THE RELIGIOUS USE OF IMAGINATION

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TO

My Mother

WHO LIVED THE TRUTH HERE TAUGHT

PREFACE

THE author hopes that this will not be thought an audacious little book. It undertakes merely to tell of something which is going on in ordinary minds without drawing attention, and which had better be told, in order that its importance may be weighed.

Certain convictions about God and his ways with men are strangely persistent. Reason has never made haste to welcome these convictions, although it has often tried to adjust itself to them, and even to justify them. They persist because they have laid hold on the Christian imagination. The less welcome to reason their persistence, the more evidently it is due to imagination. Indeed, precisely the doctrines that stagger imagination commend themselves to it in some aspect, possibly by their very boldness. Certain notions, too, about

Christian living have found similar acceptance, and in that degree are regulative of the highest aspirations.

It does not follow that the Christian imagination readily yields to delusions. It would even seem likely that there is "something in" those ideas about God and duty that are durably fascinating to good and not unenlightened people. At least, the attempt will be made directly to show what claim imagination may put forward as a guide to truth and duty; and then we will witness with what boldness she attacks the problems of religious faith and life. If that preliminary work takes us for a few minutes underground where the light is dim, it will hardly be for more than the first section; and without the foundation thus laid the rest of the book would be in the air. Even down there I trust we may catch the pleasant smell of newly turned earth, and not the musty odors of an unaired and neglected basement.

CROZER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

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PART FIRST

SERVICE OF IMAGINATION TO RELIGIOUS TRUTH

Πίστει νοοῦμεν.

Epistle to the Hebrews.

THE RELIGIOUS USE OF IMAGINATION

I

COMPETENCY OF IMAGINATION

1. A Concession and a Claim

It is agreed that the poet is a seer. When imagination accepts the shackles of metre and rhyme, it passes for Sir Oracle; but if it makes free to go in prose, what people think is plainly enough intimated by the phrase "purely imaginary." Nevertheless the imagination is a potent, trusty and widely available organ for discovery of truth.

And it is a discoverer by being first a critic. This claim, although it may seem overbold, is also hinted at in familiar speech by the word "unimaginable." That is, the last and irrevers-

ible verdict against any alleged state of facts is felt to be that such a state of facts cannot even be imagined.

In calling imagination a faculty of criticism it is not implied that the imagination actually passes judgment upon anything. This is the office of reason with its strange power of beholding fundamental truth face to face, or of the understanding with its ability to compare, to recognize identity and difference, and to draw inferences. But it is meant that imagination is often able to prepare and present so accurately and so vividly the matter on which judgment is needed that a verdict is given at once and finally. Such an achievement makes imagination seem like an immediate vision of truth, and justifies the figure of speech which directly ascribes to her the judgment that she alone makes possible so promptly, or even makes possible at all. It was in this sense that Professor Tyndall, in accounting for the colors seen in those remote fields of air which science may never explore, said, "The scientific

"imagination . . . is here authoritative." [1] Such a figure will spare us a deal of tediously detailed and analytical phraseology, and will serve the purpose of this book by emphasizing the continuous and invaluable but generally overlooked service of imagination to religious thought and life.

It is worth remarking, as we go down to the foundations, how different is the method of imagination in searching out and living the truth from its method in public teaching. In the former it fronts the reality, in the latter it often approaches it sidewise. Only mental confusion can arise from any theological office of imagination not straightforward, and only spiritual perversion can come from any indirect practical office; but its rhetorical charm is often in unlooked-for obliquity of method. This is conspicuously the case when resort is had to figures of speech, such as metaphor and hyperbole. In making use of these figures one never says what he means, nor means what he says. He utters

[1] "Fragments of Science," p. 431.

a kind of riddle, and the riddle is pleasing if at once fit and strange. Rhetorical imagination seeks to illumine the truth by pretending to disguise it; but in determining what is true, or in applying truth to life, imagination strives to penetrate all disguises and to fix a steady eye upon reality. Tyndall claimed this "Scientific Use of Imagination." Is an instrument so powerful in physical investigation as he showed it to be, utterly useless in the inquiry for religious truth, and in staking out the path for a devout life? We must note in passing what amounts to a notable denial of imagination's real competence, while claiming for it, with some enthusiasm, an inferior competence.

Years ago the brilliant Horace Bushnell, and more recently the heart-compelling Henry Drummond,[1] taught that imagination is the sole arbiter of faith, because religious truth can be set forth only in figures of speech. "Christ," exclaims Bushnell, is "God's last metaphor!"

[1] Bushnell's "God in Christ", I; "Building Eras", VIII; and Drummond's "New Evangelism", pp. 38–55.

Imagination he defines as "the power that distinguishes truths in their images, and seizes hold of images for the expression of truths." His main ground for denying that religious and, as he says, philosophical truths can have an exact expression is that names of physical things, used figuratively, are the only names for mental and spiritual things. "Hence," says he, "if any one asks, Is there any hope for theologic science left? None at all, I answer most unequivocally."

But it may be contended as unequivocally that, while figurative terms are the only terms for mental and spiritual realities, those terms may have distinguishable meanings; that, while certain of these realities are too vast or too vague to be known distinctly and described accurately, a large proportion of them can be known well enough to justify saying something about them; that what can be said can be said in the order of the relations between the objects, — and, lo! a science of those objects. Thus what we know about moral and religious

truth can be reduced to "propositional statements", and in this definite form may be laid hold of by imagination; then imagination tests it, and so fixes it in the faith of the Christian ages.

It is possible, for instance, to say with "propositional" definiteness, that God is a personal spirit, infinite in all excellencies; that man has an imperishable soul, is naturally prone to sin, and has before him a destiny determined by what he is; that Christ had no human father, and that by virtue of what he was and is, what he bore and did and does, he has made every provision required by the holy nature of God or the fallen estate of man to deliver men from the power and the penalties of sin. Whatever variety of meanings each term is capable of, one of the meanings can be fixed upon, and it then becomes possible to affirm or to deny the truth of these propositions. The list of them need not be extended. These sufficiently indicate how different what Dr. Bushnell and Professor Drummond undertook to show is

from what I now essay. In a word, whatever the risks of partial knowledge, it is so far knowledge. We need not conclude that we do not know anything about a subject unless we know everything about it; that imagination cannot adequately picture a part unless she can picture the whole.

2. How Imagination Plays the Critic

Here is the sub-cellar; but there is light enough for us to see the bed-rock and the great foundation stones. That is, how imagination is qualified to play the critic is not so very difficult to understand. Imagination is *image*-ination, the mind's power of picturing to itself things or even abstractions; of seeing the invisible; or, according to an intelligible if hardly elegant phrase, imagination is "a realizing sense" of objects not before the senses. This last phrase intimates two elements in the function of imagining: mental seeing, and vividness of mental seeing.

The ability of the mind to judge and discover

by imagining is found, to begin with, in the mind's ability to see. This is not put forward as a new notion of what imagination is; it is but calling attention to what in all cases, and as generally understood, it essentially is. In regard to sensible objects, imagination produces in their absence, as nearly as it can, the mental apprehension of them which their presence would afford through the senses. Without physical sensation of light the mind achieves a mental perception of light. In the same figurative way imagination might be called the mind's hearing, smelling, tasting. If it deals with objects not of sense, imagination attempts a depiction of them to oneself as though these objects were appreciable by sensation. In so doing it may either set up a symbol of them, often — as Dr. Bushnell claims that imagination always must — constructing a metaphor for them; or it may by sheer force press into the mind an assurance of truth in these abstractions. Imagination platonizes. To imagination universal truths are basilar realities. This latter is

its way when it gives largest aid to those reasonings about abstract truth which are the high function of rationality, and which imagination thus rescues from being mere processes of formal logic, a juggle with algebraic formulas. It is a remarkable faculty, imagination. One can hardly think of another faculty more indicative of power in the mind than that the mind can see. And so imagination undertakes its part in the office of criticism by virtue of the fact that it is the only means of holding before the mind the objects to be judged. How else can the critical process go on? How else can it so much as begin? Neglecting imagination the mind is blindfolded. It moves among its treasures, and they trip it, bewilder it, hurt and disable it.

But imagination is also of its very nature distinctness of mental vision. If with any fitness it can be called "a realizing sense", this is because imagination sees the unseen vividly enough to get an impression of its reality. If any good is to come of imagining, it must be

proportioned to the liveliness of the imagining. Nothing dimly seen by the eye is well enough seen, and nothing feebly imagined is safely imagined. The poet's gift is preëminently that of liveliness in imagination. If we looked no further into his gift, it would at least be evident that he is a seer because his *mind sees clearly.*

To be sure, this knack of almost cajoling oneself into believing that he sees what he boldly pictures to himself gives an imaginative person an ill name for veracity. It is not to be denied that, while we may prefer to distinguish sharply between fancy and imagination, and to load the former with all the faults charged upon the latter, fancy after all is only imagination at sport. But even common speech allows us to make a convenient distinction between processes not psychologically distinct. Thus "fanciful" means imaginative in no good sense. Only when the unreal or untrue is pictured ought the picturing to be stigmatized as fanciful. Without doubt the mind can toy

with the untrue and unreal. It can please itself with whimsies. But that it is able to do this does not prove that it is able to do nothing better. That one can play and likes to play does not settle it that he cannot work and would not like to work. And if Jack or Harry, or even his father, does on occasion disport himself with a deal of energy, it by no means follows that his energy is either then or ever quite thrown away. We need, however, some way to tell whether we are catching the fellow at his pranks or at serious toil. Surely it need not be so hard to find out which he is about. But we require tests as to whether imagination is now sporting with trifles or delving deep into truth. We are obliged to suspect that the imaginings of a child are mere fancies; although students of the child-mind know better now than to flog its fancies as lies. But a man's imaginings may be as trusty as a child's are trivial. And there are tests efficient enough to endorse to us the critical judgments that attend upon a strong imagina-

tion, as also its capacity to help on the progress of knowledge.

