition of the social life, the amicable presence of other beings like one's self, is reciprocity. One cannot always be taking and never giving. Without the leaving of self, without sympathy, society falls asunder. The effect of extreme selfishness is to isolate him who practises it. But without society, which altruism alone can build up, the cravings of the individual are not satisfied, and his own growth is retarded or suppressed.

Hence social ideals rise in the mind of the individual as affording ends for his own conservation. To use an extreme figure, in losing his life he sees that he will find it. He beholds himself, in



his ideal ends, drawing in vitality from the social environment as he himself contributes to the welfare of the whole.

It is obvious that there is often antagonism between the selfish and the social sentiments. Social conservation may be opposed to individual, and the converse. But however they reconcile themselves or oppose themselves to each other, neither can be wholly eradicated. Both are present as factors of the development of individual character and as influencing individual conduct. At least, so far as the action of other people is concerned, it is certainly for the interest of the individual that they be governed by the social law. I may not conform to altruistic principles, but I have very strict ideas of how my neighbour ought to act. And though everybody be more or less egoistic himself, the social sentiment tends to increase under the force of law laid down for other people. Men are moulded reactively to no little degree, if not directly by education.

Individual conservation through progressive adaptation to circumstances is the motive force of individual human activity. And as a means to this, altruistic regard for the conservation of the social organism becomes more and more prominent, and indeed necessary, as human life increases in complexity. Social progress, the maintenance of the social organic unity, depends altogether upon altruism.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

*BELIEF AND DISBELIEF IN A FUTURE STATE.*

IN the earlier part of this work we noticed the waning of human life (Chapter VII.) as generating religious sentiments. Whatever ends we propose to ourselves, and however prudently and enthusiastically we follow them, as age comes on we find ourselves thwarted. We are profoundly impressed with a sense of our impotence. Vitality is constantly slipping away, and from our knowledge of human life we are forced to anticipate a further deterioration. Death must come. We may or we may not believe in a *post-mortem* conscious existence. What is the effect of either belief upon our present life?

We have seen in a former chapter (Chapter XIX.) how, when we reason upon the subject, we are induced to believe in such an immortality. But it is quite possible for us, looking upon the phenomena of physical disintegration, to doubt our own introspective consciousness, and arrive at the belief that memory is irrecoverably lost, personal identity completely abolished, and death the end of all for the individual. Bearing in mind the statement of the last chapter, that the motive to activity is the conservation of life, if we appreciate that death is certain and we already feel its approach, and have no hope of a further existence, at least ideal ends of future development must fail of being formed and presented to the mind as objects of attainment. They are not only useless, they are a mockery. The result is that in such case, the sphere of activity being limited by the present life, action is determined solely with reference to it. A tendency is created to get for one's self all that one can out of the present. *Carpe diem*. To-morrow we die. That such a thought has a depressing effect upon activity directed to remote ends is perfectly evident. Economy of pleasure is of no use. The higher ideals hence give way to the demands for present

enjoyment. To the latter there is no resisting power which our minds are capable of furnishing. To be sure we wish to preserve our lives as long as possible, but life at best is uncertain, and in the disbelief in its continuance after death we insensibly lose a strong volitional influence favouring its present prolongation :—

Ah, my beloved, fill the cup that clears  
To-day of past regret and future fears ;  
*To-morrow !* Why, to-morrow I may be  
Myself with yesterday's seven thousand years.<sup>1</sup>

In my former work, 'A System of Psychology,' to which I have made reference, in an examination of the comparative value of pleasures as ends, the truth was brought out that pursuit of the primary (that is, appetitive) pleasures is not conducive to increase<sup>X</sup> of vitality. This point is of so much importance in the present inquiry that I shall venture to quote a portion of what was there said.<sup>2</sup> 'Primary pleasures, when made principal ends of activity, have the effect to fasten the attention and desire upon sensation. The thoughts are directed toward the sensational pleasurable experience, and are constantly seeking a repetition of that experience : the mind does not rest satisfied with a representative pleasure, but is eager for a return of the presentative. The result of this is that the importance of conservation of pleasure is lost sight of. Providence is not found in such a case. The nearest means of gratifying the desire is seized upon, and there is little consideration of the future. Economy of pleasure no longer exists. Hence there is greater room for the operation of pain-producing agencies ; they are not guarded against ; there is no forewarning and no forearming.<sup>1</sup> Allied with this is the further fact that making sensual pleasures principal ends has the effect to shorten their duration, and prevent their repetition and recurrence, through a weakening of the organs through which the pleasure is produced. All the evils of excess are engendered, the system is broken down, and the vitality destroyed. Another way of stating the same fact is to say that one pleasure is cultivated and pursued, to the utter neglect of others. The enjoyment of eating and drinking is sought, while the pleasures of organic integrity are despised. In order to obtain happiness there must be a balance preserved of pleasures. If one set is eschewed, there will, in all likelihood, be a considerable increase and greater

<sup>1</sup> *Rubaiyât of Omar Khayyam*, xxi.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. lxviii.

predominance of the corresponding pains; and unless all the primary pleasures receive their due share of cultivation, there will be a superabundance of one group of pleasures (or a few), and with the depreciation of the others a prevalence and overmastery of pain, which overbalances and countervails the pleasure and makes misery instead of happiness.

‘It should further be noticed that when a person makes the primary pleasures principal ends, he sets himself against the line of development of the human mind, and begins a retrogression. This line of development is from the simple to the complex through the redintegrating processes, that is to say, by means of representations. In order to foster such a development, the mind must pursue as its principal ends more highly representative ideals rather than less representative and sensual pleasures. He who follows the latter sets himself to repress and thwart the principle of growth in his own nature, and if the growth is arrested, soon causes decay.’

The tendency to sybaritism is undoubtedly increased by whatever destroys hopes for the future. This is true with regard to the present life. In times of pestilence or war, when death is imminent, revelry and debauchery of all kinds are much more prevalent. Under oppression, where motives to activity are taken away, through impossibility of accomplishing one’s ends, people are led to content themselves with sensual pleasures. Despots have frequently seen the force of this, and in the midst of their tyranny have kept the people amused and winked at appetitive excesses. In regard to the hope of a future life, the influence of disbelief or despair upon present activity is of the same character. One would at first think such a disbelief would induce greater care to conserve the life that now is, but, as just seen, the contrary is the fact. It depresses the mental energies, destroys or prevents the formation of high ideal ends, turns the mind to present intensity of enjoyment, rather than to conservation of pleasure, weakens the vital forces, and hastens the accomplishment of what is most dreaded—decay and death.

It must now be brought to mind that sybaritism is one of the phases of the egoistic or selfish character. It is the passive form of egoism, and results in a carelessness or want of interest in the welfare of others, which is disintegrating to the social organism.<sup>1</sup> It is of a fundamentally anti-social character. Hence the disbelief in a future state, so far as it develops in the individual the disposition to prefer the present enjoyment to the remoter good, encourages

<sup>1</sup> *The Problem of Evil*, chaps. xxvii., xxix., xxx.

selfishness and weakens the bonds which hold together the social organism, the preservation of which, as we have seen, is so necessary to individual growth. But there is another way in which the same effect is wrought. The natural force of human energy is very great, and it must expend itself upon something. —It will not always content itself with the ease and luxury of the voluptuary. —But there must be some end of activity. If it is believed that there is nothing for the individual beyond the present life, the purpose of getting as much as possible out of the life as it is will be the limit of effort. Every one of intelligence will recognise that in order to do this some regard must be paid to society; but it is more difficult in such case to develop the pure altruistic feeling. It is harder to construct a stimulating ideal of the social state and the social feeling as of permanent value to the individual. He is more apt to say, What care I for society, its progress, its welfare? He forms the notion of using others so as to give him the greatest advantage, to enable him to command to the fullest extent the possibilities of worldly happiness. Hence the lust for power in the form of authority, or fame, or wealth, grows to the utter disregard of the happiness of others. In order to enjoy it is necessary to acquire; either may become the ruling passion, the pursuit often becoming the greater pleasure, but in either case it is the egoistic ideal that controls and the egoistic character that is formed, altogether to the detriment of the social organism, and very often visibly to the damage of the individual also.

It cannot be denied that some forms of the belief in a future state, presently to be reviewed, have just as damaging an effect upon individual and social life, in both the directions we have been considering, as has a disbelief in immortality; but for the moment regarding only the latter, I think both analysis of the modes of operation of the volitional powers of the human mind and observation historically upon the course of mental development conclusively show that disbelief in a future state has a tendency to favour egoistic, or selfish, rather than altruistic, or social, character. It is destructive of the social organism, the life of which is that each member be the means and end of all the rest. I do not feel able to allow space for an exhaustive historical examination upon this point, but many illustrations of the truth of what I have been saying will suggest themselves to the reader. Wherever we find ~~disbelief in a future state~~ we find an increase of egoism. The French revolutionary period is as conspicuous an example as can

be selected, though so often used to point morals that we are inclined to become tired of having it brought up. There was a state of anarchy accompanied and preceded by a prevalent disbelief in immortality among those who controlled public sentiment. Besides, the political causes which led to the outbreak are corroborative of the theory we are maintaining. Those causes were, speaking broadly, the limitation and repression of individual ends, purposes, and efforts by the oppression of a tyrannous and selfish upper class. Hope was cut off. There was no chance to develop. Effort was useless. Altruism was quenched. Now in precisely this direction the prevailing disbelief operated also, as it must ever operate. It furnished a resisting barrier which turned men's minds back in despair from the future to the immediate present. The current of social life struck a blank wall and, thrown back, was scattered in a thousand directions. There was no future of happiness and for realising ideals in the present life, and there was no life to come. What else but social disruption could happen? Absolute egoism would seem to be the inevitable outcome; and then did appear a condition of things about as near to absolute social chaos as it is possible to find among any human beings excepting savages.

It is exceedingly difficult to find any peoples, however primitive and barbarous, among whom is not present the belief in a future life. Even among those tribes of which it is reported that they have no idea of immortality, upon closer examination it turns out that the belief is existent to some degree. And as to historical religions it may safely be said that there is none which does not contain some formulation of a conviction of *post-mortem* personal existence. Many people have supposed that personal annihilation was a distinctive doctrine of buddhism. But the better we become acquainted with the facts respecting this cult, the untruth of this supposition appears the more certain. The idea of Nirvana is rather freedom from pain, tranquillity, rest, as opposed to Sansâra, the state of change, disquiet, and suffering. But undoubtedly in the buddhistic, as well as under other religions, whose ideals involve much greater activity as the type of religious virtue, there is to be found disbelief in personal immortality, not only in isolated individual cases, but pervading classes or periods. Wherever this does exist, I venture to say that it occurs in conjunction with some anti-social influences, paralysing individual activity and generating selfishness, either as the lust for power or

the eagerness to seize the present pleasure. James Freeman Clarke, in referring to the degenerate days of the Egyptian religion, calls attention to the coexistence of epicurean notions with the denial of immortality, and quotes from the Litanies of *Ra* these words, which a dead wife is supposed to address from the sepulchre to her husband: 'O my brother! my spouse! cease not to eat and drink, to enjoy thy life follow thy desires, and let not care enter thy heart, as long as thou livest on the earth. For this is the land of darkness and abode of sorrow. No one awakes any more to see his brethren, nor knows father nor mother. I long for water, I long for air!' <sup>1</sup>

But while it is certain that there is a concomitance between despair of a future life and conditions which tend to produce increased egoism, it may be a question which is cause and which effect; or, at any rate, whether the two are not effects of a common cause. Is it not likely that hopelessness with respect to the present life has a tendency to generate disbelief in a life to come? Doubtless, in particular instances, the hope of paradise is the sole consolation to him who sees death very near, with no prospect of escape. The force of religious conviction is so great that this often happens. But if we have given such conditions as make effort seem useless, and life a burden, when intelligence subsists which is sufficiently great to allow doubts as to the truth of authoritative religious declarations, any general pessimistic depression must have the tendency to take away even the hope of compensation for present ills which would subsist from the idea of a life to come.

At any rate it will probably be conceded that, in the language of Mr. Tylor,<sup>2</sup> 'he who believes that his thread of life will be severed once and for ever by the fatal shears, well knows that he wants a purpose and a joy in life, which belong to him who looks for a life to come. The effect is repressive and blighting both upon individual and social growth.'

<sup>1</sup> *Ten Great Religions*, vol. ii. p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Primitive Culture*, chap. xii.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

*THE FUTURE STATE AS A MONARCHICAL SOCIETY*

THE prospect of a hell as his ultimate destiny is not a pleasing one to the individual. People do not cherish ideals of pain. Hence the belief in a place of torment is a strong deterrent to courses of action which are supposed to lead to future punishment. But the fear which is thus aroused would ultimately paralyse action unless an alternative of attainable happiness were presented. Thus the ideas of heaven and hell are complementary to each other. Fear and the opportunity of avoiding that which is dreaded, taken together, powerfully affect human conduct and character.

The manner in which the latter are affected depends upon the idea that is formed of the future state, and thus of the requisites for attaining immortal bliss. We have already seen that in any event our notion of a future if made at all definite will develop the conception of a society. Relations between beings capable of mental communication will at least be thought of. Then the conditions of these relations as affecting the individual will determine the conduct and character of the latter.

The monarchical idea of a *post-mortem* society involves obedience to an authority vested in a master, governor, lord, whose will is law. This authority is the standard of conduct, and obedience to it is the measure of righteousness. If this obedience is perfect, the character is perfect; in the degree, however, that the obedience is imperfect, the character is defective. Sometimes we observe the suggestion of God as a constitutional monarch willing conduct because it is right, not because of his own arbitrary choice; but it is then explained that God and Right are one, so that there is no practical difference between his will and righteousness. At all events the essence of religious virtue in the creature is obedience to the supreme will.



It is hardly necessary to say that then the only question to be determined is, What is the divine will? It matters not how this will affects human relations, provided we can be satisfied that it is divine. But find it and declare it we must, and when declared it must be followed, not in act merely, but in intention, volition, disposition. Our characters must be formed by it.

The monarchical idea of a supernatural society cannot subsist without an authoritative declaration of the will of the sovereign. It never has prevailed without such a law. If each man supposes that he has revealed to him the divine commands, unless the same revelation be made to everybody else, reference must be had to some objective standard to determine which is the true will, and which is false assumption. This remarkable coincidence has never occurred; hence everywhere some one declaration or set of declarations have been adopted as the law in preference to all others, some one person or set of persons have been revered as the oracles of the divine communication. Thus the rise of a priesthood became inevitable, and this priesthood is the vehicle of the divine communication to men. The priests are God's vicegerents upon earth.

However perfect such a system might be if there were only one revelation, one law, one priesthood; every student of the world's history, even the ecclesiastical student, must admit that there have been many assumed revelations, and many claimed promulgations of divine law, commanding a considerable amount of practical authority and influencing large societies. Moreover, within the pale of the same religion, there have been enormous variations in the precepts which have been put forth as God's will. This is true both as regards ceremonial observances and rules of conduct. The old Jewish law enjoined sacrifices of burnt offerings; the new dispensation substituted self-abnegation. The mosaic morality was an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; the Christian, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.

The individual man, believing in the supernatural society as ruled over by a monarch whose will is law because it is his will, and considering that future happiness depends upon conformity to that will, endeavours so to shape his own character as to make his sentiments agree with those he supposes belong to the divine being. He wishes God to approve of him, and thus he becomes God's friend. He is moved to obey whatever declaration of the divine will the priesthood which he acknowledges is willing to

make. He cannot sympathise with those who disobey this law; he cannot give aid and comfort to God's enemies. He cannot but condemn other assumed revelations, and his detestation of false prophets grows apace as he becomes more pious in his own religion. His belief is that God hates these heretics, and he praises God for this; he comes to hate them himself, and thinks it but just that they should be punished for their nonconformity; he will even aid in their extermination, and sincerely believes he is meeting with God's favour in so doing.

The effects of such ideas as these are commonplaces of history. Antipathies, hatreds, oppositions, wars, confiscations, cruelties unspeakable in weary succession from the beginning of recorded events have followed upon this monarchical notion of divinity. This is admitted by all candid men; but it is claimed that, through all this woe and ruin, better and more worthy conceptions of the divine character have been growing clearer and more prevalent, and that the mistaken ascriptions of these tremendous immoralities to divine commands are no longer possible. God is a good God, and what he wills is right. There is no longer any doubt about his commands. He decrees for human conduct that every man shall love his neighbour, and that this will must be obeyed, and such obedience is the source, and the spring, and the essence of all virtue whatsoever.