Imagination is mental picturing, and lively picturing. Now when the mind attempts a lively picture of the unseen, it is utterly baffled if the notions which it tries to put together will not stay together. The livelier the mental picture, the more obviously incoherent may be the combination; and to reject so futile an admixture is to obey reason. In fact, reason is best able to judge when the vividness of an imagination exposes the real character of the objects imagined, and makes conspicuous that some of them are false or, at least, that the attempt to combine them a mistake. Cherubs' heads with wings, which the old Italians painted with so light a touch, are lovely symbols of swift and adoring intelligence; and, though altogether fanciful, they do not affront reason, because, like other conventional symbols, they avoid pretense of reality. But if we were seriously asked to imagine cherubs as heads needing to be moved,

all of us to-day are physiologists enough to see that wings so set could not answer the purpose, and to see this as soon as we imagine the winged heads.

The ordinary process of imagination is synthetic. In the fine arts and poetry, in romance and history, in science, philosophy and theology the business of imagination is to put things together. It finds things together. Nothing in nature exists apart. If it did, it would be waste material, like ill-estimated heaps of sand, lumps of hardened mortar, and fragments of brick defacing the street before a new house. Souls of men conscious of selfhood are the only discrete entities, and then only as to the solitariness and originality inseparable from will as will. A human soul would be inhuman if it attempted to exist alone. And so imagination seldom has any proper business except putting together things which fit. So entirely normal, so essentially valid is this process that, when ideal combinations remain in free union, the imagined picture

is universally accepted as essentially true. The literary critic does not find the well-worn word "verisimilitude" express his conception of the authority which belongs to well-imagined compositions. He is not content to say that the imagined hero or incident is like the truth or unlike it; he says the story is "convincing" or "not convincing," as though it were a lawyer's brief. The best fiction is truer than any happening; the romancer is a realist, the poet is a seer. It is because each is first a critic, although the critical process may be spontaneous, and its verdict felt rather than thought.

Now, imagination may attempt to picture an analysis, even a scientific analysis; but how? Again, by synthesis. If it images an hitherto unknown argon or krypton in our atmosphere, the gas it guesses at can be correctly guessed only because there are signs that a thus far undetected "element" is entangled with known elements. But now the chemist's imagination catches a glimpse of its skirt as the wind whirls past, and no other eye except his trained eye is

quick enough for that glimpse. He imagines a new element; how will he isolate it and make sure of it? Not by tearing it out, as a boy tears out the wing of a fly or the honey-bag of a bumble bee. He must either first coax the unknown element to combine with some other, and then coax its new company away, or else get the company in which he finds it to yield to a stronger affinity. And he will try to imagine the necessary combinations before he attempts them. He would be no better than an old style alchemist if he worked at haphazard without foreseeing, as in these days he partly may, what will come of his experiment. But when he has entirely determined the existence of his new element, and got it by itself, and can talk of its atomic weight with a confidence one might say beyond all imagination, what after all does he know about his argon or his krypton until he can see what its old companions are without it, or what will come of putting it into strange company? All that we know about chemical elements isolated

is but the threshold of knowledge. We know their nature when we know what they do in combination.

If the physical philosopher in thought pursues his analysis far beyond the point where all scientific tests come to a full stop, if he makes bold to imagine all elements analyzed back into one, that one resolved into motion, and motion reduced to an action of God, venturesome and stupendous as the imagined analysis appears, it is idle and presumptuous unless imagination begins where just now it left off, with the last result of its analysis, and shows how from it as "primordial egg" the universe might be hatched. A question is for the sake of the answer; analysis is for the sake of synthesis.

Combination then is the major part of imaginations, and congruity in the combination will hardly be taken for a covert lie. The poet at least is admitted to be a seer; and that which the poet or the philosopher, with his extraordinary power of combination and clarity

of vision, can show to be a coherent imagining, this imperiously and successfully demands recognition as truth.[1]

[1] Mr. Ruskin, who felt the strongest repugnance to mechanical combinations of ideas and altogether denied to them the name of imaginations, who accounted "imagination penetrative" the highest order of imagination, and insisted with a rush and a glow unusual even in him that "the virtue of imagination is its reaching, by intuition and intensity of gaze (not by reasoning, but by its authoritative opening and revealing power) a more essential truth than is seen at the surface of things," although he made a complete mystery of the process by which the truth is thus reached, nevertheless in the same connection recognized that the truth when once reached is attested in the very way alleged in these pages. He says, "If it be fancy or any other form of pseudo-imagination which is at work, then that which it gets hold of may not be a truth, but only an idea which will keep giving way as soon as we try to take hold of it and turning into something else, so that as we go on copying it, *every part will be inconsistent with all that has gone before*, and at intervals it will vanish altogether." ("Modern Painters," Part III, Sc. II, Ch. III, §§ 28 [foot note], 29). Intuitive and inexplicable as Ruskin takes the process of penetrative imagination to be, he perceives that its results can be tested by their coherence, or their want of it.

I can hardly forbear adding that, difficult or even impossible as it might be to trace the swift processes of imagination in the case of surpassing genius, when Ruskin goes so far as to affirm that imagination knows truth without using reason, he as much as says that genius may know the inner life of objects without seeing that the objects themselves are

Besides his gifts of mental vision, of clear sightedness, of tact in synthetizing, the poet may put forward another claim in behalf of the critical acumen of imagination. Among all the materials which his imagination works over, some at least are of the best quality. Certain of his ideas are undisputed truths. With his clear insight and his alert recognition of relations, his true ideas serve him as guides. They take new ideas into their fellowship, and warrant these to be as trusty as themselves. One truth is a criterion of all related truth. The poet's imagination brings up to it other ideas to be tested by it, and advances with joy from that to these, or retreats from them with the decisive repugnance which a false

the proper fruit of that life. Ordinary minds trace effects to their causes by noticing some correspondence between the cause and the effect. If imagination can exercise the penetrating judgment which Ruskin ascribes to it, more will need to be said for that ability than an eloquent assertion of it. It will have to be pointed out wherein imagination's qualification to judge resides; and unless it can be pointed out, this great power of the human mind will remain too inscrutable to be entirely believed in and deferred to.

note or disgusting spectacle produces in a sensitive mind.

In closing this curt exposition of the imagination's fitness to play the critic and pass judgment, it may be noted that all ideas, true or false, are so capable of unfolding their contents and of forming at least temporary combinations after their own sort, that a test generally accepted as final is found in the issue of such a development. A tree is known by its fruit. The surest criterion of truth or falsity in a doctrine is to unfold completely what it enfolds, to build a system on it. This is the congenial office of reflective imagination. One of the strongest tendencies of the human mind drives it to undertake this office. No derision of system-making in religious doctrine long arrests or diverts this tendency. When it is checked in one direction it pushes out in another. The very persons who dislike the outcome of one scheme of ideas, spontaneously or even unconsciously set about a scheme of their own. And so their ideas come under the test

which they hate; — have judgment passed upon them as a whole. This tendency to developing and systematizing ideas would not be so irresistible if the process were chiefly one of formal logic. Let those who have worked out sets of notions on a subject which deeply interested them say whether they went about making up a broad and complete view by studied deduction and formal inference. Systems once made may seek a defense of this sort, as military defense plants its posts in calculated lines on or near the established highways; but the highways are rarely laid out by so mathematical surveying. They get themselves formed along "the lines of least resistance." And so schemes of thought on what subjects you please almost seem to make themselves. Imagination runs to and fro until the highways are beaten smooth by use. Whole generations, successive ages may be busied in forming them, but when they have been formed nobody can dispute whither run these well-worn roads. A scheme of ideas is like such a network of roads

traversing a country. By their aid one can readily go from part to part, and know all that is to be found out about the lay of the land and what grows on it. Good or bad as it may be, wholly or in part, no one who lives or visits thereabout need remain in doubt of the region which these naturally formed paths traverse and open up.