One thing, however, cannot be blinked, and that is the fallibility, in the past at least, of all these claims of divine authority. They must be admitted to have been fallible, even by the priesthood, in order to justify present claims; else why has there been any change? Either the old priests were mistaken and their declarations false, or the new mandates are not to be trusted as authoritative. This being so, what reason have we for believing in present authority which our ancestors did not have for obeying the authority of their times? We should certainly presume that those who lived nearer the days of the Buddha or the Christ received purer truth than we of this late day. The water ought to be better the nearer we get to the fountain. It may be said that the water was the same but men would not drink it. But it seems to be forgotten that whatever misconstructions have been put upon the assumed divine emanations have been put upon them by an authority that assumed to declare God's will; and that until this authority was overthrown a better condition was impossible. The only safe answer to the question just asked is that the present declarations of authority are

to be respected because their commands are better suited to the needs of mankind. But this is a most unsafe reply for the authority-system and the absolutist idea of deity. It shows clearly that religious obedience can justify itself only by falling back upon human ethics. These religious declarations are authoritative as God's will because they express the individual and social wants of humanity. Right is determined not by the will of a supernatural monarch but by human experience.

It may be said that when the supreme being is conceived of as an ideal of goodness, obedience to his behests is in itself the most salutary means of promoting the welfare of humanity. If this be true, it is still the case that there must be declarations of God's will, and, however assiduously we may seek to evade the difficulty, we never can get rid of the dilemma that we must obey a command either because it is God's will and therefore right, or because we deem it right from a consideration of utility, and hence believe it to be God's will. It need hardly be remarked that the moment we take the latter ground we undermine the authority theory.

Even if there happen to be a coincidence between the declarations of assumed divine authority and natural social morality, we can have no security for its continuance. If the law of conduct is the will of the deity, to be promulgated and interpreted by inspired deputies, any variance from this suggested by natural ethics in the development of the social organism must of course be condemned, and an opposition arises between the law of conduct as based upon the wants of humanity and the supernatural law. One or the other must yield. If the latter, the result is injurious to the social organism; if the former, the uselessness of the system appears plain. If it still be respected and upheld, it becomes a drag upon the advancement of civilisation, an obstacle to the attainment and dissemination of healthful notions as to character and conduct.

The idea of God as an absolute monarch giving commands through chosen representatives has an unmistakably repressive effect upon the spontaneity of the individual. The latter under such an influence becomes a machine to obey orders. He is not at liberty to suggest or improve. Differentiation is blighted. His character does not expand. He simply follows along the lines pointed out to him. Criticism and doubt, without which there is no growth in knowledge, are sternly reprobated. His ideals are contracted, and his moral and spiritual life tends to become that of the slave rather than that of the freeman. In all his relations to his fellows his

conduct depends entirely upon the orders he receives. If they are to kill and burn, he acts accordingly; if they are to sympathise and help, such is his duty. Society may be benefited if the reigning theology happens to be altruistic; but it may also be subjected to terrible calamities if the predatory lusts are encouraged by identifying piety with that conduct which makes men the instruments of divine wrath and punishment. Any unprejudiced student of history must concede that the latter situation has more frequently arisen.

The progress of society depends upon altruism, which is indeed the social bond. But it requires as well that the spontaneity of the individual be preserved. Any society which is burdened with a priesthood of a supernatural monarch, whose commands through this priesthood are law from which there is no appeal, ceases to grow unless there is some relief. Often there is spiritual tyranny with some degree of political freedom. Where church and state are divorced, the result is always favourable. The less the area within which the spiritual authority can exert itself the better. But where the political and ecclesiastical authority are combined under the supremacy of the latter, the conditions of social development are the worst possible. The most extreme effects of the monarchical idea in supernatural relations may be seen in the East, where, under systems of caste and religious slavery of one kind and another, not only progress has ceased but also the desire for progress. The very thought of change from their own hateful bondage to superstition is abhorrent to the people. In the West, too, every one knows how stationary or retrogressive society was under the domination of the church of Rome, especially while it was able to maintain temporal and political power.

It must be conceded, I think, that the monarchical idea at certain stages of civilisation has worked beneficially, both as regards the political order and the supernatural. Obedience to commands which are salutary can often be enforced much more perfectly if they are supported by the weight of a supposed divine authority. Oftentimes greater stability is secured in this way, and if, for instance, this régime were the relief from anarchy, unquestionably its success would be a step in advance, in the course of social development. Probably the children of Israel would not have obtained their deliverance and their distinct national existence in any other mode than by assumed theocratic government under Moses and his successors. But it by no means follows that institutions and beliefs which at one time serve a good purpose will do so

always and under all circumstances. The most awful abuses have frequently followed from too uncompromising, too exclusive, or too long-continued insistence upon doctrines which once were useful for their circumstances. Arsenic, if employed in proper doses, is highly curative under certain conditions; but as a universal panacea or as an article of daily food it is not a success. And, with regard to the particular dogma before us, the psychological effects upon conduct and character of holding it, the dangers to society which it necessarily involves, and the actual wickedness and misery which it has brought about or promoted, make evident the truth that the monarchical idea of deity in relation to mankind, either here or hereafter, must not be regarded as anything more than a provisional and temporary theory of supernatural relations, to be inevitably and properly superseded as intelligence grows, and freedom is able to assert its prerogatives.

The hypothesis of deity as an absolute monarch whose will is law has developed the doctrine of sin. This latter, carried out to the extreme of endless punishment for the wicked, is one of the most hideous and depraving dogmas that ever possessed the minds of civilised men. In a former work<sup>1</sup> I have undertaken to show that this whole notion of sin in its effects upon the individual and the social character is highly deleterious and ought to be eradicated; hence I do not pursue the subject here, but the reader who agrees with what has been already set forth will readily see how such conclusions must follow.

<sup>1</sup> *The Problem of Evil*, part iii.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

*THE FUTURE STATE AS AN OLIGARCHICAL SOCIETY.*

THE polytheistic idea of a supernatural society in its influences is not always like the monotheistic. The notion of a personal lord or chief is present indeed, but instead of one there are several or many. This has both its advantages and its disadvantages upon individual and social developments.

In destroying the unity of deity, doubtless some degree of that reverence which the monotheistic idea inspires is lost through the diminution of power. We may think very well of our gods in the main, but cannot help some sort of contempt for them if they are not able to accomplish all we would wish, or some lack of confidence and dissatisfaction when we encounter circumstances wherein it appears that other gods are greater and better. Again, our ideal of the excellence of deity suffers if we are compelled to believe in contrariety of action or opposition of wills between supernatural beings.

The commands of different deities communicated to mortals would naturally have a perplexing effect. Men would not know / whom they ought to obey and worship first. Yet the Greek and Roman systems, which exhibit polytheism in its perfection, as a rule accommodated to each other the claims of the different deities, both by assigning different departments to them, and by creating a chief God as a governor of the Pantheon. Yet often the poets tell us of men suffering from the wrath of one god because a preference has been accorded to another through a greater devotion, leading to neglect or positive affront. But the general effect of a division of counsels and commands is inevitably disturbing upon moral conduct and character so far as any virtue comes from obedience to a supernatural power whose will is absolute law.

On the other hand, under polytheism mankind escapes the iron-

bound despotism of supernaturalism to a more considerable extent. Each deity will have his priests and his own system of worship, and the necessity for compromise and accommodation between these diverse interests prevents the creation of that tremendous solidarity of power to which the monotheistic system often gives rise. Hence there is more chance for spontaneity and growth. One can choose his own favourite deity and accept him as an ideal of life, taking some risk, indeed, of giving offence to others, and yet feeling that he has a divine protector. Polytheism thus favours the growth of the ideal life, and the æsthetic character is likely to flourish under its sway. This is undoubtedly a great gain. Individual independence in all respects is assisted for similar reasons. The best illustration of the truth of these remarks is found in the Greek religion. Roman ideas of law, authority, the state, together with a more prosaic popular temperament, prevented the development of that spontaneity which occurred among the Grecian people. And as absolutism grew more predominant in the Roman civilisation, the very contracting and repressing process which I have been noticing took place. The triumph of Cæsarism prepared the way for and favoured the monotheistic religion, which was established upon the ruins of the old polytheism. In Roman history consolidation, centralisation, and repression, were continually going on. Not so among the Greeks. Freedom was an inspiration; and to preserve it as such their religion contributed. 'The Greek by intercourse with Greek gods became more a Greek than ever.' Every Hellenic feeling and tendency was personified and took a divine form, which divine form reacted on the tendency to develop it still further. All this contributed unquestionably to that wonderful phenomenon, Greek development. Nowhere on the earth, before or since,<sup>1</sup> has the human being been educated into such a wonderful perfection, such an entire and total unfolding of itself, as in Greece.<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion to which we naturally come is that, so far as polytheism contributes to establish the idea of an oligarchical supernatural society, with divine authority so promulgated and exercised as to repress and prevent individual spontaneity of thought and action, it is injurious to the social organism. So far, however, as, by encouraging the formation of ideals of perfection, it favours this spontaneity, it is of value. Both of these things it can do and has done. Like monotheism it is dangerous to morality,

<sup>1</sup> Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, vol. i. chap. vii.

because it may substitute a divine will as such for the needs of humanity as a standard of conduct, and set up obedience to such a will as the perfection of character, quite irrespective of the requirements of the social organism ; but a plurality of deities, with different attributes and dispositions, makes this loyalty less perilous. I cannot but feel that, among a people of quick perceptions and ideal-forming tendencies, polytheism is much more healthful than is pure monotheism upon disposition and character. Had it not been for a polytheistic departure in the monotheistic idea (which we shall shortly consider more particularly), monotheism would have become the most fatal and subversive religious belief that human progress has had to encounter.



## CHAPTER XXX.

*THE FUTURE STATE AS A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.*

It might naturally be expected that, inasmuch as men have generally transferred to the world beyond the conceptions of society which obtain in their day and generation, when the principle of democracy came into vogue there would be some sort of democratic ideas carried over into men's views of the supernatural. Democracy, however, contemplates freedom ; and though there must be government, the notion of sovereignty very materially changes. The rulers become the agents of the community, and the people is the sovereign. As much liberty is to be allowed to each as is consistent with the common freedom. The government is not inherently sacred, but to be respected only as it fulfils the purposes of the social organism.

As noted in another chapter (Chapter XIV.), the mind in contemplating a future state at once inclines to separate the good from the bad, and to conceive of the society which it hopes to join as a society of the good, with everything perfect or tending to perfection. If then we remove the idea of an absolute monarch, the realisation of one's ends and purposes through the free action of the individual receives an impetus. Freedom there is for all ; and, as in a society, individual freedom can only be preserved through social freedom, such a character as will respect the liberty of all becomes a *sine quâ non*. Regarding this as secured, there is nothing for a government to do, since it can only be guaranteed through the good will of the individual. Hence it will be seen that the tendency of democratic ideas, as applied to the supernatural world, is to develop the notion of a society whose members are laws unto themselves indeed, but in whom dwells the spirit of comity and love. Compulsion, authority, tend to disappear, but in their place rises self-improved constraint in obedience to ideals of social perfection.

The effect of all this upon the idea of God is to abate the conception of a compelling, and develop that of an attracting, power. It makes more prominent the notion of a God as fulfilling desires and purposes, and throws into the background the offices of a ruler and governor. In other words, of the two chief factors of the construction of the supernatural which we noticed in Chapter XIII., the one which follows the ideas of deity as a cause of what is, becomes less controlling than the one which makes God the guarantor of the realisation of ideals.

The Greek polytheism, of which we were speaking in the last chapter, exhibits these results to some extent. Greece was a democracy for a time, or rather was a congeries of democracies, and the Hellenic religious system shows traces of democratic principles and practices. But still the notion of chieftainship was never absent. The patriarchal idea, so characteristic of the East, and which became the very foundation of the Roman legal system, is found lurking in the Greek social life. This operated to prevent the formation of the conception of society as an organic whole. Individual spontaneity was indeed favoured by the existing conditions, but the development of the individual was made the end rather than the social organic development. The development of individuals was egoistic rather than altruistic. Men grew and aimed to be leaders of men, conspicuous among their kind, controlling their fellows, and as they became so they were often invested with divine honours. Hence, though there was freedom for development, the ideals which were followed were ideals of some sort of aggrandisement, rather than of the harmonious growth of a society. The monarchical idea was still present, but the opportunity was afforded for a large number of petty monarchies which limited each other. Then the Greeks in their supernatural society must have gods as rulers and chiefs in high and low degree; but they divided up the power of deity so minutely that they really formed a sort of Olympian aristocratic democracy, to establish and enforce a law for the conduct of gods and men.

Another result of the idea of individual freedom is to deny personality to deity. God becomes the power immanent, in whom, indeed, we live and move and have our being, but with whom there can be no personal relations. To this conception of a supernatural world allusion was made in Chapter XVI. as a pantheistic conception. It is, however, the most consistent and pure democratic theory of a supernatural society. God is working in and

through each individual. Each one is in a sense a part of God, is assimilated to God and assimilates God to him. There is perfect freedom of development, no external constraint, no hero-worship, no fear. But, as previously observed, we cannot suppose such a society to exist without the altruistic character. There must be an inward disposition upon the part of each one to regard the pleasure of every other. Without this there is no such thing as society conceivable. Only, in the case now supposed, this social order is preserved by the good will of each, and not by the authority of an external law and power. In such a view there is no use for a God as a ruler, except to take care of the wicked, if they still exist in a place apart. The sole office of a deity would be to regulate the purgatories and hells; in heaven he would be without occupation as a governor.

There is, however, the want of a divine personality for another purpose, which has made itself felt in human history in so strong a degree as to have more or less coloured all religions. And this want has prevented men from forming and keeping before them to any marked extent such a conception of a supernatural order as the one to which allusion has just been made. This is the need of a pattern or exemplar. If we were to regard the future state as one in which perfection is attained by all who enter, then there is no sphere for activity. This means that there is no longer any active life. Everything is negated save repose, and the idea of a Nirvana takes possession of the mind. This seems to have been very attractive to those people who live under Indian skies. Rest, quiet, dreamy indifference, is the summit of conceivable bliss. But with men differently circumstanced, and thus differently constituted, happiness lies in some form of activity. Hence the future world presents itself as affording opportunity for action. Thus the supernatural society is expected to exhibit the constant formation and realisation of ideals of beauty, truth, and goodness in the progressive unfolding of character. But in order to do this some divine norm, director, guide, becomes important. We will now proceed in the next chapters to show the influence of this sentiment upon the theological constructions of mankind.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

*THE IDEAL OF HUMAN PERFECTION.*

THE christian religion is often spoken of as if purely monotheistic. In reality it is the least so of the religions at all entitled to bear that name. The jewish and the mohammedan exhibit monotheism in its purity and simplicity. Christianity is tri-theistic, and hence as much entitled to be regarded as a refined and highly developed polytheistic religion as a monotheistic cult. For the distinctive feature of christianity is worship of the Christ as a deity. To be sure there have been and are some sects which call themselves christian but deny the divinity of Christ, though accepting him as a great moral teacher. Yet without disparaging these latter at all, it must be said that they do not exhibit the characteristic type of the christian religion as it appears before us historically. Christ as a divine person, related somehow to at least two other divine persons, and sometimes three others,<sup>1</sup> is the essential phenomenon.

Christian theologians have presumed and relied upon the hebetude of their disciples to proclaim and maintain a doctrine that these three or four divine persons are one God, and that their system is hence monotheistic. Men are unhappily quite ready to allow their intelligence to be insulted even to the extent of persuading themselves to believe, because they think they ought in a spirit of reverence for authority, that black is white and that two and two make five. Hence they have come to assert, and apparently to believe, that two and one, or one and one and one when added, make one. This theological arithmetic is of course meaningless, except as indicating or postulating complete harmony of will between the three deities. There is, however, a very great significance to this doctrine of a trinity when we come to examine it in the light of the facts of human mental constitution. In such an examination

<sup>1</sup> The Virgin Mary, the third.

we shall see why such a curious notion of deity has arisen and maintained its hold.

I have more than once alluded (see Chapter XIII.) to the two sets of factors concerned in the development of our constructions of the supernatural. There is first the supernatural regarded as the cause of all that exists and comes to pass, and secondly the supernatural regarded as a guaranty for the realisation of ideals of the possible and desirable. In an earlier part of this work we noticed, though very generally, how these two sets of factors wrought out effects with relation to each other. We discovered that, as mankind grew intellectually, the supernatural as cause was pushed farther back, the mind dwelling more upon natural causes; and that this progressive removal of the supernatural as cause afforded room for the development of ideas of the supernatural as realising the ends of effort, the highest ideals of character and conduct.

Further, in a more recent chapter (Chapter XXVI.), in studying the springs of human action, we found that the conservation and perpetuation of life through progressive differentiations and integrations, growing out of present uneasiness, were the motives to activity. We noted also that action postulates ends of activity, and that in the realisation of those ends and the pursuit of them happiness consisted. The tendency to form ideal ends being much enhanced by the belief that they could be realised by effort, men came to form definite ideals of the perfection of the human individual, which furnished powerful inspirations for action. Hence was encouraged the tendency to deify humanity which has been noticeable in all religions.

In addition, we have observed the opposition between the attributes of power and goodness which sprang from these two notions of the supernatural, as cause, and guide, or pattern. They furnish antagonistic conceptions of deity; and, though stress be laid upon the divine person as beautiful and good, the shadow of power is always present. Evil and pain exist, and God is the cause of all things.

Now a purely monotheistic religion must combine in one God these antagonistic attributes. Then, to preserve itself, it must enforce the monarchical theory with great relentlessness. It must extinguish, and if it retains its hold it will extinguish, the growth of ideals. Blind obedience will be its law and iron fate will be the mind's master. There is no goodness but the goodness which power decrees to be goodness. Thus spontaneity is extinguished,

and with its extinguishment development ceases and all progress. Such results in their most unqualified and extreme form are illustrated in the religion of Islam.

But to this autocratic monotheism the human mind never has shown itself willing permanently to submit. The tendency to differentiate from it cannot quite be crushed out. Even islamism had its prophet, who was believed to be an embodiment of virtue ; and Mohammed as a living realisation of an ideal had more influence over his people's life than the Allah he commanded them to worship. It was the life of Sakya-muni as the realisation of an ideal of human perfection that wakened the Eastern peoples from the lethargic sleep of brahmanism, and infused some life into a dead society. In similar manner the character of Jesus as an embodiment of that ideal was the inspiration of christian progress. The point to be specially noticed here is, however, the influence of these divine men upon the idea of deity. Sakya-muni and Jesus were deified ; that is to say, the ideal of perfect humanity as an end to be realised was carried into the idea of God, in opposition to the notion of God merely as a cause of what is.

The christian idea of a trinity is an attempt at a reconciliation between these antagonistic ideas of power and goodness. The Father is the Supreme Power and the Son the Supreme Goodness ; the Spirit is the medium of union of God and man, the deity immanent. And men, in their enthusiasm for what satisfied their desire for the realisation of an ideal of human excellence, have fastened their faith on the Christ as the means of escaping from the pain-producing powers. They have established the Son as a deity who has acquired complete control over the will of the Father and nullified his wrathful dispositions, and they have given him such a supremacy that man's duties to God are summed up in love for and worship of the Son. But inasmuch as evil does exist, and cannot be gotten rid of, they were forced to regard it as a punishment for sin by the Father, to be still left in store for those who failed to receive the Son as a saviour. Sin being universal, and the character of the divine Father being marked by his justice, which must be satisfied, his benevolence was also saved by allowing his Son to become a bloody sacrifice for justice's sake. Thus that strange and horrible egyptian doctrine of atonement became engrafted upon christianity.

The meaning of the Christ as a divine person thus becomes plain, and in this meaning we begin to see the explanation of the extraordinary power of christianity. But we have not yet reached

the complete solution. Having relegated to God, the Father, all the fear-inspiring and disagreeable attributes, which the presence of evil and pain in the world obliges us to ascribe to some supernatural cause, the christian theology makes the condition of salvation, belief in and worship of the Son, as representative both of the deity and of the perfection of humanity, Son of God who is one with God, Son of Man who is perfect man, an exemplar for all the nations of those human attributes which command approval. Contradictory, chaotic, mechanical, and in some respects barbarous, as is this theory of tri-theism and man's relations to the divine, it reconciles in its rude fashion the great contradiction which religious thought inevitably develops. And, what is more important, it furnishes an ideal of human perfection, imitation of which, with belief in the person exemplifying, will ensure the fulfilment of man's hopes for happiness in a future world.

But if this ideal of perfection had been different from what it was and is, I venture to believe that we should have had no such results following. Men have been deified in great numbers before the days of Jesus. Noble ancestors were constantly worshipped by their posterity; heroes of great achievements were made gods and demi-gods, and their manes propitiated; but never before Jesus has the life-principle of social progress been so clearly recognised as the controlling spirit in any individual. That principle was contained in the life and teaching of Sakya-muni, but not so definitely and perfectly. Yet if the conditions existing at and following the life of the latter had been the same as those attending upon and succeeding the life of Jesus, it is probable that we should have had Buddha instead of Jesus as the founder of the most universal religion of western civilisation. However that may be, it is certain that the words ascribed to Jesus teach as a rule of conduct the most complete altruism that we find expressed by any religious teacher, and enforce the altruistic as the ideal of perfect character.

When we were discussing the springs of human action we saw that the ideal of individual happiness or perfection was egoistic, but that the social state of mankind necessarily qualified it. We noticed how the social appetite forces men to become gregarious; that the condition of social life requires some degree of altruistic conduct; and that altruistic conduct can only be ensured by an altruistic disposition. Thus altruism is directly in the interest, is indeed the life, of the social organism. Consequently when the

ideal of individual happiness and perfection becomes altruistic, the growth of society is necessarily enhanced. Hence the vital force which the religious worship and imitation of Jesus infused into social organisation. It made the altruistic character in many places and at many times the prevailing type of character in the community, and this increasingly so. Often the sentiments of autocracy nullified the effects of this beneficent influence, and turned christianity from a blessing into a fearful curse, but wherever the altruistic sentiments which were developed and fostered through the example of Jesus, and through his deification, were allowed to become predominant, progress was rapid, and the general happiness largely increased. Then christianity co-operated with morality, and furnished a motive for individual effort as well as promoting the social growth.

It will not escape attention, I trust, that this beneficial influence of christianity, so far as it has been beneficial, involves two elements. The one is improvement of the happiness of the present life; the other is the realisation of one's desires and ideals in a life to come. The latter satisfies the egoistic longings; the former relates primarily to the altruistic feelings. But one complements or supplements the other. The greater enjoyment of life in this world through altruism, with the notion of the next world as a society, suggest the realisation of one's desires for the future life to be feasible only through altruistic conduct. The harmonious development of all individuals as parts of a social organism becomes an object of interest, for the sake of individual happiness, and as a means to the development of the individual.

The same results are observed in the development of buddhism. The power of the religion of Sakya-muni upon social progress came from the presentation of an ideal of human perfection, consisting in happiness attained by the cultivation of altruistic conduct, and the formation of altruistic character. The idea of the life to come, however, was somewhat different from the christian. Passivity rather than activity, repose rather than motion, seems to have characterised the buddhistic conception. The end of effort appears to be the cessation of effort. This Nirvana, however, was not to be attained by inaction. Humanitarian, altruistic work was necessary. The religion taught this. Witness the four virtuous inclinations of Siamese buddhism: (1) Seeking for others the happiness one desires for himself; (2) Compassionate interest in all creatures; (3) Love for, and pleasure in, all beings; (4) Im-



partiality.<sup>1</sup> But for people in whom the desire for activity is strong, the idea of a future life in order to furnish a potent motive for activity in this world must present a field for the continuance of activity, and, I think, such an idea is necessary always to stimulate practical altruism to its highest developments. For an indolent people, however, as remarked in the last chapter, the release from activity doubtless has a great charm, and a religion which teaches that this release can only be secured by practical benevolence and beneficence will exercise a considerable degree of salutary influence upon the social welfare. And yet the adoption of this idea of passivity instead of activity in connection with the future state I cannot but regard as one main reason why buddhism has fallen short of christianity in its vitalising influences.

<sup>1</sup> Alabaster's *Wheel of the Law*, p. 198.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

*PERFECTION AND AUTHORITY.*

IN discussing the conception of a monarchical future society we observed some of the disadvantages of locating the standard of action in the authority of a personal will. But, in view of the considerations of the last chapter, which reveal a most beneficial effect upon human happiness and progress following upon the deification of a person whose character, taken as the ideal of human perfection, is predominantly altruistic, the question again recurs whether, perhaps, these beneficial results are not brought about in some degree, and may not be still further extended, by allowing a sovereignty to such a divine person, obedience to whose will is law. Is not the idea of Jesus the Christ as the ruler of heaven and earth, under whose feet everything is to be put, the idea which has inspired christian progress? Is not the conception of Sakya-muni as the Buddha of Buddhas, Lord of All, the truly quickening force in the reformed religion of the East?

Against such a view, as relating to the monarchical idea generally, we have already found considerable to say (Chapter XXVIII.) which need not be repeated. Some, however, may think that, in view of the excellent things that have followed under such a method of regarding the divine man, what has hitherto been observed upon the subject needs qualification, if its force has not been altogether destroyed. But a close survey of the historical progress of christianity, at any rate, makes plain that it is not christianity as an exclusive system of obedience and homage to a personal will that has moved human advancement, but the two ideas in christianity to which attention was called near the close of the last chapter; and those ideas are not essentially connected with a personal sovereignty. It is the idea of a future life and of a realised altruistic character that have given the impetus to

development. And so far from the belief in sovereignty having aided this, wherever it has been at all prominent and absolute, it has been the chief obstacle in the way of this very progress. No more striking illustration of good and evil forces competing in a single system can be found than in the history of christianity. Under the papal *régime* Christ is unqualifiedly sovereign and lord; and no more tyrannous, repressive, and demoralising religious order can be pointed out. Under it individual character became so bad and conduct so shocking, and that, too, in the highest places in the church, that the wonder is that organised christianity was not swept from the face of the earth. Social progress was stopped and retrogression took place. The altruistic influence was all but eliminated. In spite of this, continual returns to the life and teachings of Jesus, not as a lawgiver but as the bearer of a message of invitation, and as the guide pointing out a better way of life, always tended to modify the deleterious effects of ecclesiasticism, and finally restored to a prevailing extent the altruism of the gospel.

Similarly with the religion of Siddartha. So long as it kept itself close to the teachings of its master, and contented itself with impressing altruistic ends in freedom of action, it was leaven to the lump. But 'like brahmanism it fell from its stage of prophecy to its stage of priesthood, from inspiration to ritualism, and what was at first the spontaneous play of earnest instincts, however blind, crystallised into the polity of a church.'<sup>1</sup> It came to have a vast ecclesiastical system. In Thibet a succession of infallible pontiffs flourished. There were rivalries of buddhist popes and 'political intrigues for building up a vast temporal power'; 'contentions of Red and Yellow Lamas;' until finally the lamaist church fell under the dominion of the Chinese civil power, and we have again the spectacle of a political institution wielding what it claims to be supernatural powers.<sup>2</sup> 'Thus buddhist organisation in Thibet ends like Brahmanical caste in India, in disintegrative forces. They are found, after all the phases of consolidation, all-powerful in this as in other distinctive communions, showing how vain is that assumption of finality which is always made by institutional religion.'<sup>2</sup>

The thorough and candid student of historical religions cannot fail to be satisfied that christianity and buddhism, the two religions

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, *Oriental Religions; India*, p. 284.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 289.

whose founders were most thoroughly altruistic in their teachings, furnish no exception, but only confirmation of the truth that the notion of authority and sovereignty in religion is damaging both to individual and social development, and should never be regarded under the best circumstances as of more than temporary and provisional value, to be dispensed with as quickly as possible. However disinclined men are to allow it, the truth must be recognised that individual spontaneity and liberty are indispensable conditions of the long maintenance and progressive growth of altruism. The good will cannot be a constrained will. Resistance provokes resistance. Commands succeed only by obedience; and obedience negatives spontaneity; with spontaneity extinguished growth ceases; and when growth ceases disintegration begins. Life proceeds from within assimilatively, and if its freedom of development is interfered with, so far forth death ensues.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

*HEAVEN AND HELL.*

THERE is no question but that fear of the scourge will influence men's actions. Whether it will improve their characters is another question. It operates as a *deterrent*; it cannot act as a permanent stimulant to self-activity. Reformations never have been effected by the lash. Thus the dread of a place of punishment after death may prevent men from doing certain acts, if a belief can be maintained that the punishment is certain to follow; and it may induce acts of propitiation; but a psychological examination of the natural operation of fear fails to disclose how it can promote growth of character. What is wanted for character and conduct is the disposition to do what is right and good. Then there is an unfailing spring of righteous action. The tendency of fear of punishment is to produce the character and the actions of the slave, not of the self-directed freeman.

Heaven may mean a blissful state wherein are congregated my friends and myself, while hell is a place of torment to which are consigned my fellow-man whom I do not like, together with his friends and supporters. If this idea be entertained, its immorality cannot be doubted. The whole notion is a selfish one. Desire for my own happiness and gratification, with contempt and revenge upon my enemies, or those whom I hate, is at the bottom of it. This, probably, would be generally admitted; but what is not generally allowed is that the sentiments of a great many people on this subject are disguised forms of the feelings which I have just stated so baldly. They cover their selfishness and predatory lust under the claim that they are friends of God, and only voicing his just will. If they believe God approves of their feelings they set up as an ideal of deity a most unworthy idol, whose influence is contracting instead of enlarging.

The doctrine of eternal punishment for sin is an extreme form of this immorality. It is depraving upon the individual and upon society. It sets the seal of divine approval upon the wickedest feelings that can arise in the human mind. It is one of the most hopeful signs of the present time that this barbarous dogma has so generally lost its force, and become modified to accord with the principles which christianity claims to be fundamental.

The ideal of a future state in which evil purposes shall be eliminated is the truly moral notion. If purgatory be necessary for this, purgatory may be admissible as a conception of a process of purification. The altruistic principle requires the saving of men, the improvement of their characters, and to make their acts in this world final and conclusive is really to assert the perpetuity of evil in the universe. The christian doctrine of universal salvation is therefore the only one in connection with the doctrine of a future state which can operate in a salutary manner upon character and conduct. The opposite induces blank despair upon the mind, which dreads the punishment, and upon all others works to limit the universality of altruistic sentiment, to weaken the bonds of human brotherhood, and to encourage those dispositions which lead to war, murder, and robbery.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

*ECCLÉSIASTICAL ORGANISATIONS.*

ORGANISATION increases power. The influence of one individual is something, but the combination of individuals having a common sentiment as the basis of their organisation effects much greater results. The question, then, as to the value of organisations depends both upon how much they accomplish, and the nature of their influence. An organisation may be of little consequence because it is ineffective, or it may be of great importance either for good or evil by reason of its power.

In each case, therefore, the inquiry must be raised as to the effect of organisation on a foundation of religious sentiments, upon the individual and the social development. The tenour of discussion in the preceding chapters leads us at once to the conclusion that so far forth as any organisation assumes authority, and requires conformity because of its authority, it straightway becomes an obstacle to the progress of civilisation. This point I have so fully discussed in another work,<sup>1</sup> that I shall content myself with its bare enunciation here. The ground for the position taken sufficiently appears from our consideration of the monarchical idea of deity, and the future state. Discarding authority, an ecclesiastical organisation becomes a society for the discussion and comparison of views upon religious subjects (truth), or for the development and gratification of æsthetic ends in connection with religion (beauty), or for altruistic purposes in improving the characters of individuals and of society (goodness). It may be all or any one of these; latterly, the third has become more prominently indicated as the office of such associations.

The value of discussion and comparison of views for the elucidation of truth in any sphere or department has long been recognised.

<sup>1</sup> *The Problem of Evil*, part iv.

It stimulates thought and corrects one-sidedness. And it cannot be denied that the attainment of truth in matters of religion is a great desideratum. It surely will not be claimed that all is now known that can be known on these subjects. But the utility of organisations of this sort for the promotion of knowledge is exactly in proportion to the encouragement of freedom of thought and discussion. We often hear 'religious inquiry' spoken of; this means not the stimulation of unfettered thought, but the influencing of people to adopt the particular ideas of those who promote the movement. In general, church organisations stand directly in the way of the advancement of knowledge. They only encourage thought upon religious subjects when that thought is 'orthodox.' The man who does not think at all is in much better repute than he who strikes out new or uncongenial lines of thought. Whatever harmonises with the creed is acceptable; whatever is at variance is reprobated. Moreover, almost always there is, instead of discussion, authoritative teaching from a priest or clergyman, whom it is not allowable to contradict, and criticism of whom is made unpleasant, perhaps dangerous. As church societies are constituted, where there is instruction merely upon the basis of authority, their influence is opposed to the increase of knowledge; where authority is reduced to a minimum, if the creed or platform of the organisation compels spoken or professed belief to conform to any system of speculative doctrines, still for intellectual purposes such an organisation is more apt to be a hindrance than a help. The foundation of any ecclesiastical society upon a creed which expresses for final truth more than the most conservative science of the day will sanction, and which in any wise limits or discourages the right to doubt and to express that doubt, is so far forth inimical to the best interests of society. It cannot be gainsaid that an injurious attitude toward intellectual freedom, and thus progress may be coupled with highly commendable principles respecting conduct of human beings toward each other. Undoubtedly the altruistic influence of churches in modern society overbalances very often the harm done by their insistence upon immovable articles of faith based upon false assumptions of knowledge. But to the extent that the principle of requiring obedience to creeds has any effect, it is pernicious. It certainly promotes hypocrisy or it fosters ignorance. There always will be a conflict between science and religion so long as the latter will not take its truths from the former, and with them the spirit of doubt and inquiry. Eternal scepticism is the



price of growth in knowledge, religious as well as any other. Undoubtedly there must be some common bond of union, but it need not be subscription to a body of statements held to be absolutely true and final, belief in which is to be compelled by authority, and criticism of which is foreclosed by the conditions of membership.