3. How Imagination Makes Discoveries

If, now, it is recognized that imagination at all provides for a judgment upon the truth or falsity of its own vaticinations, if it so provides by its vision of the invisible, by the distinctness of its vision, by its knack at combining materials, at testing them by their coherence, by their accord with known truth, and their outcome as unfolded systems, it needs little more than to be mentioned that these very means of testing the truth of ideas are each and all means of advancing to new truth. Such advance is effected either by the spontaneous self-suggestion of ideas germane to those al-

ready seen by the mind in full light, or by the more painstaking method of exclusion. In either case the office of imagination is conspicuous. How indispensable that office is, apart from all thus far implied in the process of criticism, one may be pardoned for regarding as undeniable when these three additional points are considered; to wit, 1. a large part of the material to be dealt with is outside of sense, and as such wholly imaginary; 2. the material which may be known through the senses can be assembled before the mind at one time only by an act of imagination; 3. the end sought, the law to be discovered, the ultimate truth which includes all truths already known, is but an imagined end, law, truth. This does not mean that the entire task falls to imagination, but it means that no long step can be taken in the progress of knowledge unless imagination lend the help of her strong hand. Let us see.

(1) The material to be looked into is in large part beyond the reach of sense. Familiar illus-

trations are atoms and the ether. But although no approach to seeing or otherwise "sensing" an atom is possible, what prodigious strides modern chemistry has taken by aid of these imagined ultimates of matter! And while physical philosophers sometimes amuse themselves by indicating the difficulties involved in the conception of a perfectly fluid and elastic medium filling space, physical science itself has been all afloat in that thin medium and safely borne afar by an imaginary reality. Nor has any one been able to suggest a substitute for the ether which would serve science as well, and be tangible too. How one must wonder to find the most aggressively realistic of all modern knowledge, to wit, physical science, resting on a transcendental substance, if one may so call it, the luminiferous ether, and built out of imaginary materials, the indivisible atoms! Imagination could hardly set up a bolder claim to trustiness than this.

As the realities fundamental to physical science are purely imaginary, it should surprise no

one that such are also the objects of mathematical reasoning. Nothing else is so subtly abstract, so ineffably imaginary as those ideal quantities and relations which are the objects of mathematical exploration. In large part they are capable of expression only by symbols. Yet the mind is so constituted that, if it deals with these imaginings at all, it can accept no other findings than those of this mystic science. At the same time these findings enclose the largest knowledge of nature. Mathematical reasoning is a strenuous and irresistible incantation to which the heights and the depths give up their secrets. What the laws of mind require us to imagine concerning the world about us is invariably matter of fact. Things answer to thoughts, the laws of matter to the laws of mind. And so, in the orderly dreaming of trained imagination, knowledge moves on, often with quick, long strides that defy frolicsome and light-footed fancy herself to follow.

(2) If a great part of the material with which

progressing study has to deal is from its very nature, as we have just seen, wholly beyond the senses, another great part is within the range of sense; but is never at one time in range on a scale sufficiently large. The inductions of science commonly rest on former observations, not on observations at the moment. The story of human history is also a story of persons, of ages, long vanished. If truth about anything not before the sense is to be learned at all, it is imagination that musters and arrays the facts. Thus the second as well as the first condition of progress in knowledge is supplied by this faculty.

(3) The third point is that the issue sought by study is an unseen reality, unseen both before and after it is reached. What more tenuous abstraction than a law of nature? As just noticed, it can be stated often in a mathematical formula. The abstract laws of concrete things are the furthest reach of human science. And they are science. We know by their means the safety of a suspension bridge and of the

planet we live on. The mind's realizing sense is capable of forming and of lending aid in the justification of these final convictions. Thus much can be said of truth already in possession: if universal, it is a generalization with which only the mind's eye can deal.

So long as it remains an object of search the truth is wholly a creature of imagination, and must first be imagined if it is to be found. The investigator arranges his materials and asks their meaning under guidance of a guessed answer provisionally adopted. Hypothesis or theory always falls short of knowledge, but is serviceable in the pursuit of knowledge. Investigation is not aimless wandering in hope of coming out where one would be glad to find himself; it is not a chance tumbling about of children's lettered blocks, counting on one's luck to spell out the truth. It is such following of clues as existing information and sagacious guessing will afford; it is the slow reading off of so much truth as facts deftly put together can be made to spell. But in all skillfully pur-

sued inquiry conjecture must precede certainty. In thus adding to the common stock of knowledge the service of imagination is even more obvious than its ability to estimate its own operations. It is bent on progress, not on criticism; but in the service of truth that which, in a sort of metonymy, I have called its critical office is indispensable as a quick way of testing "guesses at truth."

Now this account of the competency of imagination to serve the interests of knowledge has entirely failed if it leaves the impression that imagination defies reason, goes beyond reason, or in any way is at odds with reason. Facility in picture-making provides its own safeguard when the relations of imagination to reason are normal and free. Imagination's office is to make the office of reason easy. And it succeeds so well, as was remarked at the beginning of this section, that in many cases the decision is not due to deliberation, but is virtually made in making the picture. So that imagination figures over and again as

both artist and critic. The process of preparing the case for the inspection of reason is such as to exhibit the reasonableness of the process. To recapitulate: Imagination is mental vision, vivid and comprehensive; it puts together materials the coherence of which is to be determined, a coherence which is of peculiar significance when it includes the accord of questionable materials with unquestioned truth; or it swiftly unfolds a fruitful idea into a scheme of ideas, and thus definitively tests the veracity of the initial idea by its outcome. So far its competency to sit in judgment. Its competence to aid in discovery of new truth is clearly seen when we reflect, *first*, that the data which are to be constructed into new truth are largely objects of imagination, being either abstractions or concrete facts rarely all present to the senses of the explorer; and *secondly*, that the truth itself, if a general truth, is an object of imagination alone, never capable of subjection to the senses.

Of course, too wide claims must be avoided.

The faculty which pictures may picture the false as well as the true. Furthermore, not all sorts of reality are equally submissive to the plastic hand of imagination. It is necessary to examine in another section the scope of its availability as the servant of truth.

II

SCOPE OF IMAGINATION'S SERVICE

1. Varieties in the Imaginers and the Imagined

In attempting to fix the limits within which imagination can help us to make sure of the truth it ought to be mentioned that the serviceableness of this faculty varies greatly with persons. One can scarce make brilliant use of a power which he may barely be said not altogether to lack. It is preposterous to offer poetry, music or even history to the unimaginative. If a game like chess seems dull, or a science like geometry incomprehensible, it is very likely because the mind's eye is unable to see the combinations which need to be made on the chess-board, or which must be mentally traced from lines already drawn and lettered on the blackboard. If you are unable to follow

the clearest instructions about the road to take from one village to another, why deny that some other man can do it? The unimaginative should not make haste to discredit the doings of competent imaginations.

As men differ in imagination, so ideas differ in imaginability. Widespread and persistent beliefs are all easily imaginable beliefs. And the easily imaginable are the exceptionally salient ideas which dominate the fields of thought around them, and are ever in view. They are recognitions of essential reality, of reality which cannot well be disguised or long overlooked. This is precisely the reverse of that purblind want of discrimination and that fatuity which are widely ascribed to imagination. It is believed even to put a false face on truth, if not to hide it entirely. Snow and ice lie deep over the dome of Mont Blanc and the peak of the Jungfrau. Human eye has never seen either mountain top, but only its gleaming veil. Another Swiss mountain flings its sides so steep into the air that, although clouds

enfold it and snows dash against it, they try in vain to keep it hid. Presently the wind changes, storm and cloud are beaten back, and the abrupt mountain is seen to lift its stern black pyramid to the blue heavens as of old. It is with truths like the Matterhorn that imagination most readily deals, truths so conspicuous that their reality cannot long be masked, nor ever afterward forgotten. Such truths abound in every region of thought. They always catch the eye when it turns toward where they stand. Not, of course, that all traditional beliefs are true, but that of all true beliefs those only which tower before imagination can become traditions.

That this salience in ideas which abide before the mind's eye does not shut up imagination's service within narrow limits may be seen if we glance at its office in those departments of mental activity which are subject to the most rigorous rules, and in which the claims of notions are tested by the most palpable results. In this way we submit the office of imagination

to the scrutiny of the senses. What eye and ear know shall now determine for us what imagination can know.

2. Imagination in the Grand Callings

If one sort of human genius is more masterful than any other, and is put to a test more severely practical than any other, it is the genius of the soldier. In a swift crisis everything is risked for which human lives can be risked. Of all men the military leader needs to be the least subject to illusions, but he must be the most imaginative. The strategist's work is almost disproportionately one of imagination. So is the tactician's. The strategist who cannot in advance sweep the entire field of operations with the mind's eye, who cannot imagine the grouping and movement of his forces, and those of his enemies too, is as helpless as the chess-player who moves his pieces about without foreseeing what situation will be caused by his move. And when battle is joined the tactician who allows his mind to be occupied with what

his eyes see or his ears hear, is defeated in advance. If military ambition aspires to world-conquest, the soldier so ambitious must go where Satan took our Lord, to the top of a high mountain from which he can view all the kingdoms of the world. Only imagination can work such a miracle for him. The strain upon this power in conjunction with memory is so great that no less a prodigy of planning than Napoleon is said to have aided the mental picture by sticking pins with variously colored heads into a topographical map at the points reached by different bodies of his own and the enemy's troops.