The attainment of truth, categorical or hypothetical, does not complete the sphere within which religious organisations may move. Conspicuously among all religions the christian and the buddhistic have insisted upon altruistic conduct as measuring religious duty in no inconsiderable degree at least; often we find such conduct made the test of true religion. Hence, to confine our remarks now to the first of these cults, even when christianity was most perverted its ethical relations were not wholly disregarded, and, since the German Reformation, christian churches have insisted more upon the altruistic spirit as an essential of the christian spirit. In the present times we find the notion prevalent that the creed of the church is something for theologians to settle, and that the business of the rest is to do good practically. The clergy have often favoured this sentiment; so that we frequently notice the church creed becomes something set up to be looked at, but not used or handled, while the members are impressed with the idea that it is enough if they nominally accept the creed and serve God by loving their neighbour and helping him. This is a most fortunate circumstance. It produces a dry rot in theological systems, which undermines them and destroys their efficiency for harm. It certainly releases the laity from bondage, and tends also to liberalise the clergy. These latter become less and less theologians and more and more lovers of men. They themselves come to attach less importance to their creeds, and more to personal altruistic conduct.

When, however, the principle of altruism is accepted as a guide for conduct, there are frequently difficulties in the way of its application coming both from the influences of the old doctrines of authority, and from the kindred doctrine of immutability in morality. Besides, it is not always easy to choose between the present and the future good. The perpetual contest between supernatural and natural morality has hindered the growth of altruism, and organisations which insist that ethical principles come by revelation, and that conduct is to be determined thereby, never can develop the best moral order, because they ignore the fact that circumstances vary, and that conduct as to its morality varies with those circum-

stances. Very much the same obstructing influence comes from so-called *a priori* ethics. The idea is fostered that moral principles being immutable, moral practice is always the same, and no allowance should be made for variations of conditions. Undoubtedly the principle that morality requires that people should be moral is immutable, but it does not, therefore, follow that the same act is always either moral or immoral. Consequences both direct and indirect must be considered. It may be immoral to eat pork under some circumstances, while under others it is not. To drink a glass of wine sometimes may contravene the moral law, at other times not. The test of moral quality is the question of injury to other human beings. Tendencies, it is true, must be considered, but frustrating and counteracting causes must also be taken into the account. And while, indeed, the altruistic disposition must be cultivated, practical effects must also furnish the objective standard of the ethical value of actions.

When, therefore, religious organisations stand upon the platform of supporting and promoting the welfare of mankind through altruistic principles and practice, they must, in order to do their work effectively, follow the teachings of ethical science, as the same is developed, modified and perfected by the needs of humanity. They must get their law from a consideration of mankind as a social organism, of which each individual is at once means and end of all the rest. They must always be ready in applying principles to verify them by actual reference to existing conditions. If morality as an art is to be improved, it must be allowed that morality as a science is susceptible of improvement. Commands, laws, precepts, which are announced as final and absolute, must be abjured, and their warrant repeatedly and renewedly questioned and tested in the light of human experience of their utility.

The æsthetic side of religious sentiments makes itself apparent in connection with the formation of ideals of supernatural beauty, and in the forms of ceremonial worship. One of the prime characteristics of the æsthetic is the elimination of the disagreeable, and the abolition of pain is one of the objects proposed by religious thought and feeling, at any rate so far as the individual himself is concerned. A heaven for one's self, free from the woes of the present life, is an essential feature of the religion of most people. Moreover, the altruistic factor in religion operates also to develop a second element of the æsthetic—namely, that the object of æsthetic interest shall be something which is susceptible of

universal enjoyment, which does not perish with the individual using. It will readily be seen, therefore, how the notion of a future life as something to be enjoyed by a society of men and women, and as excluding pain and evil, has a decidedly æsthetic colouring. It is natural also that ideas entertained of deity should include æsthetic as well as moral perfection. So also, when the æsthetic susceptibilities are ministered unto in the constructions of the supernatural which the mind forms, modes of worship inevitably become affected thereby. The same things which arouse religious emotions, in so doing awaken also æsthetic emotions, which indeed for the reasons stated are a part of the former.

The cultivation of the æsthetic is of the highest value for human happiness. It is only by dwelling upon the possible as an improvement upon the actual, the disagreeable being eliminated, that development can be accomplished. It is the fictions of the constructive power that lead us on to increase of knowledge and improvement of character and life. The impulse toward perfection can be sustained only by some ideal of perfection, and this last subsists only in connection with æsthetic sentiments.

Æsthetic interests, however, are not characteristically altruistic. Things which become the objects of æsthetic regard must indeed be things which can be enjoyed by others than the individual, but attention to them does not necessarily lead to altruism. In leading men away from merely appetitive enjoyment into a region of pleasures of a more catholic nature in which community of enjoyment is feasible, the æsthetic dispositions indeed counteract the tendencies to selfish individual absorption. The hoggish, the gross, the brutal in human nature is unmistakably subdued by æsthetic development. But one of the characteristics of the latter—namely, impatience of the disagreeable—has often led in human life to the exhibition of the most thoroughly selfish character in connection with a high degree of refined appreciation of the beautiful. People in such case, in their devotion to cultivation and enjoyment of their own tastes, deliberately ignore, wherever they can, the painful, the annoying, the distressing. This, it need scarcely be remarked, is quite incompatible with the spirit which enjoins that one love his neighbour as himself. Self-sacrifice is foreign to such a character. The history of religious organisations has often disclosed a high degree of æsthetic development with a low degree of ethical. Beautiful temples, magnificent works of art, charming accompaniments of worship—all appealing to very refined senti-

ments of the human mind, have frequently subsisted with an almost complete absence of philanthropic activity, though the need for the latter were very conspicuous in the community. And even this æsthetic growth has proceeded so far that the observances which it has prescribed have been considered the essential means for obtaining the divine favour, and the feelings which those observances arouse have been regarded as evincing a communion of the soul with the divine nature itself.

Hence, there is need in religious organisation to subordinate both knowledge and æsthetic cultivation to the principles of altruism, if we wish to have such organisations serve the purpose of aids to individual and social happiness and progress. When, however, the altruistic purpose is placed first, and realisation of genuinely altruistic results is made the chief end, then the pursuit of knowledge and the love of the beautiful may be cultivated with certainty of the most salutary consequences.

If the church organisations of the most enlightened countries of the world expect to escape the disintegration which threatens them, they must heed the lessons which the foregoing considerations suggest. If they really were what they profess to be, many of them ought not to receive the support of intelligent people who have the welfare of the human race at heart. An institution of the sort whose members, for example, endeavour to form character upon the basis of beliefs that mankind is righteously doomed to eternal torment by a good God, escape from which condemnation was only made possible by a bloody sacrifice, cannot have aught but a baneful influence. Yet, as a matter of fact, though such doctrines are still officially promulgated, they are not believed in at all generally. They are kept in the background and used occasionally on holy days, but the strength of the organisation expends itself upon social and philanthropic work. Sometimes, unfortunately, the repressive influences of authority make themselves felt, especially when by consolidation a greater degree of power is secured. But so long as christianity is broken up into a multiplicity of sects, it is not likely that the dangerous tendencies in religious organisation will have sufficient power to seriously interfere with the progress of civilisation, but those tendencies exist and should not be overlooked by the thoughtful. And so far forth as authority is found asserting any system of beliefs as true, concerning which it is sinful to entertain scepticism; so far as we discover a supernatural system of ethics attempting to dominate the natural; to the extent that

any other test of conduct is approved than the altruistic as determined by the law of the social organism; and wherever the æsthetic sentiment in religious matters dwarfs the ethical—in all or any of these cases counteractives should be persistently and courageously applied in all the spheres of human interest and activity.

The best platform of any religious organisation with which I am acquainted is that of the Free Religious Association, a national organisation in the United States. If churches would adopt this in place of their creeds, and preserve their educational, social, and philanthropic character, moulding it upon the basis of these principles, they would vastly increase their efficiency for good, and would altogether remove the causes which are constantly increasing the distrust with which they are viewed by many of the most intelligent and most devoted servants of humanity in their day and generation. These are the enunciations which I desire to commend :—

*‘Constitution.*

‘1. This organisation shall be called the Free Religious Association.

‘2. The objects of this association are to encourage the scientific study of religion and ethics, to advocate freedom in religion, to increase fellowship in spirit, and to emphasise the supremacy of practical morality in all the relations of life. All persons sympathising with these aims are cordially invited to membership.

‘3. Membership in this association shall leave each individual responsible for his own opinions alone, and affect in no degree his relations to other associations; and nothing in the name or constitution of the association shall ever be construed as limiting membership by any test of speculative opinion or belief—or as defining the position of the association, collectively considered, with reference to any such opinion or belief—or as interfering, in any other way, with that absolute freedom of thought and expression which is the natural right of every rational being.’

## CHAPTER XXXV.

*WORSHIP AND PRAYER.*

THE discussion of ecclesiastical organisations suggests the topic of this chapter, since worship at least is a distinctive feature of such organisations as they have usually been constituted. In this prayer is always more or less involved. Both are likewise features of the individual's relations to the supernatural.

Homage to a deity and requests to him had their origin in fear and the idea of propitiation. It is not necessary for present purposes to trace the process of modification by which mankind has come from comparatively simple to highly complex ideas upon the topics before us, leading to a great variety of ceremonial observances. The superstitious terror in which propitiation began has become a reverential sense of dependence where intelligence is highly developed. The notion of aid in developing perfection of character has appeared, and has considerable power. But the belief that God's wrath will be averted and his favour received is still the chief inducement to worship and prayer.

If the question be asked, Would religion die out if there were no ceremonial observances and no formal prayer? the answer must be in the negative. Religion never can die out so long as the human mind is compelled by the laws of its being to postulate a supernatural beyond the natural, an unlimited behind every limited. Ceremonial worship is only a mode in which the religious consciousness manifests itself.

That progressive substitution of natural causes for supernatural interposition which has marked the increase of human intelligence has greatly lessened the value of propitiatory rites for the purpose of influencing the supernatural powers to bring about particular events, though it is patent that everywhere plenty of people can be found who believe that religious observances of one sort and another

do effect providential interferences with the course of nature.\* But even in theological circles there are many who consider that though prayer, for instance, is answered, the effect comes only through the influence of the prayer upon the human will, stimulating it to action in directions favourable for the accomplishment of the desired end.

It is impossible to estimate correctly the importance of ceremonial observances, or of religious supplication, without antecedently fixing and defining the idea of the supernatural. If there be a God who has commanded a certain set of rites, doubtless his command must be obeyed if men desire his favour. If the monarchical or oligarchical hypothesis of a future state be accepted as truth, and a priesthood be created whose declarations express the will of deity, then it is of importance to obey their behests. If, however, this hypothesis fails, the system of worship which authority prescribes fails with it, and we are obliged to inquire into the general effect of worship upon character, and upon the social welfare.

At any rate, it directs the attention to supernatural relations. It is a law of mental action that those states of consciousness are most apt to be revived upon which in past experience the greatest amount of attention has been concentrated. Thus, with the thoughts constantly directed toward religious objects, the whole character will be moulded thereby. If this attention stimulates to self-improvement, and to altruistic conduct, well and good; if, however, as is often the case, its effect is to diminish activity through fostering the belief that, in following religious observances, religious duty is completed, and, whatever may be one's shortcomings or wickednesses, these observances take away guilt or work atonement, ceremonial worship is a curse to humanity. If a man can commit crimes, and by religious ceremonies work his absolution, a system which allows of this is directly antagonistic to the social welfare. Hence our sentiments of approbation or disapprobation as regards acts of worship must depend altogether upon what they signify to the individuals concerned, and to the community.

Where there is not claimed to be any efficiency in such acts to influence in any way man's accountability to his fellows for his conduct, the effects of worship are chiefly educational. Here, too, the æsthetic emotions have free play. The charms of music, perhaps, should be placed first. All sorts of emotions can be aroused by musical sounds, and a skilful artist well knows how to sway the whole emotional nature this way or that at will. The quiet of the sanctuary, the architecture, the embellishments, all have their

effect ; now soothing, now stimulating, according to circumstances, and the mental condition of the person worshipping.

Upon the whole, subject always to the qualification that it is a means, not an end, and to be rigorously judged by its effects, it seems to me that an æsthetic worship, guided by truth, not by falsehoods, and steadily pointing men to the duty of ethical conduct and character, is a benefit to the human race. Some public recognition of the ineffaceable supernatural, some calling of attention to destiny, the great questions of Whence and Whither that affect man's some awakening of aspiration toward ideals of beauty, truth, and goodness, is eminently desirable. But to obtain the best results truth never must be sacrificed, nor must human happiness be compromised. Better that all the temples be destroyed, and all ceremonial worship abrogated, than that one human being perish from hunger, cold, or neglect.

Although prayer is an element of public worship, it is after all primarily a matter of individual communication to the power addressed. Its public employment, indeed, is open to many serious objections. In the latter case it is supposed that the ritual employed or the words of the leader express the sentiments of all the congregation. As a matter of fact they never can, and very often, in the case of extempore prayers, the utterances are highly displeasing and offensive to many who are listeners. The use of a well-arranged formula with opportunity for silent prayer is much preferable, if prayer in concert be maintained at all in worship. As to its use by individuals, we must allow that it undoubtedly has the effect before remarked of concentrating the attention upon supernatural relations. A christian theologian,<sup>1</sup> setting forth the doctrine of prayer held by Mosheim and Morris, says : 'It is the means of reminding us of the great truths of religion, and of impressing these truths deeply on our hearts. It excites, moreover, a sure and grateful confidence in God and his promises, and a longing desire after the enjoyment of the blessings he has promised. It is, therefore, in itself of a most beneficial tendency, and has an indescribable influence in promoting moral improvement and in purifying the heart. . . . In this exercise God is made, as it were, present with us ; and while we are engaged in this duty, we feel as we are accustomed to feel in direct intercourse with a person who is near at hand listening to us, and who by our words and requests is rendered favourable toward us and becomes intimate with us.'

<sup>1</sup> Knapp, *Lectures on Christian Theology*, p. 412.



There is, however, in this quotation a reference to what is after all the great motive to prayer, and which is set forth by the writer of the volume in criticism of the above-cited ideas. The strength of the prayer idea is the belief that it will be heard and answered. It is the thought that by asking one will receive, that inspires the greatest amount of interest in devotional petition. But, unfortunately, there is no evidence whatever that prayer accomplishes any effect upon the events of nature, save as it influences the human mind to emotion, volition, and action. Even attempts to apply scientific tests of the efficacy of prayer have been reprobated as impious. This being the case, we are compelled to fall back upon the subjective considerations above-mentioned. If we divest ourselves of the superstition that our prayers will directly change the course of nature there can be little objection to the address of the individual to supernatural power in whatever form the mind is accustomed to conceive it. Aspiration, meditation upon the truths of nature or the mysteries of existence, expressed hope for the future, longings for immortality—all indicate the prayerful state of mind, and they *are* prayer in its essence, when divested of the accessories of superstitious ignorance and ecclesiastical untruth.



PART IV.

THE SCIENTIFIC EDUCATION OF  
RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS





## CHAPTER XXXVI.

*TRUE BELIEFS AND FALSE BELIEFS.*

No one denies the great influence which religious sentiments in their various developments have had upon conduct and upon both individual and social life. In the chapters of the last Part I have endeavoured to show some of the effects wrought by different varieties of religious theory and belief. It is conceded by everybody that there has been much religious error exhibited in the world's history; yet in spite of this there has been progress in civilisation, and that too under religious systems whose tenets it has been found necessary to abandon or correct. Very little can be said with regard to the supernatural at most either by way of affirmation or denial. Kant showed that while the existence of God could not be proved, it could not be disproved. Room for possibilities and perhaps probabilities being left, the question arises in our minds whether it matters much what hypothesis be assumed, provided some creed be laid down and maintained by organisation to foster a religious sentiment which seems to be salutary, and which appears to bring us into closer relations with a supernatural which we are obliged to postulate.

Outside the domain of religion as well as within, in all the departments of human knowledge, men have worked under theories and principles which they supposed to be true, but which were afterward found to be untrue. The world made progress under the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, and perhaps some will argue that mankind would have been just as happy if Copernicus had not overturned it. Ships can sail on the sea and agriculture and commerce flourish as well whether we believe that the sun moves around the earth or the earth round the sun. It does not matter for practical purposes whether the earth is flat or spherical. Except in the arts which directly affect human life, is knowledge of much importance? And as for theories—is not a false or incomplete one often as good

as a true or complete one? This argument has the greater force the more remote theory is from connection with practical life, and the less susceptible it is of verification. Intrinsically, are the problems of speculative philosophy, for instance, of enough consequence to make it worth while to dispute whatever conclusion may be affirmed?

Again, when it occurs, as it does in religion, that theories which are not susceptible of verification by natural science have somehow been adopted by large bodies of men as divine revelations, and upon this basis organisations have sprung up whose influence affects very materially practical interests, is it wise to disturb the foundations of an order which is at any rate tolerable and perhaps noticeably beneficial, for the sake of setting right some theoretical statement, even if it could be righted; much less when it is very uncertain whether anything more nearly true could be promulgated after the effort?

This argument is harder to meet than that other which is founded on the position that the most tremendous consequences affecting man for eternity depend upon the belief which he holds; that one particular creed expresses the only truth. If for any reason doubt is excited, then the fear of the alleged results of a false belief must stimulate the mind the more to ascertain what is the truth. It becomes of the highest importance that we be not deceived. The inquiry then comes, Is this particular creed true? with every incentive to the prosecution of the search. But, entertaining the view expressed in the last paragraph, it becomes a matter of comparative indifference whether the belief be true or false, the opinion being that, even if false, more harm will result from upsetting it than any good to be derived from a better knowledge.

This is an old contention and a favourite one with those who believe in the established and dread innovations. It has been used to help authority everywhere, both in the political and the religious world. There are plenty of people who, for one reason or another, esteem learning, be it much or little, to be a dangerous thing. Priests do not want their people to read the bible; despotic sovereigns establish a rigorous censorship of all publications; while in slave-holding countries masters prevent their slaves from reading at all. From the point of view of all these autocrats their course is doubtless a wise one. The peasant may live very comfortably and die happily even if he never is allowed to read the bible. The more intelligent man may be much the happier if he do not

have within his reach and before his eyes incendiary or revolutionary literature. The negro slave may escape evils by the fact of his ignorance. All this may be ; but one thing is still more certain—namely, power of one or a few over the many is thereby made more secure. The few say justly, if man eat of the tree of knowledge he will become one of us, and we control him no more.

Samuel Bailey's essays on Opinion and Truth, though written a long time ago, ought always to be read by any one who tries to persuade himself that since really error may sometimes be more useful than truth, the pursuit of the latter ought at any rate to be regulated and often restrained. I never have been able to get a favourable expression upon that work from anybody in authority. It is generally put by such people into an *Index Expurgatorius*. No doubt in many places and times it would have been publicly burned. I once loaned a copy to a clergyman, who returned it with the remark that such books did not exert a healthful influence. Bailey contended that 'truth is the only sure and stable basis of happiness,' and he defines truth as implying 'accuracy of knowledge and inference.' To attain this the utmost freedom of inquiry is advocated, and the moral duty of indifference to the particular result is clearly set forth. 'It cannot be too freely proclaimed that whenever and on whatever subject inquiry becomes necessary or obligatory on human beings, the only duty to be performed consists in full and impartial investigation and has no dependence upon the result. When a man has accomplished this he may have failed in attaining the truth, but he will not only have satisfied the requirements of his own conscience, but have deserved the approbation of every wise and just judge.'

One thing may be safely assumed at the outset. Inquiry and scepticism will inevitably arise unless some constraint be exercised to prevent them. Mental indolence, indeed, may abate the energy of curiosity, but never wholly extinguish it. The mental acts of association, comparison, inference, and constructive imagination, are all the time going on, so long as consciousness lasts. Unless the sentiment arises that the mind must not or ought not to doubt and criticise, it will inevitably do so, for such is the nature of intelligence. This is recognised by the strenuous attempts that are made to repress just these exercises. The force of reaction is an index of the strength of action. Now such attempts are originally at least from outside, the mind coming to exercise self-restraint because there is outside pressure. They must be in the interest of

somebody. Is it the interest of the person upon whom the pressure is directed? If not, but the interest of others, whose interest, and what sort of interest is it?

If it be for the welfare of the party who is discouraged from doubting, or forbidden to doubt, it must be because such scepticism will bring, or is likely to bring, some harm upon that person. This harm will come either from supernatural providence directly, or from the action of men, or it might conceivably arise from an unsettling and unbalancing of the mind of the person himself, preventing him from properly adjusting his actions to his environment. As to the first of these, it must be said that we have no authenticated accounts of people, in our day at least, being visited with punishment in this world by immediate divine interposition because of their doubt and inquiry. Sceptics have died suddenly, or been injured by accidents, but so have those who are not sceptics. The house of the unbeliever has been struck by lightning, but so has the church spire. Upon ordinary valid principles of inference, no argument can be drawn from events like these as to a connection between them and any moral acts or intellectual states. Besides, there is a great abundance of doubters who live and die happily. So that whatever may have been the case in former ages of the world, we cannot now say that supernatural providence will punish the doubter in this world by any direct interposition. As regards the world to come—here arises the very object of inquiry. If the question is not asked, no ground is furnished for belief; and if it be asked, the asker must judge of the answer by the criteria of his own intelligence. If he does not do this, he must suppress the exercise of his own intelligence, and nominally accept the declaration of some one else on authority. This no man will do against his own conviction or scepticism, unless from fear of harm at the hands of other men.

It is the fear of direct or indirect injury from other human beings that constitutes the chief restraint of interest on the part of the individual upon questioning established creeds. It may be for his welfare on the score of prudence that he avoid this harm, but it would certainly be for his advantage also if he could remove the cause of anticipated injury. If he were strong enough to resist and throw off the threatened evil, it would allow a clearer field for the expansion of all his activities. This he will be tempted to accomplish. To thwart his attempts, the pressure will have to be increased; this increase will continue to enhance the desire to



be rid of constraint. So that the whole matter, so far as the question of individual welfare is concerned, will resolve itself into a prudential interest not to rebel against the powers that be until mighty enough to overcome them, but to use all effort to become sufficiently strong.

This feeling, which inevitably will arise since force always evokes resistance, will not have the effect to repress inquiry except as it lowers all the energies and reduces all the activities. This last, indeed, it may do, but even then it will not abolish scepticism in reality. It will stop the expression of opinion, not its formation. Belief is not voluntary; it is formed by our associations. You can command people to say that they believe a certain statement, and make them obey. The belief cannot be directly reached by constraint. This fact brings us back again to the question of prudence. If I believe a thing, I am disposed to act upon my belief; motives of prudence restrain me, but there is always the superior motive to get rid of the restraining power. To support the established without question is only the interest of the individual as determined by existing conditions. It cannot be argued from this that it is not for his interest that the conditions be changed.

If now the conditions were such that each individual were at liberty to employ freely the spontaneous activities of his mind in attaining truth, proving all things, and thus being free to doubt and question, who would suffer? Obviously if all men are not to inquire as to what is truth, and determine it upon their own reasoning, if there is to be truth at all in the world, it must be found, declared, and maintained by some to the exclusion of others. That is to say, a few men are the custodians and the oracles of truth which they dispense to the rest of mankind, as the owners of well-filled granaries dole out corn to the populace in a famine. When, therefore, inquiry is opened to all, the power of the oracles is diminished. There is a distribution of knowledge and the power that knowledge gives. There is an equalisation which is for the benefit of the many and to the detriment of the few. It is thus ever for the interest of the few that the law which they promulgate shall not be disputed.

We have now reached the root of the matter. If we consider that men are upon an equality of right to pursue happiness, that in the social organism one individual unit is entitled to as much as and no more power and privilege than another, save as the representative of all to maintain the common freedom, then it

is clear that it is for the advantage of this organic whole, of each as limited by every other, that knowledge shall grow from more to more and be perfected. For knowledge forms character, and determines conduct; and through conduct happiness or unhappiness is reached. The utility of the best and most complete knowledge Samuel Bailey has admirably shown, and many since his time have made it evident. I shall not detain the reader upon this point. What I desire to emphasise here is that this interest in the increase of knowledge is always the interest of the whole organism, while the repression of that scepticism and inquiry through which alone knowledge can be perfected is always the selfish interest of a class.

‘Utility and truth are not to be divided,’ said Bishop Berkeley. It is thus a fallacy to assert that a false belief is beneficial to humanity. Whatever advantages ever flowed from it were derived from the fact that it was believed to be true. And when the knowledge obtains that it is false, its utility is proportionately on the decline. A false belief may not affect conduct to any great extent, it is true, but so far forth as it is allowed to do so, when once known to be false, it is injurious and tends constantly toward social disorganisation.

It is doubtless the case that an overturning of established beliefs often disturbs the equilibrium both of the individual and the community. There is a shock at finding the supports on which we have relied giving way, which is followed by confusion, sometimes very serious. But the remedy for this is to allow the utmost possible room for movement to recover one’s self. Usually advantage is taken at such times of the anarchical condition to impose some new authority. It then may well be questioned whether it would not have been better to have kept the old tyranny. But surely it is not past hope that mankind may become so self-disciplined and so altruistic as to adjust their conduct from time to time to the teachings of advancing knowledge, without entailing destruction and woe.

It is this dread of breaking up a settled order, this preference of present ills known, to unknown evils to come, that induces many well-disposed persons to feel that a creed, false though it be, should be let alone, since it is in some sense a guaranty of tranquillity. More thorough consideration would teach them that in the first place the falsity of a belief is sure to be discovered sooner or later. The activity of the human mind cannot be suppressed altogether.

As the knowledge of its untruth is propagated, the belief can only be maintained for any influential purpose by constraint. Constraint inevitably will arouse resistance, which will necessitate the increase of authoritative power. This must go on to absolute despotism, with the certainty that some time or other there will be a terrible upheaval, with consequences the more disastrous, as there exists more concentrated power. Far better to have the creed criticised and modified in the beginning, without its maintenance being artificially made a matter of life and death. Even if there be a natural unsettling, there will be a natural readjustment if the spontaneity of the mind is allowed scope for its exercise. Evils may flow from doubt and criticism, but far greater evils will arise from their attempted discouragement and suppression. Truth will out, and the more its development is hindered, the more trouble is occasioned; but it is not truth that makes the difficulty, it is the resistance to truth.

The proper conservative attitude to assume upon this subject is, I conceive, to allow in general and to everybody the utmost freedom of inquiry and of expression, in order that error may be corrected and knowledge grow 'from more to more.' This at least must be insisted upon. In addition, wherever there is difference of opinion, some insisting upon the old creed and others favouring a new one, the fact of the difference ought to be recognised as a matter of practical concern. Prudential considerations of how to act under the given circumstances, so as to promote individual happiness and the common welfare under the law of altruism, should have full weight. But while existing conditions must modify conduct, the utmost freedom should be left for change of the conditions. If this be done, we secure the minimum of harm from false beliefs; for the opportunity is constantly afforded of replacing them in natural course by true beliefs. Their advantage to those who believe in them is preserved, while those who do not believe in them can entertain their own convictions, and appreciate that the field is left open for the march of intelligence. The welfare of mankind emphatically requires that beliefs shall be allowed to form themselves in each individual mind, without the pressure of interest coming from apprehended benefit or injury at the hands of other men because of the belief itself, and that when such beliefs are formed there shall be full liberty of expression, without fear of other consequences than intellectual criticism.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

*THE RELIGIONS OF IGNORANCE AND ERROR.*

IF the right to free inquiry be preserved and no repression of such inquiry be favoured, any religion which is founded upon ignorance, upon partial truth, or upon erroneous ideas, will be sure at least to undergo modification, and perhaps will be entirely superseded if the error is in excess of the truth. Such results are inevitable, and therefore those to whom any particular system of religious organisation is of paramount value upon any account, act wisely from their point of view in discouraging doubt and criticism, and in nourishing a respect for authority in religious matters. It is exceedingly perilous for them to concede any individual freedom whatever. The only thoroughly safe and consistent plan is inflexibly to maintain that the church and the priesthood are the infallible teachers, expounders, and judges of doctrine and law. The Roman Catholic Church in Christendom has followed much the wisest course for the interests of its organisation, and it is no wonder that to sustain itself it has resorted to persecution. Under the tenets of any religion based upon authority, persecution is logically justifiable, and it is very apt to be resorted to unless human sympathies prove too strong. But even if physical coercion be abandoned, the strongest reasons prevail to enforce moral constraint, and to impress the belief that the authority of the ecclesiastical organisation is inherently sacred.

Happily the power of free inquiry has been growing much greater, and it is likely to be more and more exercised in the future. The modifications, consequently, in ecclesiastical institutions will probably be much more marked than they have been in the past. We must expect much disintegration and a period of apparent confusion in religious beliefs and the organisations arising from them. This is a healthy condition, and, so far from exciting

alarm, it ought to be held a matter for congratulation. The 'unbelief' of the present age is a symptom of intellectual and moral life; it is not an evidence of wickedness. And out of this scepticism a better and sounder religious sentiment is sure to grow. But because particular institutions seem to be in their decadence, we need not feel that the foundations of social order are being undermined. The destruction of no organisation can destroy the religious impulses; it will only affect the form of their manifestation; and social order does not depend upon any form of religious thought or feeling.

Inasmuch, however, as religious sentiments do have a great influence upon both individuals and upon society, it is important that the changes which take place in religious organisations and in individual beliefs be guided as far as possible by the light of knowledge. If the religions of ignorance and error are to be reconstructed or are to pass wholly away, it is necessary to find out what scientific basis we have left for religion, and, having this established, to determine in what directions and by what means further knowledge can be obtained. How to make the most of the religious sentiment for human welfare is the ultimate problem. To ascertain what we can know on religious questions, to increase our knowledge, and to apply to character and conduct the scientific truth obtained, to the end of promoting the happiness of mankind—this is what we ought to set before ourselves as the task to be performed in connection with religion. In this view, therefore, let us gather together the threads of our inquiry, and see if we are able to conclude what should be the religion of science and morality.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

*THE RELIGIONS OF SCIENCE.*

AT the outset, in defining religion, we asserted that its intellectual centre is the ascertained or assumed relations of man and the order of nature generally to a postulated supernatural. An examination of this postulate discloses the fact that it is conditional for all knowledge whatsoever. That is to say, all cognition assumes it as an essential datum. But, although the supernatural is thus postulated, our knowledge of it is that of a blank negative reality, which we cannot bring into positive thought without a contradiction. Yet, because we only think in and by relation, we are obliged to give some sort of form and consistency to this notion of a supernatural. Hence the mind makes fictitious symbolical constructions of this postulated reality.

These constructions are influenced by two principal groups of factors—the Actual and the Possible. The supernatural is regarded as the cause of what is and as the surety for the realisation of what we desire to become actual. These two sets of factors modify each other in varying degrees, but together they produce the different definite conceptions of the supernatural which mankind entertain.

The central point of all constructions of the supernatural is the question of continuity of personal existence. If there be no such continuity, interest of inquiry is quenched. If there be immortality, then the nature of the future existence, and the relations of the individual to that existence, become of great importance. Upon the whole, the continuity of personal life is a probable hypothesis; and if of one individual, then of others.

The idea of some sort of a society, and hence of a moral order, thus may be safely entertained as a consequence of individual immortality. But as to the further environing conditions of such an existence we are scarcely able to form even an hypothesis. Nor

can we be sure of the social conditions. Our only guide is an ideal of what would be best, and our practical preparation for such a state must be to form a character in harmony with such an ideal. Hence the bearings of the various ideas of the supernatural life and of supernatural relations upon character and conduct in this life are of paramount importance; and these we have also considered.

Nor must it be forgotten that, whatever notions we do form, when we have constructed a future state or a future world, or any world whatever beyond the visible, we have still only another natural world with a postulated supernatural behind it, which we cannot know or comprehend. We cannot even assume a personal God without postulating a greater and controlling power behind him.