Not less imperious demand is made upon the imagination of a statesman. Preposterous as it would seem to require of him foreknowledge, he needs to foresee what men will do under any imaginable circumstances which he can bring about. The sagacity reverently ascribed by Americans to the framers of their national constitution, is the sagacity which could compass precisely this result. Their failures are fail-

ures in foresight, their successes due to visions of the future. The papers by Hamilton, Madison and Jay, known as *The Federalist*, which played so important a part in persuading the states of the old Confederation to accept the new constitution, were able to overcome the fancies of timidity by the stronger imaginations of a true statesmanship. The more vivid the prevision, the more crafty are the devices of a demagogue, and the more trusty the plans of a patriot. An imaginative politician is the only practical politician in small things as in great. His combinations must be framed under the guidance of insight into human nature and circumstances; but they are all framed by imagination.

The historian, too, must be able to see events long past or he cannot make his readers see; he cannot even know what to try to make them see. His imagination must penetrate the transactions in the human breast; he must be able to declare the hidden motives which the makers of history never avowed even to themselves.

Unless he can in imagination so completely recreate the situation as to see all this too clearly to be deluded, he may be an annalist or a teller of fables, but he is not a historian. He cannot be just, he cannot tell the truth, he cannot know the truth, unless his imagination is powerful enough to follow the course of events and to behold the unveiled causes of events. This is why historical genius of the first order is as rare as poetical genius of the same order. The imagination is like a vast pair of compasses. One foot rests firmly on the present, while the other sweeps the past; this is history. Then the clutch is tightened, the hand steadied, and the compasses fetch a circuit through the future; this is statesmanship. Statecraft and historical insight are so near akin that no one's views of the past are so interesting as those of a great statesman, and no one's predictions so impressive as those of a real historian.

There is one further realm of imagination more significant than any other to the modern man, the realm of natural science. Within

this sphere the exactitude of positive knowledge reigns, and conjecture is remorselessly exposed. But in its fields misunderstanding is easy. Such a field is the sky. It is far easier to imagine an error than a truth with regard to the daily and nightly spectacle of the heavens. The body's eye deceives the mind's eye even while provoking its activity, and the students of science sometimes go wild with amusement over popular fancies. Still it is no mean physicist who has taught us the indispensability of scientific imagination. Professor Tyndall's famous address on this subject ascribes to imagination the critical exploration of the unknown. Speaking as above noted concerning the color of the sky, as to which there had been no small futile guessing, he does not hesitate to say, "By the scientific use of imagination we may penetrate this mystery." His illustrations are such as can be understood by anyone. "Nourished by knowledge patiently won, bounded and conditioned by coöperant Reason, imagination becomes the prime mover of the physical

discoverer. Newton's passage from a falling apple to a falling moon was, at the outset, a leap of the prepared imagination. . . . In fact, without this power, our knowledge of nature would be a mere tabulation of co-existences and sequences. We should still believe in the succession of day and night, summer and winter; but the soul of Force would be dislodged from our universe; causal relations would disappear, and with them that science which is now binding the parts of nature to an organic whole."[1] Tyndall's general conception of imagination's office to science is happily set forth in his "Apology for the Belfast Address." "I have sought incidentally to make clear that in physics the experiential incessantly leads to the ultra-experiential; that out of experience there always grows something finer than mere experience, and that in their different powers of ideal extension consists, for the most part, the difference between the great and the mediocre investigator. The kingdom of science, then,

[1] "Fragments of Science," p. 426.

cometh not by observation and experiment alone, but is completed by fixing the roots of observation and experiment in a region inaccessible to both, and in dealing with which we are forced to fall back upon the picturing power of the mind." [1]

Thus the serviceableness of imagination to truth stands unquestioned at the two opposite poles of mental activity, poetry and science. The poet by common consent, the scientist by his own acknowledgment, relies upon this singular but energetic guide. The poet's use of imagination is easily associated in our minds with its office to religion, because religious themes have so often called into exercise the poet's gift; but at the point reached by Professor Tyndall science also is close to religion. The physicist who needs, and who feels that he needs, the purely metaphysical conceptions of causation and force, who gladly avows the dependence of science upon these imaginary realities, which he still holds to be realities

[1] "Fragments of Science," pp. 546–7.

although they lie quite beyond the reach of scientific appliances and are recognizable by imagination only, the physicist who goes so far as this should not hesitate to take one further "leap of prepared imagination", and joyfully own that the scientific mind needs to imagine the Cause of all causes, the Origin of all force. At least they who believe that religion deals with unseen realities need not hesitate to avow their debt to imagination, that is, to acknowledge the importance of vividness of thought to soundness of thought on religious themes. That these themes lie within the scope of imagination's normal activity can be best assured if we notice how large a part of knowledge faith is, and especially how large a part of faith imagination is.

3. The Case For Faith

In its ripened form faith is trust. But the objects of religious trust are out of sight, and no one can entrust himself to the unseen unless he forms a lively enough mental image, a realiz-

ing sense, of the unseen. One must be desperate indeed to throw himself through a strange window into the dark, not knowing how far or on what he will fall. But it would be irrational to imagine unseen realities, unless their existence is assured; so that religious faith is grounded in discernment of spiritual things. It is first knowing, secondly imaging, thirdly trusting. But the point with which this inquiry is chiefly concerned is that the cognitive function of faith, the recognition that spiritualities are realities, can be put into most effective exercise only by aid of imagination; the two offices of knowing and realizing interact to an extent which makes them interdependent.

Others may claim, but it is not here claimed, that faith is no less than a face to face vision, an intuition, of God. If by intuition no more were meant than "a quick perception of truth without conscious attention or reasoning", an inkling of logical relations between an accepted notion and another said to be "intuited", a suggestion of the second by the first through

some hint of congruity or kinship, a hint strong enough to guide the mind in docile moods, but not obtrusive enough to be noticed, in some such sense faith might be "intuition." It is the form in which the most conclusive reasonings first suggest themselves. In this manner women are said to know intuitively what they cannot make good by argument. A wise man used to say, "I want my wife to give me her advice, not her reasons for the advice." But in the strict philosophical sense of the word we can claim as intuitions only direct visions of truth, visions of truth revealed by its own light. Self-evident propositions alone are known by intuition in a strict sense; and yet it falls to us presently to consider how faith, without being intuition, is cognition.

Two stubborn facts seem to set aside the possibility of knowing God by intuition. It will not be claimed that he can be intuited as an external object, in the way the senses know; he must therefore, if intuited at all as an entity, not an abstraction, be intuited as within us, in

the way we know ourselves and our mental states. But what reason can even be imagined for saying that we are conscious of a spirit within our bodies beside our own spirit? Every thought, emotion, volition, is consciously one's own; how then does God reveal himself within us face to face as a Being not ourselves? Whatever may be said of prophetic communications from God, the problem for us is not how the prophets knew God, but how we know him; and so far as we are concerned it would appear that any alleged inward vision of God is hallucination. His presence in us must be *inferred* from what he does there; we cannot *see* him there as One not ourselves. The other fact against the claim that God can be intuited is that self-evident truths are necessarily ultimate and irresolvable ideas. If they could be analyzed, instead of being self-evident they would be provable by the evidence for their elements. But the idea of God is highly complex. There may be reason for accepting each and every element in that idea, and some

further reason for accepting them conjointly; but the validity of this latter reason is dependent upon that of the former; in other words, is inferential not intuitional.

If however it should be explained that, in claiming an intuition of the divine existence, one means only that the infinite is a logical correlate of the finite, the absolute of the dependent, that a rational Creator is the warrant for confidence in human reason, and a Lawgiver involved in the obligation to obey moral law — then it should at once be conceded that, in knowing the temporal, we know that something is eternally preëxistent, and in knowing the dependent we know there is something for it to depend upon; but it would still need to be proved, as I think it can be, that the physical universe is not the eternal and absolute; and it would remain that, while reason and conscience furnish the basis for an excellent argument, it is still an argument, — we may infer God from reason and conscience, not intuit him in them. We must accept, to begin with, the

facts that reason is trustworthy and moral difference real, or else we cannot confide in any affirmation of reason that God exists, nor be certain that we ascribe to him a reality when we say he is holy and requires us to be holy. In no way, then, does it seem possible to intuit God, that is, dispense with inference from evidence that God is.

With this disavowal of all pretence that faith can know God either by demonstration or by intuition, but claiming none the less that it can reach a moral certainty so secure as to serve every purpose of spiritual knowledge, and to deserve the name of knowledge concerning matters within its sphere, we will consider a little more fully in what way such claims can be justified, and thereby imagination's service to spiritual truth be more clearly defined.

A compendious statement of the case will have to be made in terms too abstract to carry conviction, but the relations of the points involved will be the more obvious after this summary. The case, then, for faith is in brief:

Thinking men are in possession of ideas which they cannot but recognize as true; certain of these ideas are concerns not of intellection alone, but of all our highest powers, and to give employment to our highest powers is the highest end of our existence; when these ideas are summed up in one Being, the All-perfect, he is recognized as our Archetype, the complement, the other part of what at our best we are; but faith thus discerns God only when the ideas summed up in him are made luminous by imagination. Let us notice each of these points in turn.