Without further recapitulation, it may be declared that, upon the basis of science, of what we know and of the ascertained limitations of knowledge, and of the effects upon human life and conduct of the leading religious ideals and hypotheses, we may scientifically develop two systems of religious sentiment differing characteristically according to the answer that is given to the question of personal continuity after death. These we will proceed to consider in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

*THE RELIGION OF SOCIAL IMMORTALITY.*

It may seem strange to some to consider that of the religious ideas God is secondary to Immortality. But I contend that the primary motive power in religious sentiment does not come from the idea of God, but from the idea of self as existing in relation to a God. The reasons for this contention have been sufficiently set forth in preceding pages. It is the desire for life, the instinct of self-preservation, that stirs within us the questions respecting a supernatural that we are for ever asking. In the present life, for all knowledge we are obliged to hypostasise some power, energy, substance, or cause. The same necessity exists in regard to a world beyond the grave. If there be experience, there still must be a source and a cause of it, and whether, and if so how, we can affect that experience becomes a great practical question.

At most the doctrine of individual personal continuity, with or without an interval of sleep, is only a probable hypothesis at present. Mankind may learn more on the subject by-and-by; but on the most favourable construction no more can be said now. On the other hand, the least that can be said is that it is possible. John Stuart Mill thought that we could rationally indulge a hope, but were not warranted in entertaining a belief to that effect. A strictly agnostic position can be taken theoretically, we can say we do not know, refusing either to affirm or deny personal immortality; but practically it may be suspected that every one either believes or disbelieves the doctrine. By this, I mean to say that every one either allows the idea of a future existence for himself to influence conduct and character, or he does not. If he does not, he practically disbelieves it. If now a person refuses to admit the doctrine of personal continuity into his mind as a living force, or if he positively disbelieves in it, what religion is there left for him and in him?



The sense of the limitation of knowledge and activity is certainly not gotten rid of. The wonderful facts of change, of progress, of evolution are not any the less clear. The life that now is remains, and the knowledge that birth is all the while occurring as well as death. Ideals of what humanity might be are not obliterated. The theory which man can then entertain is that there is an Unknowable Energy whence all things proceed, that there is a law of progress, and that the individual is a link in the chain of that progress; that his ideals of good to be realised may not indeed be realised by him or for him, but that by-and-by they will be wrought out for his posterity or his brother men. And that to such a result he may contribute.

‘Not a mind but has its mission—  
Power of working woe or weal;  
So degraded none’s condition,  
But the world his weight may feel.

‘Words of kindness we have spoken  
May, when we have passed away,  
Heal, perhaps, some spirit broken,  
Guide a brother led astray.

‘Let no being, then, be rated  
As a thing of little worth;  
Every soul that is created  
Has its part to play on earth.’

‘In this sense it is, the sense of the immortality of influence, that we abide, the sense of the immortality of that which is best and noblest in us, quite content to leave to the christians the selfish materialism of an after-life, which, contrary to all reason and all morality, they seek to transfer to another and impossible sphere.’<sup>1</sup>

Thus upon an ideal of human perfection to be sometime realised, and when realised to be vicariously enjoyed, a principle of altruistic conduct is made the guide of life.

It is a great advantage of this Religion of Humanity that, as thus understood and maintained, it does not interfere with the development of natural ethics. It does not aim to prevent that progressive adaptation of organism to environment which is at the foundation of individual conduct and social morality. It adopts

<sup>1</sup> Courtlandt Palmer, *The Cause of Humanity*.

the rule of maximum happiness for the greatest number as the social *summum bonum*; and it inculcates as a duty making the most of the present life for the purposes of the social organism. It recognises the need of science, and believes in advancement in knowledge and character. The perfection of humanity and its complete happiness in this life is the goal proposed.

The doctrine of deity characteristically belonging to this system of belief is essentially pantheistic. Personality is certainly denied to the supreme being, but a deity immanent though not distinct from, the universe would seem to be consistent with it. Its theology is agnostic, so far as declaration is concerned, though there is no denial of a power that transcends knowledge, whose manifestations we behold in nature.

But valuable as is this enthusiasm of an ideal humanity, and faultless as it is in the ethical principles which it adopts and inculcates, it nevertheless is wanting in the most powerful religious motives. In a former chapter (Chapter XXVII.) I have set forth the depressing effect upon activity of a disbelief in a future state, and the corresponding stimulus derived from the belief in personal immortality. Carry altruistic education to as high a degree of perfection as we may, human nature must have for itself a collateral egoistic motive. It must lie in happiness, satisfaction experienced, and this implies conscious life. I may indeed derive joy from the contemplation of ideals of human blessedness, but unless I can witness their realisation there is not the incentive to work for that realisation that there is when I expect to see it and share in its beneficent results. Under proper education, I may indeed labour for the good of humanity, and live a life of constant and extreme self-sacrifice, but the idea that death 'ends all' for me is a constant weight upon my activity, while the contrary belief is a powerful incentive. And if the disbelief in personal immortality were to become general, however much we might encourage altruistic conduct, and attempt to influence activity by ideals of the perfection of humanity as a race, it seems to me certain that the sources of morality which lie in human character itself as manifesting the inward disposition, would become materially dried up, to the detriment of that organic unity which binds society together. At any rate, much stronger effort would have to be made to preserve the true altruistic spirit, with great doubt as to success. The belief in a future life will not of itself secure altruism; that depends upon what we believe the future life will be, and will require. But

the absence of that belief tends to quench activity, and thus to cause a lapse to the condition where egoistic gratification of the present moment is all that the mind has any interest in proposing to itself to secure.

Nevertheless if science teaches us that we must dismiss the belief in personal immortality, we must face the consequences. I have given some reasons for the conviction that on grounds of science such immortality is a probable hypothesis. If I am right, we have then open to our reception another system of scientific religion.

## CHAPTER XL.

*THE RELIGION OF INDIVIDUAL IMMORTALITY.*

IF we believe in an after-life, that belief, as before noticed, will not necessarily tend to encourage conservation of the present life. We may be taught to consider that if we throw ourselves before the car of Juggernaut the immortal happiness which we shall gain will be so great that in comparison with it the loss of the present life with the pain of death is nothing. Religious enthusiasts often have rushed into the dangers of battle, and gone to certain death inspired by the hope of reward in the world beyond. On the other hand, many men have doubtless been deterred from similar things by an apprehension of punishment in the world to come. Many an intended suicide has been thus prevented, many an unholy war has lost adherents for like cause. The fact that the belief in a future life does strongly influence conduct is plain, and does not admit of dispute; but that influence may be a good or a bad one, so far as present existence is concerned.

If, believing in a continuity of personal existence and, in connection with this, looking forward to a society in the world to come, we seek to determine what we shall be and in what relations we shall stand in such a world, any one of the possible modes of social constitution may come into our minds. But not having direct evidence of what such a state actually is, we shall construct it according to our ideals of excellence. These ideals, of course, will vary with the progress of civilisation. Taking the best knowledge which we have at the present time, the question arises, What are the conditions to which we should look forward in the after-life, if after-life there be?

This question can only be answered by a study of present conditions in the light of the past experiences of the race. The problem of the present world has always been, how to reconcile

different individual ends. The competitions of egoistic development, together with the apparent necessity of men dwelling together in society, dash individuals against each other repeatedly to mutual destruction. The only way by which this can be avoided is by securing some sort of assimilation. There must be some blending of ends and purposes, or else devastation will ensue, and with it frustration of individual purposes.

Thus the idea of the organic unity of mankind came into being, and the sense of its importance has been surely though irregularly gaining ground. The placing of individual ends in the social end, the growth of one's own life by entering into the life of others, have wrought such remarkable effects upon society, and thus reactively upon individuals, that the altruistic character has risen into prominence as the ideal of the perfection of humanity.

If society were perfectly altruistic collisions would not arise, and the injustice of giving self-sacrifice without receiving it would not appear. People having full faith in the efficacy of altruism as a healer of the nations if everybody would be altruistic, are confronted with the very sad fact that everybody is not altruistic, nor is it likely that such a fortunate condition will soon arise. Self-preservation requires a very considerable degree of anxious care as against one's fellow-men. And if one wishes to sacrifice self, there is no lack of opportunity. The probabilities are that his desire will be taken advantage of without much honour to him, and perhaps with little result to humanity.

Thus, for its own intrinsic excellence and as a satisfying compensation for present disappointments, the future state conceived as a perfect altruistic society has the highest degree of beneficial power over the minds of men. The idea of perpetuity of existence satisfies the desire for self-conservation, the appetite for life. The notion of this future life affording a realisation of ideals is a perpetual inspiration. If there be added the ideal of an organic society wherein each finds his happiness in the happiness of the others, a chastening influence is at once thrown upon selfish desires, a disposition to conform one's own conduct to the social good is strengthened, the social ends and the individual, the good of the one and of all, converge, thus securing the organic growth of assimilation instead of the mechanical destructive effects of impact and resistance.

This ideal of an organic unity which exhibits the perfection of altruism carries with it the implication of complete liberty and

equality. We might call such condition a democracy if there were any need of government at all. But in such a case there would only be self-government, the desire to injure and to allow injury being altogether absent. Hence, with complete altruism in character and conduct, would go the most absolute liberty. The whole idea of sovereignty would be foreign to such a state, useless in fact, and odious in the very suggestion because implying the need for external law and punishment. It would literally be a community without government, since all the offices of government are superseded by the unselfish autonomy of each individual.

Yet, if such be the most stimulating and most beneficial hypothesis of a future state, it is not easy to see how it could be at once realised for everybody. It is a fact that men seem in this life hopelessly egoistic, and often with no apparent capacity for a nobler disposition. Thus men live and they die. How totally different conditions might affect the mind we know not, but it seems a violent supposition to consider that the character would be changed from bad to good 'in the twinkling of an eye.' One thing is clear, which was indeed remarked in former chapters: that a celestial society could not exist as such with the disturbing element of those whose governing purposes were at variance with the social law. Hence the necessity of some purgatorial condition or process.

In such a view of the world to come, deity would have precisely the same place, and the relations with deity would be of precisely the same character as in the present life. Beyond experience would be a source of experience, beyond intelligence a cause of intelligence, behind change a permanent, underneath phenomena a noumenon, over against the limited an unlimited. There would still be, known as such but not otherwise known, the 'Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed.' The idea of God, then, would become not the idea of a personal sovereign, but of a power immanent, comprehensive, impersonal, not in the sense of being material, but without the limitations of personality, in whom indeed we live and move and have our being, but whose definite attributes we cannot know, and for whose manifestation we are to seek only in nature as matter and nature as mind. It is not of the slightest consequence what our imagination pictures in regard to deity (provided deity be not conceived as immoral) so long as we keep before our minds the appreciation of the fact that it is wholly imaginative and fictitious; but we can never claim that our conception is anything more than symbolic.

Shall any gazer see with mortal eyes,  
 Or any searcher know by mortal mind,  
 Veil after veil will lift—but there must be  
 Veil upon veil behind.<sup>1</sup>

But while the sense of this Power Immanent never can be absent, it will not furnish an inspiration for the satisfaction of human desires and hopes. These lie in the future state and in the realisation of ideals of human perfection for which the after-life furnishes opportunity. Hence the disposition to deify men who have become objects of fear, admiration, and love by reason of their power, natural or artificially supported. The religions of science will certainly encourage the formation of such ideals as guides of conduct, and will not oppose reverence and gratitude to the men who best exemplify such ideals or who have been benefactors of the human race in any department of activity. Nor, if the belief in a future life be held, can there be any reason to discourage the hope of meeting these, and knowing, not only the loved ones of our own immediate associations, but also the good and great of the past in human history. This refined form of ancestor-worship is innocuous, and so far forth as in the lives of those who have passed to the majority we find exhibited the ideal of complete humanity, such lives may rationally, not superstitiously, furnish guidance for our conduct in the present life. Thus there may be saved to mankind the noble example of the Nazarene, and there may also be preserved the precious inspiration of the life and teachings of that other lover of men's souls, Asia's Deliverer, who understood so well the relation of the human to the divine, and who showed men the path of duty in working out human fellowship; while recognising at the same time the Power which works to

Evolve the dark to light, the dead to life,  
 To fulness void, to form the yet unformed,  
 Good unto better, better unto best,  
 By wordless edict; having none to bid,  
 None to forbid, for this is past all gods,  
 Immutable, unspeakable, supreme,  
 A Power which builds, unbuilds, and builds again,  
 Ruling all things accordant to the rule  
 Of virtue, which is beauty, truth, and use.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Light of Asia.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* book vi.

Whatever ideas of deity may be entertained, the religions of science imperatively require that no theological system, either in its principles or practices, shall contravene the natural law of the social organism, which demands the altruistic character and the altruistic conduct for the greatest happiness of the greatest number and the perfection of humanity. To promote these last results a religion subordinated to science can be of great value. The life that now is must receive our first consideration. Here we are and we are to act according to our conditions. Then, as a sequence to our work in this life, we may if we can (and I have given some reasons for thinking that we can) look forward to an after-world of joyous society, where 'the glory and the honour of the nations' shall be brought; or, if rest be our main anticipation, we may be prepared to pass with great contentment

Unto Nirvana, where the Silence lives.



## CHAPTER XLI.

*RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.*

HAVING determined one's principles, and ascertained fully the consequences flowing from them so as to establish precepts also, it is no violent assumption to assert that this theoretical and practical truth ought to be inculcated as against both partial truth and positive error. But the problem of education is greatly complicated by diversity of views as to what constitutes truth. The most opposite and incompatible ideas are often entertained by different men and bodies of men of high respectability both as regards knowledge and goodness. Besides this, there is often much uncertainty as to the best methods to be adopted considering education as an art. Hence we cannot dismiss the subject by enunciating our found truths, and saying, Teach them to every creature.

The interest of a community that its growing youth become good citizens, extending as it does almost to a necessity for self-preservation, has developed a system of public education, supported by taxation, like any other instrumentality of government. Besides this, there are a great many institutions, particularly of a higher grade, which are of a private or perhaps semi-public character, maintained beyond tuition fees chiefly by individual gifts and bequests, but sometimes also by state aid in addition. Education in such schools of the one class and the other, rather than family education, it is the present purpose to consider with reference to the leading topic.

The maintenance of the social order depends upon the needs of mankind in this world ; not upon their desires, their wants, their speculations regarding a life to come. To be sure, the interests of men in the latter do influence their conduct in the present life and thus affect their character as citizens. Hence the religious creeds of its members are not matters of indifference to the community.

At the same time the great heterogeneity of opinions and faiths makes it a perplexing question how to legislate for the common weal in such personal concerns as that of religion. But yet it may be urged with force that, if we waited for universal agreement before we taught anything, the instruction given in every department would be very scanty.

Almost all the higher studies, such as philosophy, psychology, political economy, and philosophy of history, would certainly have to be excluded, while in the ordinary branches of science there would be breaks wide enough to destroy continuity of teaching. Men, however, will often submit calmly to having their children taught erroneously in physics or psychology, while they are up in arms if heresies in religion are inculcated. Upon this latter subject there is extraordinary bitterness. What ought to be done under such circumstances?

First, with regard to schools supported by public moneys. Every one is taxed in this respect on equal principles of property-holding, not in proportion to the amount of his political, economical, or religious ideas that is to be propagated through the school system. But it is not in human nature that a man should like to see the state using his money to advance notions of which he disapproves. Particularly is this true of religious ideas. Shall his objection be heeded? Suppose a person be found who thinks it contrary to equity and good conscience that his children be taught the binomial theorem. Shall instruction in algebra, therefore, be stopped at this point? Or, shall the objector be forgiven his tax? Or, shall a school be instituted for his benefit where the obnoxious formula is left out? Will not the same argument, whatever it be, hold good for both religion and algebra alike?

The great purpose of education within the domain of the state is, I conceive, to make men of their own wills do what is right; that is, to act for the welfare of the whole organism. They will not so act unless they have the right disposition. Hence good character must be formed to insure good conduct. I do not suppose it will be seriously disputed that to accomplish this end, as regards knowledge, truth only should be taught. A character based on untruth or error is not desired by anybody. The controversy always is over the answer to the query of Pontius Pilate. As a discerning judge in one of the law reports remarks in an opinion: 'There is no doubt that the plaintiff in this case ought by his contract to have beans; the question is, What *is* beans?' There

is, perhaps, room for doubt whether *all* truth ought to be taught, even admitting it to be truth ; but I shall assume that no one will urge that falsehood should be the basis of instruction to youth.

Theoretical knowledge may or may not have direct, appreciable effects upon character and conduct. A good deal of this sort of knowledge, when acquired in school education, is disciplinary, for the purpose of exercising and training mental powers. Such is the case, for example, with the binomial theorem just instanced. Perhaps no great harm would result to anybody if it were left out of mathematical instruction in public institutions. But some disciplinary instruction there must be, and some one must decide what it shall be. Men are taxed for the support of schools on the theory that it is for the interest of the state that children be educated. Each one must leave to constituted authorities the power to prescribe in what this education shall consist ; and even if he has views of his own, he cannot be allowed to make their rejection by the school board just ground for refusing to pay his taxes. For similar reasons he cannot ask to have a school established for his own ideas or for his own benefit. Besides, this last would be wholly impracticable on an extended scale. It would destroy the public-school system altogether. Nevertheless, nothing that is here said should prevent any one from agitating matters of complaint as to courses of instruction and enforcing his opinions if he can make them appear reasonable, through the regular channels of influence and authority.

Thus there must be a common order with regard to school instruction, overruling the preferences of individuals until changed by the common will regularly expressed. The question always paramount and fundamental is, then, What does the common interest demand ? According to the tenor of our preceding remarks we might answer, Theoretical and practical truth. It would be commonplace to say that youth should be taught not to commit crimes or private wrongs. And further, in accordance with the principle of organic growth, they should be informed, clothed on, if possible, with the altruistic character. In the direct relations of man to man there is comparatively little dispute over what is theoretically right and what is wrong. As to the elementary virtues and vices there is no serious difference of opinion, unless concerning sex-relations, which need not be discussed here. So also as regards elementary knowledge in general. The multiplication table is well settled, and is universally conceded to be of

considerable practical utility. The right use of language might occasion more controversy, but there are standards which are tolerably decisive of disputes. The geography of the globe, the common features in natural history, the principles of mechanics, the ascertained truths of physics generally, can be and are taught without arousing animosity, although points of doubt, of imperfect knowledge, of opposition between authorities, are discovered. In these and like studies it is expected by all intelligent people, of whatever sect or party, that, wherever there is question, the doubt itself with the arguments for one side or the other will be stated. This is the course usually adopted. The best text-books follow this method. In no other manner can truth be taught. But in this way the learner can be put in possession of the exact state of knowledge in a given branch of study, or upon a certain topic; and if he have the requisite mental capacity, he is placed in the best possible situation also to add to that knowledge. This is obviously for the public interest. The things that are settled, indeed, should be so taught; but when there is dispute the utmost care should be taken to state impartially and accurately the divergent views.

Now, when we come to those departments of knowledge which involve important personal and social questions of practical consequence, respecting which there is contrariety of opinion, we have three courses open. The first is for the public authority to select one set of principles and precepts to the exclusion of others, and command these to be taught as truth, and these only; the second is to refrain from teaching anything whatever on the subject; the third, to adopt the method just mentioned—namely, to present to the learner the different opinions, with the grounds of each, in the most impartial and judicial manner.

If the first plan be adopted, the risk must be run of the doctrines selected not being true. Experience has shown that truth will out; and when once error is discovered, there comes both a demonstration of the insecurity of the method and a hearty contempt for it. The one who has suffered by the teaching feels himself defrauded and swindled. Unless we can reason ourselves into the belief that falsehood or error is sometimes useful, we shall have to seek some better procedure. And even if we could persuade ourselves of the utility of untruth, we should still have the very perplexing questions to answer as to when, where, and what sort of falsehoods are useful.

But this is not the end of the trouble. If there be difference

of opinion, the parties whose doctrines are rejected will inevitably oppose, by every lawful means at least, the principles adopted by those in power. They will nullify school-teaching by home-teaching; they will seek to disturb the school system by overthrowing its government; they will encourage disrespect toward the whole scheme of instruction; they will be in a state of chronic rebellion, which will create a present and pervasive social disorganisation outweighing any advantage to be derived from the authoritative teaching. For, even if the latter be the truth, and the other error, the chances are that the force of authority will develop so great a resistance as to give a formidable strength and vitality to the erroneous doctrine; whereas, if its power were not thus artificially gathered and its life thus supported, it would die out from its inherent insufficiency.

Nor yet is this the whole of the matter. The adoption of any assumed truths by authority in the face of a manifest difference of opinion is an oppression which leads directly to anarchy and revolution, with despotism to follow. In order to maintain the teaching, the pressure in support must continually be increased to overbalance the opposition, which nevertheless grows in this very process, until by-and-by an upheaval is inevitable, perhaps with ruinous devastation. This is a familiar historical experience of which I need not stop to give illustration. I desire only to recall attention to the fact that, in the social and political as well as in the physical world, every action has its reaction. Revolution and anarchy are the natural and inevitable consequences of the establishment of truth by command. It may not come immediately, but disintegration is all the while going on, and the results will sooner or later appear. Thus, taking all these considerations, and even omitting the more special arguments which flow from legal guarantees of individual rights as established in a free community, we may be sure that, upon broad principles of the common weal, the first of the three courses suggested for public schools, in regard to education upon disputed questions of practical moment to the individual and to society, must unfailingly be most pernicious.

The second plan, that of teaching nothing at all, is not for the highest public interest, because its effect is to prevent the young from giving attention to and acquiring accurate knowledge upon subjects which ultimately will be forced upon them, and will call for opinion or action. Substantially the same reasons prevail against this course which exist against a negative attitude of the

state with regard to education generally. There are thinkers of eminence who believe that the state never should undertake to educate the young, leaving that work wholly to private agencies. Their position, I think, is an unsound one, because education is a necessity for security, and thus a legitimate matter of governmental cognisance. At all events, we have public systems, and, having them, it seems important that some instruction be given upon those topics which evidently take precedence of others in the minds of the people, and are of enough consequence to develop actively an opposition of opinion.

If this be so, there is only the third suggestion left—namely, to extend universally the scientific method of teaching. State the question fairly, give the facts bearing upon it accurately, explain impartially the differences of views with the reasons favouring each; then let the individual form his own conclusions, entirely free from any of the arts of persuasion. This is the only method which subserves the public good, the welfare of the whole organism instead of the interest of a party, and which does not work injustice. Then the taxpayer cannot complain; or, if he does, it will clearly be because he is more desirous of serving his own particular idols, whether of personal creation or of party affiliation, than of promoting the cause of truth, in which alone lies the well-being of the community as a whole. The school which educates after this fashion is a powerful help to the stability of the commonwealth; the teacher who thus teaches is a faithful and valuable public servant, for whose support no tax should be paid grudgingly.

While these remarks apply to the whole curriculum of instruction, the practical difficulty of giving such truly scientific instruction is often very great. There is little fairness between contestants; and most people, even teachers, are partisans. Each seeks only to become the oppressor. Ascendency, conquest, domination, is dearer than truth. When this situation occurs, deplorable though it be, there is no alternative but to exclude rigidly all instruction upon the topic which is the subject of such anti-social striving. The first of our three propositions is intolerable; the third and best may be impracticable; then we must resort to the second, in the hope that better conditions may arise. As between the first two, in adopting the second, we are certainly choosing the minor evil.

This I conceive to be the wise practice to follow respecting public instruction, as based on that theory of society which holds that each individual is united in organic association with every

other, being at once the means and end of all the rest. Now, with regard to religion, we are to-day in the position where we are obliged to consider seriously whether religious instruction shall be excluded wholly from public institutions, or be given scientifically and impartially. We can make no exception here to the rule that anything actively disputed by any considerable number of individuals in the community shall not be taught with authority in public institutions. There is not a single doctrine of Christian theology (save, perhaps, the altruistic law of self-abnegation as a rule of conduct) that is not doubted or controverted either within or without the aggregated Church. To begin with, there are two great irreconcilable bodies, the Catholic and the Protestant. Then there are the so-called atheists, the agnostics, the freethinkers. Again, there are multitudes of sects calling themselves Christian, but with differences upon expressions of supposed truth which they often regard as essential. Such being the case, for the sake of religious truth itself it would be unwise to have authoritative instruction given. In addition, there are all the reasons above cited, which militate so strongly against selecting a creed authoritatively out of the many that are put forward. Moreover, in communities like the American commonwealth, there are special reasons against such an adoption. It cannot be done without contravening the organic law. Constitutional guarantees of religious freedom are in force in most of the States. For instance, the Constitution of the State of New York provides that 'the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall for ever be allowed in this State to all mankind.' Mr. R. C. Spencer, one of the Visiting Board of the Wisconsin State Normal School, in an address before the school criticising the religious ceremonies he witnessed (1886), thus expresses the Wisconsin law: 'Under the provisions of the Constitution of the State, this school can have no religious purposes. The State has no religious duties to perform; therefore this institution has none. Teachers of public schools and in public institutions have as such no religious duties. On the contrary, the moment the teacher in his capacity as such begins to exercise any religious function whatever, to exert any religious influence upon the minds of those under his instruction, that moment he infringes the reserved rights of the people.' Not to multiply examples, under such fundamental law as this, the teaching in public institutions of any religious doctrines as conclusive truth in the face of dissent, is such a misapplication of the

powers of government as to demand the most emphatic reprobation.

Must we, then, altogether dismiss religious instruction from public schools? Certainly no complete knowledge of the progress of human civilisation can be obtained without including the influences of religion and religious institutions. It is really indispensable knowledge; and, if not gained in schools, must be secured elsewhere. It also involves questions of the gravest practical concern. Perhaps this kind of instruction belongs to higher institutions than those the state undertakes to maintain; though in a normal school, for the education of teachers, it is most directly pertinent. And generally in public schools of higher grade, those high enough, for example, to teach history, it would clearly be an advantage if some account of the leading religious ideas and the chief religious movements in the world's history were made the subject of instruction. The chief creeds of religion might even be taught, if the objections to them were given equal prominence with the points in their favour. I cannot help thinking that a comparative study of articles of faith would be useful. Since, however, most of the religious sects would prefer nothing at all to be said unless their own system be inculcated as infallible, it appears that we must for the present keep out of courses of study all religious teaching. It is a pity that sectarian bitterness makes this necessary. If those who belong to religious parties would only allow consideration to those who differ from them; if they would cease to claim for themselves a monopoly of wisdom and divine favour, there would be no need of this exclusion. But if they insist that their creed be taught, and no other; if they refuse equality of representation of religious ideas; if they are determined that the deficiencies of their own notions be blinked while the defects of others are magnified: then, indeed, the sole course left is, to do the simple justice of absolutely excluding religious instruction.

The extreme difficulty of adopting the other course is evidenced by the strenuous insistence upon the one thing in connection with religion with schools which is most indefensible of all. I refer to worship. This amounts to inculcation of religious doctrine by insinuation. It is the jesuitical method, very potent indeed, but highly objectionable, because, without giving direct teaching, it operates to subtly instil religious creeds. It is neither open nor fair. Worship is something which belongs either to individual choice or to consentience. Those who agree in thought may unite



in worship upon the basis of their agreement; otherwise, it should be a personal matter. A form of worship implies the truth of the creed which it expresses or upon which it is based. What more dishonest and unworthy method of pre-empting and prejudicing the plastic minds of the young could possibly be devised than that of school worship? The solemnity of the exercise is impressed, all question and criticism are foreclosed, and then, under the sentiment of awe and respect for authority thus fully developed, beliefs are argued into the minds of children by prayer and collateral exercises.

So long as public-school worship is upheld, and the consciences of people are callous to its impropriety, it probably would be vain to expect the critical method of teaching to prevail. And yet in the present state of civilisation it may not be a great while before it becomes feasible. A recent writer has asked, 'Is there any reason why we should teach the life of Julius Cæsar in our schools, and should not teach the life of Jesus Christ?'<sup>1</sup> I reply, there *ought* to be no reason, indeed, but there *is* one, which springs from the unreasonableness of those who urge religious teaching. That reason lies in the demand that the life of Jesus Christ be taught as the life in the flesh of a divine being, belief in whom is the sole salvation from eternal perdition. Granted, if you please, that this is true; it must also be admitted, deplored if you like, that a great many tax-payers do not believe its truth at all. But those who are represented by the writer quoted never would be willing to have the life of Jesus taught in the same manner as the life of Cæsar. They would not favour, for example, a fair setting forth of the arguments for and those against the miracles recorded in the gospels. They would be utterly horrified at any criticism of the character of Jesus. They would not allow him to be compared with Sakya-muni, as Cæsar might be compared with Alexander. The spirit in which they ask to have the life of Christ taught is that expressed by President Seelye in another part of the same article: 'Why, then, on any consideration are not the gospels as proper a text-book in our schools as are Cæsar's "Commentaries"?' And if the teacher of the latter is to know them; if we make thorough inquiry respecting a teacher's qualifications for his task in other things, why not also here? If he does not, in the light of modern criticism, know that the story of the gospels is in the main true, he is ignorant; or if knowing its truth he would hide it, he is false; and in either case not fit to teach.' There is an

<sup>1</sup> *Should the State Teach Religion?* J. H. Seelye, 'The Forum,' July 1886.

ambiguity in the expression 'in the main true' which allows of wide differences. But no doubt the writer would intend to make his statement cover the miraculous events recorded in the gospels, certainly the story of the resurrection of Jesus. Now, upon this point it is to be feared that the ignorance lies on the side of the author cited. He says the historical accuracy of the gospels is 'no longer doubted by intelligent persons.' Who, having a tolerably large acquaintance of 'intelligent persons,' does not know that a considerable fraction of them disbelieve, and a still larger fraction doubt, the statements in the gospel record respecting the resurrection of Jesus? This is evidenced by journals, reviews, and even by religious organisations. If, now, a person who does not believe this account is not 'intelligent' but is 'ignorant' or 'false' and 'not fit to teach'; those who are fitted to teach the life of Jesus in the schools are only the ones who accept a particular 'orthodox' view of bible literature, and are blind enough to be prevented from seeing intelligent difference of opinion! It is not the life of Jesus that a religious sect wants taught, but a particular theory of the life of Jesus. The Roman Catholics would like to have inculcated a similar theory of the Virgin Mary. How, under such circumstances, is it possible to teach the life of Jesus in the public schools? Until an agreement can be reached upon the platform of a thoroughly fair, critical instruction in religion, giving to believers and disbelievers alike the benefit of their views in equal degree, there is no other course open in a country of religious liberty than to interdict religious teaching in public institutions of learning.

Unless, indeed, we return to the rule of force. Listen to what President Seelye says, in concluding the article above quoted from: 'Hence I say that the state should provide for instruction in the gospels for its own preservation. If the conscience of its subjects approve, well; if not, the state will be cautious, but courageous also, and if it is wise it will not falter.' It is difficult to believe that in these days of enlightenment any 'intelligent person' can deliberately give utterance to a sentiment like this. Can one fail on reading such records to have rise up in his mind the vision of the wicked and bloody Past; the weary centuries of injustice, inhumanity, and woe; the ceaseless succession of robberies, tortures, and murders 'for Christ's sake'? Can it be that in any land of liberty 'intelligent persons' are still found who do not see the absolute necessity, for the common freedom,

that the state in its governmental office keep wholly aloof from any attempt to inculcate religion or religious doctrine by or with authority ?

A plausible suggestion is often made to the effect that the public moneys should be divided among different sects according to their numbers, and used to promote sectarian teaching. This is said to be fair to the tax-payer, and satisfies the desire of those who wish religious teaching according to their own views. But such a plan does not fulfil the idea of state education. Aside from any difficulties as to the division of moneys, which might perhaps be overcome, such a scheme would tend to prevent that very growth into organic unity which it is the object to secure. It makes for separatism, prepares the way for consolidation of each sect and a struggle for supremacy between them. It is the interest of the state not to foster sectarianism, but to eliminate it or keep it strictly subordinate to the common freedom. The young must be brought up to the understanding that their prime allegiance is to the state, the community as a whole, not to any domination, church, or party. When this is accomplished, private religious belief can be allowed to form itself as it may. But to divide public moneys in the way proposed is really to make the state the promoter of a sect, and to afford opportunity for the use of the public funds for the development of a character quite inconsistent with the public interests. Better have no state system of education at all, if we cannot have one entirely free from sectarian control. It does not remove the difficulty that all sects are supposably to be treated equally. Organic development is what is wanted, not the separate nourishment of the different members independently. The public school ought to be a common well of pure water from which all may draw alike and unhindered ; and it should be kept free from anything that taints or colours it so that it may not be partaken of by all.

Let us now turn our attention to those higher seminaries of learning, which, though often assisted by public funds, or patronised in one way or another by the state, are not exclusively state institutions. Wherever a college or university happens to be under state control, precisely the same principles should obtain regarding the teaching of religion as we have found applicable in the case of inferior schools. Indeed, whether the institution be public or private, these principles equally apply, but there are some differences in situation of which we must take note.