4. The First Point for Faith — Thoughts We Must Think

Thinking men think thoughts which they must recognize as true. But it is the high privilege of imagination to behold as realities those primary beliefs or first truths to which all faith and knowledge are subordinate and illustrative. Such truths are irresolvable and elementary as primary colors, self-evident as

the sunbeam, august as the sun. The validity of a mere animal's knowledge rests on the validity of first truths; but a beast cannot know these, therefore cannot know that he knows. To know them, to see their necessity without being able either to prove or disprove them, is the highest function of rational intelligence. It is to know something at the bottom of all reality in the same way that the Omniscient knows all reality: it is to *intuit* truth. If one of these truths could be presented to the understanding of a beast, he would cower before it, as a demon cowers before the face of God. The intolerable majesty of reason belongs to these simple ideas, and in their presence all philosophical empiricism shrivels into philosophical nescience. They are abstractions, one and all. Some of them are axioms of physical science, some of mental science; some are axioms of moral significance, others directly of spiritual or religious significance.

I venture to cite first the axiom fundamental in physics, that every event has a cause. This

venture is made notwithstanding that George John Romanes,[1] in his posthumous "Thoughts on Religion", maintains that the sphere of causation, which he identifies with physics, is on this side the border of the sphere which

[1] This thorough-going agnostic is one of the open-minded to whom truth comes by other avenues than sense-perception only. The following citations from his widely welcomed posthumous "Thoughts on Religion" indicate his general position and the extent to which it corresponds with that of these pages. The word "reason" is understood by his editor to be used in the sense of "reasoning."

"Reason is not the only attribute of man, nor is it the only faculty which he habitually employs for the ascertainment of truth. Moral and spiritual faculties are of no less importance in their respective spheres of everyday life; faith, trust, taste, etc., are as needful in ascertaining truth as to character, beauty, etc., as is reason. Indeed we may take it that reason is concerned in ascertaining truth only where causation is concerned; the appropriate organs for its ascertainment when anything else is concerned belong to the moral and spiritual region" (p. 118). "No one is entitled to deny the possibility of what may be termed an organ of spiritual discernment. In fact to do so would be to vacate the position of pure agnosticism *in toto*" (p. 149). "To believe necessitates a spiritual use of the imagination" (p. 154).

These are not novel doctrines. They are almost commonplaces with Christian thinkers; but it is a hopeful sign that a consistent agnostic adopts them. Religion thus becomes for him not a matter of faith alone, but virtually of knowledge also, and of knowledge because it is of faith.

"pure agnosticism" assigns to spiritual things; while at the same time he asserts the reality of spiritual knowledge based on extra-physical phenomena. But how to exclude the causal judgment from influence upon our religious convictions I am unable to see. Especially when we reflect that this judgment is not merely that every event has a cause, but that, in order to have any cause, every event must have a first cause. For it is admitted on almost every hand that we have an idea of causation only by virtue of the fact that we are consciously self-determined beings, ourselves first causes; and so it has come to pass that the mind cannot rest until the chain of effects has been traced back to Will as the First Cause, the Cause of causes, and therefore, except other wills, the only real cause.

Second among indisputable truths which have a religious importance is the axiom in morals that there is an intrinsic difference between right and wrong; together with the associated axiom, which is but the former stated more

at large, that whatever in any circumstances is the right thing to do it is duty to do, and whatever is wrong ought never to be done. To this may be added the axiom which æsthetic sensibility insists upon, and which to the artist is hardly to be distinguished from a direct concern of religion, that there is a real difference between the beautiful and the ugly, between the sublime and the mean. It is another self-evident truth that there is a distinction between the lovable and the unlovely.

Finally, it may be alleged as a notion distinct from all of these as each of them is from every other, that the sentiment of trust, the inward commitment of oneself to a not-self, rests warrantably upon a real distinction between the trustworthy and the untrustworthy, — a distinction in fact which is apprehended by a sentiment not to be confounded with intellectual conviction through proofs. This, then, is the first point in behalf of faith: thinking men are in possession of certain ideas which they cannot but recognize as true.

5. The Second Point for Faith — High Knowing by Deep Feeling

The second point for faith is that these axioms do not belong to the sphere of intellection, but to that of our highest powers; and mere intellection or understanding is not one of our highest powers. Concerning all these first truths we have moral convictions as irresistible as demonstrations; indeed they afford us fuller assurance concerning spiritual things than logical demonstrations could afford. This is partly because moral conviction is alone germane to spiritual things, partly because such things belong to the domain of our highest powers, and these powers recognize and assert their rights against all inferior claimants. Now it is certain that no one of these axioms belongs to the sphere of intellection only. That events must have a cause we come to know through the fact that we ourselves form volitions, or if you please, create volitions; and creating volitions is no more a process of intellection than feeling angry

is. But intellect recognizes the reality of the volitional process, and henceforth *thinks* that events are caused. There is no proving that any difference exists between right and wrong, whatever difference may be experienced between the advantages of the one and the inconveniences of the other. No one can demonstrate that æsthetic excellence is more than arithmetical relation in the case of sound, color, or even of form; but the deaf and the blind can know all the mathematics of beauty without knowing aught of beauty in either sight or sound. No arguments could persuade the heartless that love is other than silliness; and a few take it to be the part of wisdom to withhold trust from all men alike, even, so far as possible, from all things except scientific demonstrations. But that each of these moral, æsthetic and kindred sentiments is a just sentiment, each a discernment of reality, remains as indisputable as that two things which are equal to a third are equal to each other. Intellect has no more capability of sentiment,

or of knowing the true and false in sentiment, than the ear has of seeing or the eye of smelling; yet intellect itself notes the activity of the other faculties of knowledge, and knows that they know.

To repeat, it is the distinction of reason, as more than mere intelligence, to know all first truths as directly as the senses know impressions upon them; that is, without the possibility and without the need of proof. Where reasoning cannot tunnel a way, Reason like a good engineer can show whither the way should run, and often as on wings can carry us over obstacles which no engineering would be able to pierce or to surmount.

It is a further mark of exalted rank in these sentiments which are knowledges that the importance of exercising them is felt only when they are exercised, and by exercise highly developed. All our faculties need employment, and this need is a kind of physiological basis alike of physical appetites and of mental appetencies. If one is hungry, it is because his

digestive apparatus needs something to do; a child unduly restrained has a muscular yearning for motion; curiosity is the mind's appetency for the exercise of learning. But we become painfully conscious of physical needs when they cannot be met, as we thirst when we have nothing to drink, and pant for air when we sorely lack air; whereas the higher powers, if continually unexercised, grow comfortably atrophied, and it is their active employment alone which at the same time elevates us and makes us feel how much we need the very objects that we possess and use. Only friendship can teach us how beyond price a friend is. The irreligious are contented to remain "without God in the world", while saintly men consciously require him. And if there are human beings in another world who have escaped from sin and who see God; if there are angelic beings above these, or archangels above angels; if Jesus is there, is higher than other beings, is in any sense divine, and has received the answer to his prayer, "Now, O Father, glorify

thou me with thine own self", — these all, in proportion as they are more able than we to employ themselves with God, and so to possess God, in that proportion are more fully aware than we can be how dependent they are upon Him of whom a pious Hebrew wrote, "O God, thou art my God; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee."

If any further vindication is needed of the high rank which belongs to those sentiments that apprehend the moral and spiritual, this vindication may easily be gathered from the familiar doctrine of evolution. Evolution upon the whole is progress. For this reason the ideas characteristic of highly developed human beings are proportionately veracious. But it is at once apparent that lofty moral and spiritual sentiments are characteristic of the most highly developed races of men, while the entire absence of such sentiments would be a mark of imbruted savagery.

6. The Third Point for Faith — Veracity of Unified Ideals

The first point, then, for faith is that it belongs to us to know without reasons given the certain truth of the statements that every event has a cause, a real cause, *i. e.*, a first cause ; that there is a difference between right and wrong, with corresponding obligation to do and not do ; and that the beautiful and sublime, the lovable, the trustworthy are realities. The second point for faith is that it is by virtue of rationality, by virtue of his high place in the scale of being, that man knows these truths as self-evident. The third point concerns the effect produced upon the mind by uniting these self-evident truths in an Ideal which is capable of embracing them all. It will prepare us to appreciate the immeasurable importance of the soul's response if we approach the consideration of it through a due recognition of the fact that, while each of these first truths, these ideal realities, is recognized by a faculty appropriate to

it, and the knowledge of it is so far independent, yet appreciation of one of these realities reënforces appreciation of all the others, and the sentiments which they evoke are so far interdependent. It is reason pure and simple which, in the experience of volition, knows that all events have causes; it is conscience, in the popular sense, which knows there is a difference between right and wrong; æsthetic faculty which knows æsthetic reality; the heart which knows the lovable, and a special responsiveness which recognizes the trustworthy in that which meets our needs. But mark now that reason itself, which frames the causal judgment, is thwarted if no worthy cause can be found for these other high sentiments of ours; that conscience in turn looks to a First Cause as its final standard, and would be confounded by learning that it was not also supremely lovable and trustworthy; that the æsthetic appreciation of ideal beauty and grandeur, the rendering to it of the glory which is its due, the "transcendent wonder" at it, which Carlyle saw to be the

essence of worship, is aroused not by any physical beauty, as though it were a body, but by its great nature and place as Origin, as Moral Archetype, as worthy of limitless love and trust ; that the heart loves with all its might only that which for good reason is also most admired ; finally that the sentiment of trust goes out unreservedly toward that alone which is adapted to every faculty of the soul, therefore sufficient for all its needs. The permutations which we can make of these several ideal objects, and the interplay of sentiments thus provoked, are extremely fascinating to a normal and disciplined mind, producing, indeed, an elation felt to be almost the highest privilege of a reasonable being. To confront any one of these ultimate realities without an emotion is abnormal to an extent shocking and depressing to a mind which discovers in itself such unresponsiveness. To combine them all in one view, to face the all-inclusive Ideal, and to be thrilled at it, almost overpowered by it, this is to recognize against all odds of scepticism that we have

a vision of realities, of the most exalted realities, and that they are all phases of one Reality. For this is only to recognize that the several faculties employed are coherent and co-operative faculties of one human mind. Man takes the high place which belongs to him when he gives play to these sentiments and employs these powers.

But in all this there is one thing utterly preposterous and revolting, the talk about It. This is not truth-telling talk. A mere It never awakens in plain men the sentiments alleged, still less the alleged interplay and exaltation of sentiment. Men have shown themselves capable of worshiping idols, but never of worshiping an ideal It. Not even philosophers can hold themselves to the rule of It. The one that all ideal realities cohere in is HE. The soul's response is to an ideal PERSON. Such a response when perfected is trust; on its way to perfecting it is a realizing sense that God is; and to begin with is more or less certitude that He is. Rationality longs only for Him, not for abstract

ideals, will have Him or nothing. When our faculties are busied with God and are satisfied, they possess God and cannot be persuaded that they possess a nothing. Each step of the process is a stage of faith, and at each step faith is like a moving tripod, every foot sustains that which rests on all three alike. Knowing, realizing, trusting; recognizing, imagining, confiding, these constitute faith in the Being whom true religion offers to human souls. Thus the third point for faith is that, when our truest and loftiest ideals are summed up in one All-perfect Being, he is recognized as our Archetype, the complement, the other part of what at our best we are.

7. The Fourth Point for Faith — Imagination can Handle the Case

The fourth point for faith, and the especial concern of this little treatise, is that effective dealing with the idea of a Supreme Person is possible only through religious use of imagination, and is often lacking only because that

use is not resorted to. If religion uses first truths as we do the foundations of a house, builds on them and hides them, or as mathematics does with its axioms, forgets them after a first respectful glance at them, religion may indeed secure from these truths the logical service of unconsciously assumed postulates, but that is all. Their real religious significance is significance to imagination, at least not to logic apart from imagination. When they are duly imagined the mind's eye traces them far below the point where we think of foundations as beginning. It sees them running down and down into the center. Where the core of the world is there are they, and that world-core they are. Nothing underlies them. All that we perhaps think of as beneath them, like the idea of God, as certainly rests on them as do the hither truths. It is when imagination thus sounds the depths of fundamental reality that this reality begins to be felt; that is, to be accorded a "judgment of its worth;" that is, to be veritably known and actually faced.

If, then, no one can deny first truths out and out, although he may try to belittle our god-like intuition of them into a semi-intelligent habit of making a convenience of them; if to feel their significance is but sheer rationality, the preëminent note of man's superiority to brute intelligence and feeling, we are not even yet giving imagination her full due until we acknowledge that these lordliest functions of absolute reason come into full exercise only by imagination's aid.

This is not because spiritual realities or abstract principles are in a position of unparalleled difficulty. The proverb has it that facts out of sight are also out of mind. By a happy inertness of imagination this is constantly the case with matters which being imagined would make life dismal indeed. Every household must be broken up; but I never heard of a man and a woman who, when they took one another to have and to hold until death them do part, forthwith fell to bewailing the certainty that death must part them. Of all the preposterous woes by

which early wedlock might be disturbed, no humorist has asked us to fancy the honeymoon desolated by pictures of the final agony and the loneliness which must follow. Or when those who hold to lasting punishment beyond the grave are twitted with their insensibility to so appalling a belief, and even told that if they believed as they say they could never smile again, it would be quite fair to reply, "We do not realize all that we believe." In like manner it is necessary to realize God in order to elicit a response of rational emotion. To look for such emotion without vivid imagination of Him who is the sum of all truth, the unity of all ideals, is as idle as the dreamy tracing of the endless lines which run every whither from oneself as from the center of the universe, and to fall asleep in tracing them. But imagination sometimes rolls this very notion of immensity like a mountain upon the soul. If it is a profanation to utter the name of God in vain, how much less impious are men's thoughts about an unimagined God? The profanity of a lazy idea concerning the

Most High is quite certainly proportionate to the degree that it is unimaginative. Surely it is hopeless to attempt bringing idle minds to a clear conviction of any kind with regard to the Deity unless they will direct toward him the telescope of imagination.

But to imagine him is like sunlight on green leaves; the light is absorbed, and the whole vitality of the plant becomes operative. I have noticed now and then a small room which thrilled to a tone of special pitch, and only feebly, if at all, to other tones. A human soul is many-chambered, and the thought of God is a loud, full harmony of many notes which wake up a resonance as harmonious. Our faculties are strangely attuned to the idea of God. It is because he has made us for himself. When harmony fills the soul at the idea of God we are assured that he himself has spoken, and that we have heard. Men always listen for some response in their own nature as a test of religious doctrine. It is when they hear partial answers that they mistakenly believe themselves

to hear a true answer. But an answer to religion from within they will have, or they will have none of the religion.

For the most of their hours men's souls are unthrilled by any thought of God, and religion is as little a function of their hearts. But this is plainly because imagination does not make their dim eyes see, their dull ears hear. The capability of imagination is then emphasized by the neglect of it, and by neglect just when an appeal to imagination's aid purports to be made. I know no more decisive illustration than the habit of profane swearing. A startling idea is always called for by a curse. Vulgar incapacity of utterance seeks to surpass all legitimate force of speech by words august or terrifying. But imagination becomes utterly fagged out by the too constant and extravagant appeal. She does not make the least response. If she did, what terror would smite the curser, what awe press down the reckless mouther of the Sacred Name. This is testimony enough, one would suppose, to what we may look to

imagination for, if a sense of spiritual things is reverently and earnestly coveted. From the most rudimentary of first truths to the most complex and exalted conception of the Deity, it falls to imagination alone to make spiritualities seem realities.

8. How the Queen's Gun Lied

Of course partial answers to great questions are often false answers. Men accept as of divine authority a mere fantasy of their own. Not long ago it was the custom in a pretty village on the south bank of the St. Lawrence to set all the clocks and watches by her Majesty's gun which was fired at noon from a fort on the Canada side. Everybody knew just how many seconds to allow the sound for crossing the wide stream, and those good Americans were as happy in possessing the Queen's time as though it had been telegraphed to them from Greenwich. I happened to be in the Canadian fort one day when the old sergeant came out from barracks to fire the noon gun. And lo!

he had in his hand a little round American clock, one of those Ansonia products which could be bought for half a dollar or so. "And do you fire the gun always by that clock?" "Always," said the brave sergeant. "And what do you set the clock by?" "By the town clock," quoth he. "And the town clock, what is that set by?" That was as might happen; he didn't know. And so the American villagers, who reverently set their clocks on the pompous authority of a British cannon, were deferring after all to the cheapest kind of timepiece made in their own land of liberty. I dare say they do it still. Americans are reverent of royalty.

The error of a false faith is neither amusing nor trivial. It is so disastrous that guarantees are generally demanded for a pretended revelation of new truth. But, however imposing and convincing the guarantees, even though they are miracles of the Christ, "works which none other man did," in the end a real revelation is sure to be accepted and faith in it to

abide, because it sets forth some spiritual fact which only the mind's eye can discern, but which is sufficiently kept before the mind by imagination. If untruth is accepted, this is not because imagination has deluded the unwary, but because only part of the facts have been imagined. From the gun's great noise the village folk inferred royal authority for the time o' day, and so far were right ; but it never occurred to them that the queen would lend her authority to an Ansonia clock. It is precisely so with theoretical errors ; and it no more follows that imagination is misleading as to unseen things than that observation is misleading as to things seen. In one way or another all the pertinent facts must be held in view. If the facts are beyond the senses they can be viewed only by imagination, and in all such cases faith fails and knowledge fails when imagination fails. "The imagination is conscious of an indestructible dominion ; — the Soul may fall away from it, not being able to sustain its grandeur ; but, if once felt and acknowledged, by no act

of any other faculty of the mind can it be relaxed, impaired or diminished." [1]

To sum up what has been presented concerning the competence of imagination to serve religious truth, and the scope of that competence: vigorous imagination of religious things, as of anything else, makes it harder to hold incongruous notions about them; makes it easier to discover new truth about them; is always an element of normal religious faith. Thus it will appear that the imagination may be looked to as a resolver of some at least among the puzzling and even disabling problems of the day, that it secures and accounts for the persistence of essential Christianity through all days, and not only throws open the gate but leads the way in all real advance of religious knowledge. Claims so sweeping can be readily tested on those living problems. Sample cases may be grouped as problems concerning God as the Creator, the Ruler, the Father.