Undoubtedly a religious organisation has and should have the right to found and maintain schools to educate the young into its beliefs. Most of the colleges in America were established primarily to train young men for the christian ministry, and in nearly all of them the promotion of the christian religion (by which is meant the so-called evangelical religion) is the first object. As subsidiary to this come science, languages, and *belles-lettres* generally. Upon this basis, indeed, the greater part of the collegiate institutions in England and America stand to-day. With respect to all such, then, the question is, whether they are to be approved and supported; and, if not, what should be done to change their character so as to counteract whatever is unfortunate or baneful in their influences.

An ideal of education which sets up the attainment of truth before everything else, and claims not only the right but the necessity of questioning all things and proving all things, can never be satisfied with the constitution of any college or university whose first end and purpose is to promote any religion whatever, be it christian, mohammedan, confucian, or buddhistic. A theological seminary, to be entered after general education, may properly be sectarian and be maintained for the special purpose of teaching any kind of dogma that its founders and patrons desire taught. Not so, however, with an institution for general academic instruction and study. And it must not be overlooked that an institution whose chief aim is 'to promote the religion of Christ,' though apparently this would include many sects, is, after all, necessarily sectarian and partisan. To begin with, it is sectarian because, since there are many christian sects and a great variety of christian doctrines, some form of this doctrine must be selected and favoured, if 'promotion' be the chief object. Any organisation for convincing and persuading must have something respecting which it is to convince and persuade. It thus cannot avoid being sectarian, if it preserves any character as an effective promoting force. Such we find actually to be the case. Either by agreement at the outset or by a process of natural selection, colleges and seminaries whose chief aim is to promote the religion of Christ become inevitably Roman catholic, church of England, baptist, methodist, presbyterian, congregationalist, or something else, according to circumstances. However liberal they may be in selecting teachers for other departments, the religious teaching is all of a kind, just in the measure that they make advancement of religion an object.

Thus, though college authorities declare in their prospectus, for the purpose of attracting students, that their teaching is not sectarian, a person who reflects on the subject will not be deceived. It must be sectarian, so far as it is aggressively religious, although it may be very tolerant of all sects whose tenets are like its own. If the dominant sect differs from another only on the question of the mode of baptism, no very great amount of disfavour toward the latter would be discovered. But let the point of difference be the divinity of Christ, or the question of eternal punishment, and we shall soon see developed the strength of sectarian feeling in a manner sufficient to remove all doubts.

Even if there were unity of belief in christianity, the existence of other religions in the world, supported by millions of people, is of itself sufficient to make the man who loves truth above all things demand for higher educational institutions something more truly catholic for an aim than the promotion of any one religion. If the highest truth be coincident with christian doctrine ; then, if truth in itself be made the chief end, the only result is to advance christianity also, while there is no possible ground of reproach on the score of sectarianism. Such a reproach is not alone liable to come from atheists and agnostics, who may be considered possibly to have no rights which christians are bound to respect. There happens to be in christian communities a large class of people of the highest degree of enlightenment to whom the central doctrines of christianity are repugnant, and who are devoted to a religion of their own—the religion, indeed, out of which christianity sprang, but a religion which does not recognise any divine character in Jesus of Nazareth or any divine mission in his career. Such people are not atheists or agnostics. They worship the same God as the christians do ; and they adopt as a sacred book more than half the christian bible. In former times christians used to treat them with the greatest contumely, scarcely as human beings, in fact ; in some parts of the world to-day they are persecuted. But in countries where equality before the law is the rule, they have the same rights as other people ; and their religious views ought to be recognised in those institutions to which they contribute. The existence of a large number of believers in the jewish religion is certainly an additional argument against dogmatic religious teaching in any seminary of learning which seeks or obtains state aid. It is also conclusive against the claim that to promote christianity is not a sectarian aim, for by the expression not alone

practical or humanitarian, but doctrinal or theological christianity is always intended.

Yet this contention that they are in no wise sectarian or partisan continues to be made by distinctively christian colleges. Under this declaration, they open their doors to the world and profess to give the youth all the higher instruction he needs. They claim to teach knowledge, science, truth. But they certainly would not allow anything to be truth which militates against christianity as an exclusive religion, as the only hope for mankind—this hope lying not in the spirit of altruism pervading christianity, but in loyalty to Jesus Christ personally as the sole redeemer and saviour. The jewish view of Jesus would not be tolerated for an instant; the unitarian belief is not less obnoxious; the agnostic humility is thought blasphemous. The possibility of the ‘orthodox’ principles and facts being error is not to be allowed or considered! The chief business of these institutions is to maintain the truth of their religious creed as a postulate not to be questioned, as an assumed point of departure for all acquisition of knowledge, and as the supreme end of all learning.

While there must be liberty to establish denominational and sectarian schools to ‘promote’ religion; and if, while there are such, it is the best public policy to have as great a variety of beliefs represented as may be possible, in order to insure healthful counter-action, this condition of things does not fulfil the demands of a scientific educational system. When we send our young men and women to learn geometry or natural philosophy, it is geometry and natural philosophy, as sciences, as matters of knowledge, truth, that we wish them taught; not presbyterian or church of England or methodist geometry or physics. There are church schools where church creeds are inculcated, and in these the youth can learn the things that belong to their particular sect. Or, if it be desirable to have such teaching in the same school which teaches geometry, there is no serious objection to a professorship of the soundest kind of the special orthodoxy desired, so long as the opposite kind of orthodoxy is not denied similar privileges. By keeping the professorship of geometry or biology unfettered by any complications with the professorship of presbyterian theology, both biology and presbyterianism might be learned in the same college. Then the qualification for a teacher of biology would be that he knows biology, and his religious belief would be irrelevant. As it is, whenever we examine college catalogues we discover the title ‘Reverend’

prefixed to the names of most of the professors, even of languages and science. This creates a suspicion which is confirmed absolutely when we find, as we do in many colleges, that no one who is not a professing christian is eligible to the position of teacher! Charles Darwin would not have been 'fit' to teach biology; nor would Huxley be fit to teach natural history, nor Tyndall to give instruction in physics! Institutions like these may be provisionally endurable; but they do not satisfy the highest ideals either of truth or morality. Unless the policy of the fagot should return and become successful once more, they must be superseded by something better.

The effort ought to be made, therefore, to establish and maintain a larger number of colleges and universities which shall be absolutely without any religious *purpose* or aim, but which shall furnish facilities to the student for obtaining instruction in the comparative study of religions, and in the tenets of the leading religious sects, such instruction to be critical, not authoritative. These universities should be broad enough to cover all branches of science, including religions, and each department should stand upon its own foundation. The teacher of Latin should be qualified by reason of his knowledge of Latin and ability to communicate it, and it should matter not whether he be a christian. The government of the institution should be wholly impartial as regards religion, and its charter ought to forbid religious discrimination in any form. As to worship, the teaching of religion by insinuation, that should have no place in a university save as a matter of voluntary attention.

Such a scheme of higher institutions has commended itself to a great many thinking people, but the importance of creating and sustaining the like should be more sensibly appreciated. The christian church has always been alive to the value of education for the promotion of its own interests. The monks were usually men of peace, but, through their care for the instruction of youth, they became more powerful than the men of war. Though they were working chiefly to perpetuate the power of their order, the world is greatly indebted to them for the preservation of learning and the interest in its acquisition. It is true enough that the church has been in times past the foster-mother of education, but it is not true, therefore, that education will not flourish except under the auspices of religious organisation. Let it be impressed upon the community that for the preservation of the social organism

education is necessary, for the life that now is; for good government and a larger liberty, and just as powerful a motive is created to promote it as any that loyalty to an ecclesiastical society can originate. To encourage this thought, and to secure its practical carrying out, should be the aim of those who believe in a stable social order; who appreciate, indeed, the value of knowledge in religious matters so well that they are not willing to rest content with partial truth and error. Some institutions of learning there are that foster such a sentiment, and which in their constitution are substantially free from religious partisanship; it is desirable to have more.

Modifying influences are everywhere at work upon existing colleges and universities, and they are nearly all in some degree susceptible of improvement in the directions I have indicated. They desire students and must have funds. The best method of making them understand their shortcomings is to cut off their supplies of both. But the higher education must be had, and if it cannot be obtained in a non-sectarian institution, the conditions are often such that with proper antidotes the sectarianism inculcated may not do much harm. It is a significant fact that in some of the American colleges, founded to train young men for the christian ministry, a very small and continually decreasing number of graduates embrace that profession. Emotional revivals are growing less in favour and are of less influence. The strong tendency of public sentiment, at least among the patrons of colleges, is toward the abolition of compulsory worship, and this has been effected in the largest American university. Thus, it may be said that there has been in America a progressive secularisation of colleges, spite of the resistance offered by their boards of government. The university systems of continental Europe already allow much greater freedom from coercive influences of religious creeds. The American college system must give way to the broader plan exemplified in Germany, and to some extent in England, and proceed still further in the direction of making religious instruction only a department on equal footing with other departments. Those who are interested in existing collegiate schools, and who esteem it to be a higher, nobler, more truly religious ideal of education, that truth, verified knowledge, be sought persistently, and be inculcated regardless of its consequences upon a religious system maintained by authority, should not rest until the narrower object of promoting any religion ceases to be the chief end and aim toward which all the teaching in the institution converges.



This result can scarcely be brought about so long as the government and instruction in such institutions is confided in a controlling degree to clergymen. Now in this class there are, of course, many learned, catholic, truth-loving men; but the trouble is, they are all under retainers, and have necessarily a professional duty which they must first perform. Doubtless they have in each case espoused a cause in which they fully believe; but their opinion, upon any point which touches the interests of their churches or their church, is of no more value as regards truth than the statements before the court of counsel in a law case. It is to be hoped that falsehood will not be practised or countenanced either by the clerical or the legal advocate; in both instances what is said is probably believed to be true; but the mind of each is necessarily shut to anything that militates against the party for whom he appears, except for the purpose of refutation. It would not be just to allow one of the attorneys in an action at law to decide the case. This is what we are doing, however, when we put clergymen in control of educational institutions. As judges of truth, they are not 'fit' to pass upon any question which concerns the welfare of their respective religious systems. They are disqualified by reason of interest. But such judges we need in our schools and colleges. If it were not for religious bias and intolerance we might have them; if the scientific method of instruction in religion were adopted, we certainly should have them. But until such a happy day arrives, so long as we must have advocates without judges we shall get at truth much faster and with greater certainty if at least we hear both sides. Let clergymen be appointed to professorships relating to their calling. Then they are in their place. Let them also be represented in boards of government; but to give them any longer the controlling power either in faculty or among trustees, or in the presidential office, is to interpose the most effectual means to arrest progress in higher education, to defeat the healthy growth of intelligence, and to dwarf and shrivel the characters of the students, who ought to receive from such institutions a thoroughly enlarging and ennobling influence.

If this seems ungracious, as doubtless it will to some, it must be insisted, with courtesy, indeed, but with firmness, that a necessity exists for reducing the too extravagant claims of the clerical profession to authority by reason of their office. They consider that their position, as representatives of a higher power than man, makes their anger righteous, and renders opposition to their declara-

tions impious. Hence they attack with great vigour and often vituperation, but, if the objects of their wrath turn in self-defence, the rain of anathemas is increased tenfold; and should it happen that they are worsted in the conflict, they begin to cry out that they are persecuted! Now, patience is a virtue, and ought to be exercised; it is the weak rather than the strong who are intolerant; but surely people who claim more than they are entitled to must not expect that their claims will be recognised. Much less, when their demands for respect involve the stoppage of progress in knowledge and inquiry, can they reasonably anticipate acquiescence. Clergymen often complain of the increasing lack of deference shown to their order by the laity, while they bitterly lament their very conspicuous loss of influence. Reflection, however, ought to make the causes plain to them. The simple truth is, that they have latterly been growing to be of less value to the community. Many, indeed, are most excellent and useful members of society, and such do not fail of receiving full recognition. But, on the other hand, many are obstructionists to the advancement of civilisation. And it must be said, also, that far too many are substantially paupers. They are supported by the community's earnings, and give nothing in return. They do not even express thankfulness for what they receive. If offered a crust of bread, they cry out for the best the table affords, and threaten the good housewife if they do not get it. Until they become moral and intellectual producers, they have no right to consume. If, therefore, when they are rebuked, they think those who rebuke them to be arrogant, in justice they must be plainly reminded of their situation. Clergymen must neither ask immunity from criticism because they are clergymen, nor must they expect to dominate the educational sphere through any 'inherent sacredness' of their profession. If they attack, they must not complain if they are attacked. If they think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, they must not feel aggrieved if they sometimes find their pretensions ignored or treated with contempt. The gist of this whole matter is, that the doctrine of inherent authority in any statement, principle, profession, or office must be abandoned.

Where we find the position taken that anything or anybody must not be questioned or criticised, we may be sure that then ignorance, error, or oppression exists, as latent if not patent evil.

It will be a great pity if religious men and women misapprehend the meaning of modern scientific criticism of christian doc-

trine and of religious organisation. If they did but know it, the salvation of present organised religion depends upon this criticism. The most serious question which weighs upon the thought of earnest men who are lovers of their kind is, how to save the good which there is in christianity and perpetuate it for the human race. The edifice is at present in danger of ruin, through the folly of its guardians. No one can deny the service which christianity has rendered; but people will not see what it is in christianity which has brought about the benefit. It is the altruistic element which, affecting character, has caused men to seek growth through assimilation, instead of pushing their way in the world by mechanical impact. It is the encouragement to natural development produced by christianity, and by other causes as well, which has worked the change in humanity. It is the ideal of human perfection, and of organic connection in society as the only way to realise that ideal, which has given its glory to the christian system. It is the general doctrine and the special dogmas of authority which have constantly interfered with and nullified its beneficent tendencies. It may be that, in days gone by, the supernatural machinery, the stringent ecclesiastical organisation was necessary, to keep alive the christian, humanitarian spirit; for, in past times, force and fear ruled, and nothing could be sustained without physical power behind it. The present situation, when an industrial civilisation is superseding the militant, is altogether different. It is no longer possible for religious authority to sustain itself; its day has gone by. The clergy do not see this; they will not recognise envioning conditions. They cannot be made to understand that what was good is now passing to better, and that the soul of things is, after all, sweet. They sorrow and are angered; but their hell is really of their own making. Upon the world the blessed light of a new and a more perfect day is dawning. They must either flee away with the darkness, or they must let the light penetrate their souls. If they will allow the latter, they will behold a much more glorious vision of beauty, truth, and goodness, the three sisters 'never to be sundered without tears.' The good in christianity will not die, though errors be found, acknowledged, and discarded. Religion will not pass away, because it is inbred in the human mental constitution. The men who are accused of seeking to destroy christianity are its best friends. There is not a christian church which may not stand, increase its membership, and become a much more active power for good, if only it will abandon its superstitions. The clergy

say that to do this is to abandon christianity. A great many of the laity do not think so. That is the issue. In the absence of some effective counsel of reconciliation, more destructive work will have to be done. Meanwhile, I cordially invite the clergy to become scientists. If existing religious organisations are to be preserved, the scientific method must be unqualifiedly adopted and prosecuted in the study and teaching of religion. By this method, ecclesiasticism may be transformed, and organised religion saved. Without it, deterioration will go on till the ruin is complete. If the present system of organised christianity perish, however, the men who are responsible for its destruction will be those officially in charge of its interests ; who might have saved it if they would, but were not wise in time ; who would not believe in the power of social forces ; who refused to perceive the necessity of adaptation, the certainty and the beneficence of change ; who had not faith in the God of their worship, as he works in and through nature ; and who would not allow their own minds to awake from their dead selves and rise ' to nobler verities.'

To conclude, now, these remarks upon religious education, let me sum up what I conceive to be the scientific position. Religious truth should be taught in schools and seminaries of learning as far as it is a matter of scientific knowledge, but critically and not with the purpose of promoting any religion. The utmost care should be taken to present arguments for and against any statement of fact, or any inference, judicially and without the arts of persuasion. Doubt and inquiry should be favoured and stimulated, not discouraged or repressed. If this can be accomplished it is desirable to have religion, as something to be studied in its relations to truth, to character and conduct, taught in public and other schools. But if this method cannot be followed, then, until there is unanimity of opinion as to what is true in religion, all teaching on the subject must be excluded from the public schools. In other institutions effort should be made to introduce and develop the scientific, the critical, the comparative method in this sort of instruction, while every encouragement should be given also to the establishment of schools, colleges, and universities where its adoption and consistent practice shall be insured.

THE END.



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