[1] Wordsworth's "Lyrical Ballads," Preface to edition of 1815.

III

PROBLEMS AS TO THE CREATOR

1. Imagine Change

The main problem is, Has the universe had a Creator? Yes, is the only reply which imagination can tolerate. The mind cannot help attempting to picture an origin for such features of the universe as motion, order, fitness, life, personality. I am not about to argue from these that God exists, except so far as the imaginability of theism and unimaginability of atheism may be an argument. If our business were to prove the truth of theism, the facts above mentioned would be adduced, but in a way quite different from that which will be followed. Our problem is, What origin can imagination make out for these facts?

Motion is incessant and universal. The most obdurate minerals are changing. If we

accept the current philosophy of atoms, the enduring diamond is a congeries of atomic motions, and it is to the intensity of its unobserved activities that its seeming fixity is due. The spectacle before all eyes is a world undergoing a process. Every step of the process requires as its antecedent, its cause, an earlier step. Imagine the receding series. Try to imagine it as running back to eternity. Can we do it? If an entire chain must fall to the ground unless hung up by one of its links, imagination does not see what can keep it from falling even though there is no end of links. Say that the links are changes, that every change depends on a previous change, that therefore the series cannot have been infinite; and then someone will surely reply that this is to beg the question, that no beginning is needed for that which always existed, the infinite series. Evidently, if bent on arguing the point, we must go about it in some other way; but our only concern is with the fact that a series of finite changes from eternity is unimaginable.

Try then an idealistic conception; exclude the easily imaginable solidity of atoms, and we face the challenge in which the wit of Professor Tyndall uses for another purpose the critical acumen of imagination: "Ask your imagination if it will accept a vibrating multiple proportion — a numerical ratio in a state of oscillation? I do not think that it will. You cannot crown the edifice with this abstraction. The scientific imagination, which is here authoritative, demands, as the origin and cause of a series of ether waves, a particle of vibrating matter quite as definite, though it may be excessively minute, as that which gives origin to a musical sound."[1] That is, whatever difficulty the imagination meets with in achieving a realizing sense of an eternally preëxistent series of interactions between atomic *things*, it cannot replace this by interactions without beginning between abstractions, or no-things; because abstractions in no case have physical properties, and so for all physical purposes are

[1] "Fragments of Science," p. 431.

non-entities. Even though they were not so, the idealistic hypothesis of an infinite uncaused series of caused ideas lends itself much less readily to mental imaging than the materialistic hypothesis.

Try imagination then upon the eternal pre-existence of a self-moved Spirit. Here at last is a picture which will cohere, which also has the advantage of corresponding to our own experience at the crucial point: we are self-moved spirits, we are creators of our own volitions, and our volitions cause the release of muscular energy. Other people's thoughts we can be compelled to think after them; but our purposes are exclusively our own, never forced upon us, only invited, perhaps urgently invited with a thumbscrew or hot coals, but no more than invited by the wills of other men. As Goethe said, a man's purpose is all that is original with himself; but until *he* forms it, it does not yet exist. The only *imaginable* origin of change is the creative volition of a self-existent, self-moved Spirit. To the imagination a

self-moved Spirit needs no accounting for, but self-moved matter is unaccountable. The universe is the problem, God is the solution. We cannot distinctly picture any other possibility than that at some point this side eternity a Spirit began all motion, and in beginning all motion created everything to which motion is essential. This solution of the problem is the only one which can endure, because it is the only one which can be imagined. And it is precisely of this solution that it was written, "By faith [that is, by imagination] we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God."

Some one will surely object that the eternal preëxistence of a self-existent Spirit is as unimaginable as the eternal preëxistence of finite changes; and further that, if imaginability is to be the test of a standing or falling theory concerning origins, eternal preëxistence is as much beyond imagination as eternal non-existence, simply because eternity in any case is unimaginable. Such a challenge must be met. To be

sure, no one imagines that the universe created itself out of nothing. The impossibility of imagining this impossible beginning would be appealed to only for the sake of discrediting some other appeal to imagination. But the difference is that to imagine eternal preëxistence of something is impracticable, while to imagine eternal preëxistence of nothingness is impossible. An absolute beginning and an absolute non-beginning are not, as Sir William Hamilton persuaded himself, equally inconceivable. Nothing self-contradictory can be found in the notion of eternal preëxistence; but the self-contradiction is almost palpable in the notion of eternal non-existence. If we attempt to picture the notion of the eternal preëxistence of something, the picture cannot be finished; but a picture of eternal nothingness cannot even be begun. It is easy to trace existence back to any definite period however remote. We can do it in an instant. But to unroll the panorama of eternity past would require the eternity which is before us. It is

impracticable, though not in itself impossible. On the contrary, when we have in an instant gone back to a date however remote, and attempt to imagine at that point an absolute beginning of all existence, the image of nothing converting itself into something is utterly lunatic and preposterous. No sane imagination will fling itself into the bottomless abyss of an empty eternity.

2. Imagine Order

Now the universe which affords the ever shifting spectacle of motion exhibits also, contrariwise, the *fixity* of order or law. Law is a permanent characteristic of change itself. But whence is law? How did chaos come to be cosmos? What explanation is imaginable? To some minds there is no other indication of Supreme Intelligence so plain as universal order. I admit at once that order or law is but another name for definite quality in things; that the chemical elements, singly and in combination, from time to time reveal amazing

variety of qualities; that the capacity for this exhibition is all the while inherent in the elements, and its revelation a revelation of their laws. If we succeed by and by in reducing the number of elements, — a number until to-day increasing, — if we find them all reducible to one element, then the variety in the universe becomes all the more amazing, just short of incredible, and law the more complex. It would indeed ravish the soul of a physicist to discover in some one irreducible element, in some primordial set of absolutely identical atoms, the unity which philosophy has been seeking ever since philosophy fairly began. But what then? The greater the capabilities of that one element, the greater would become the burden on imagination. An infinite variety in things, due to an absolute unity in the original thing, would astonish materialism, at its last word, into theism; imagination would have merely to choose between saying that God made that wonderful first thing, or that the FIRST THING was itself God. So almost in-

credible a first thing, with its boundless capacity for qualities, would present us with as many laws; and these laws of the several things which have been evolved out of one thing would offer us, and do offer us, laws rising from numberlessness into unity, a great law, either known or yet to be found, a law of nature over all natural laws, a colonial empire over countless tribes in strange lands, each tribe accorded its native customs, and all loyal to one throne in the imperial land. Imagination would be challenged to give an account of the complexity, the simplicity, and then of the complexity in simplicity, of law. The greater the difficulty of answering that challenge, the more insistent and imperious the challenge. The more amazing the spectacle of complex yet coherent order, the more urgent the demand how all this came about; whence such capacity for qualities, which is capacity for laws; and how it has happened that the world-stuff did not fix itself in a few unfruitful forms. It is easy to imagine that it might have been

so fixed; and no exposition of the process through which the universe has become both heterogeneous and orderly, has made it imaginable that chaos unrolled itself into cosmos in the complete absence of intelligence. How unroll itself aright unless it started aright? Huxley himself conceded that, if we go back to beginnings, "the teleologist has us at his mercy." If then imagination is allowed a voice, and with regard to the unseen it must be consulted, Huxley is right, of course. The bigger and more uniform the original nebula, the more nebulous the picture of origins without coördinating intelligence; but imagination delightedly looks on while Supreme Intelligence sets about ordering the world in just the way that has been followed. Theism satisfies imagination, atheism confounds it. It has been so ever since thought on these matters began, and it will be so to the end.

With regard to law there is another fact which staggers imagination, if law is not to be referred to intelligence. This fact is that the

highest laws of physics are not reached by measurements of real things, but by reasonings about imagined things. Not induction but deduction is the process which attains to the widest knowledge of the universe. Mathematical order pervades all objects in space, and mathematical results are wholly independent of observation. Attention has already been called to the fact that the truths of mathematics are objects of imagination. The state of facts now to be noticed is: first, that laws are exponents of the qualities in things; secondly, that mind and matter have not a single quality in common; therefore, thirdly, their laws are not, as some hold, the same; and yet, fourthly, there is complete accord between their laws. As to order or law Hegel is right; the rational is the real. The widest law known, the all-inclusive law of gravitation, the deepest secret yet torn from nature, was laid hold of and dragged into light by mathematics. What ground can be imagined for this correspondence? If matter and mind were one, if matter

were spiritual or mind material, that is, if the properties of mind and matter, instead of being mutually exclusive, were all either of the class now known as psychical, or of the other class known as physical, in that case we might still wonder at so much harmony in so great diversity; but we would no longer have to stand almost aghast at so great a strain on our credulity as that, in two utterly alien spheres, with no fact in common except that they both exist and are spheres of action, there is correspondence as rigid as though both spheres were one. How can imagination accept such a state of facts? Indisputable, it is all but incredible, unless it may be ascribed to originating Intelligence. A theory which denies Intelligence is so opaque that it shuts out all light from beginnings, and imagination, at least, cannot see anything.

3. Imagine Fitness

Imagination seeks an origin not alone of motion and order, but also of the fitness to each other among things. An argument on

this basis would be teleological, always the most widely appreciable, but of late the most decried argument. I decline to argue the matter, and ask only what imagination does with it.

We have noted that as things change they reveal qualities so permanent as to constitute order in the world, and to deserve the august name of nature's laws. But these qualities are of such sort that, as any one may see, objects to which they belong affect each other. The universe is a total of related things. And imagination is spectator of it all. It penetrates the depths of the swirling nebulae, watches aloof the influence of suns on planets, sees the molten earth cool into crystals, its hardened surface worn away and relaid by water, and finally takes organisms apart with knives and reagents, or watches their performance under microscopes, until it knows how every part of a structure serves the whole. But when on large scale, or even on small scale, imagination witnesses the adjustments found everywhere, it

invariably recognizes *purpose* in them. It is all the same whether one's religion is low as animism or lofty as Christianity. It is quite the same whether the imaginative observer's beliefs figure as the credulity of superstition or the unfaith of agnosticism. If imagination be permitted to look, she can never miss seeing a god in the world. And though fetishism is mistaken in ascribing every odd stick and stone to a demon, and superstition may play the fool in fancying that God reveals some malignant purpose in the chance that thirteen sit at table, or salt is spilled there, that one unwittingly walks under a ladder or incurs the expense of breaking a looking glass, that any of the thousand "signs" happen which skeptics as often as others torment themselves withal, do such misinterpretations of the unusual imply that there is no *constant meaning* in nature? Is it quite out of question that the world had a Maker, that he made things for a purpose, or that he can hint in his works at what his purpose is? And if imagination persists in

seeing a purpose worthy of such a Being as God, must this persistence be pitied as a poor guess, or denounced as unscientific so soon as it claims to be insight, and is touched with reverence?

If imagination finds itself curbed by the steady rule in logic that we must allege only a sufficient cause, and by the alleged fact that the mechanism of nature has proved its sole sufficiency by doing all that has been done, nothing is more certain than that imagination will not consent to this application of the rule. It will still insist with antiquated Paley that the mechanical processes of a watch do not supply an adequate account of the watch. It will go on with him to contemplate the fact that, if a watch could beget watches, the process of propagation would not be a complete account of the propagation. And when the critic thereupon attacks imagination with his confident objection that watches are known to be artificial while worlds are known to be natural, even in the face of this criticism, which seeks to close

the eye of imagination like a hand laid firmly upon it, still imagination will be perspicacious enough to penetrate with her X ray where common light is lost. She will say that it is not and never can be proved that the world has existed from eternity; she will see that it is precisely her privilege to keep in view the possible significance of facts which, because they seem to mean a great deal, probably do mean something, or at least suggest the existence of purpose in a Maker.

Or, if evolution is insisted on, and the story of it so well told as to make us feel certain that all objects are unfoldings from earlier objects, in that case imagination will be all aglow at the spectacle of a world forming by a process so facile and so sure of its end. She will be amazed, not only at the evolution and its glories, but at the purblindness which fancies that such a process shuts the door against Purpose. Imagination will think she sees how, if there is a God and he is a Creator, to create by evolution would be for him a worthy way.

Imagination is vision, clear vision, especially comprehensive vision. When the mind comprehensively and clearly views first the cosmic activities, then the cosmic order, then the interdependence of all objects in the cosmos, an interdependence apart from which there could be no progress, no evolution, nor even the continued existence of any organic thing formed this side of formless chaos, and when in such a view we have to choose between these two alternatives: — all this was intended; none of this was intended, but all came about of itself — then imagination never hesitates. An unpurposed universe can be argued for, its possibility approximately made out, but it can never be imagined.

Does perhaps reason require imagination to efface itself, or even to put on itself restraint enough to hesitate? Decidedly no. Not even grim determination to accept only what has been proved by physical appliances is able to suppress imagination in the consecrated priests of science. These, no more than others, can

hold doctrines in permanence the image of which falls apart when left to itself. Nor can they wholly repulse the charm of symmetrical and persistent imaginings. If the scene just now before the mind is unacceptable, another point of view can be sought. If one physicist rejects "the mechanical view" of creation — by which he means that the world was shaped by its Maker, — another physicist replies that the atoms give every sign of being "manufactured articles." If every several product be regarded as wrought by nature, nature itself is to the mind's eye the more evidently dominated by Idea. Or if the repugnance to special creations and divine providence cannot be surmounted, physical philosophy will presently be found resolving all physical energies into divine volitions, and agreeing with the imagination of simple folk who lived before Newton that the spheres are rolled through space by the hand of the Almighty. Teleology, if not in the little yet in the large, will endure; and of this we are assured not only by the fact that it has already

lasted so long, but also because for the scientific and the simple alike it is the only interpretation of the world which imagination can frame. When we view all nature, or any large part of it, comprehensively, it has meaning; and the modern as well as the ancient history of man's reflection upon nature exhibits an irresistible proclivity to imagine that a world means a Maker, although his purpose may sometimes be past finding out.

It would be as easy to hide the majesty and beauty of the spectacle as to hide its divinity. Analysis does not detect and isolate God's part just here or there; but neither does analysis pick out and set up by itself the grand or the beautiful. Grandeur is not often an attribute of fragments; the subtle essence of beauty evaporates in analysis, as life escapes under the scalpel's too curious exploration. But beauty and grandeur are not the less real that the sense of them cannot be imparted by anatomizing; and the divineness of the whole is not the less appreciable because it cannot be found

lurking in some small, secret part. Whatever the beauty or the divinity of the details, the total, like a consummate piece of human architecture, is much more impressive than any or all its parts ; and imagination, peering minutely or gazing at large, has never missed altogether either the æsthetic or the religious significance, which are but two sides of the spiritual significance, of the cosmos.

4. Imagine Man

In the problem of origins, life and personality are the factors which illustrate motion, order, and adaptations at their highest. As such they will require little more than mention, and that for the sake of indicating the point of view from which they are here regarded. In organism motion is not a mere incident, like the felt blowing of winds and the visible flowing of waters. Air and water might be all that they are without perceptible motion. But motion is plainly indispensable to organism from the beginning to the end of life. Organic

activity is also the most intricate and inexplicable of activities. Order too reaches its culmination in living bodies. And their laws are as various and refined as their qualities. Further, law in living objects is not mere order; it is the method of relations within an organism. The laws of life are laws of adaptations in means to ends. Nowhere else are adaptations so manifold and necessary as in living things. Whatever lack of precision we may discover in the interaction of a rational being's faculties and organs, reason is his supreme faculty, of godlike ability to preside over voluntary functions and reduce to order the anarchy of personal existence. If imagination is impressed by the resources of this planet, which are discovered as rapidly as civilization needs them, and indeed are no small part of civilization itself, much more is it the discoverer that impresses imagination, and the discoverer as the servant of that larger organism which we loosely describe as human society. What imagination beholds is the steady realization

of the Hebrew faith that man has been set as lord over creation, and set there by the Maker of both it and him.

It is, however, when man contemplates himself not as part of the scheme of things but in and of himself, that imagination finds no other self-stultification like that which refuses to see in himself the image of a Maker. The opposite tendency is the natural tendency. Instead of finding it hard to imagine himself made in the image of God, man is prone to make a God for himself in his own image and after his own likeness. At first people had to jeer when told in the name of science that they were descended from some monkey race, or older race from which monkeys also sprang, and the "London Punch" thought it a fine jest to picture Mr. Darwin before a mirror which showed him a gorilla face in grotesque reflection of his own thoughtful features. But by and by a conviction grew that the assertion by the learned of such an origin for man was quite too confident and general not to be first plausible, and

then authoritative; so that now persons who know a little and would like to know more begin to relish the still droll conceit of saying "to the worm, Thou art my mother," if not yet "to corruption, Thou art my father." But the natural imagination of mankind has not been wholly put to shame, although so many turned away when she spoke; and at last it is quite clear that, while she must recognize our kinship to beasts, yet she may insist that descent from beasts is a divinely guided ascent to man. To the enlightened imagination of so good a Darwinian as Mr. John Fiske materialism is an outrage on philosophy. "The whole creation has been travailing together in order to bring forth that last consummate specimen of God's handiwork, the Human Soul" . . . "The Platonic view [of it] as . . . an effluence from Godhood . . . is doubtless the view most consonant with the present state of our knowledge." [1] Some day it may be proved that God had no hand in making man to be something

[1] "Destiny of Man," pp. 42, 43, 32.

other than a beast; but who can ever *make it seem* that he had not?

5. Imagine God

The first problem concerning a Creator was, Is there a Creator? The second is, What sort of Being is he? Every attribute in him is baffling to thought when run out to infinity. If we try to think back and back to eternity, we are dealing with the most bewildering of ideas; still it is a necessary idea. If we try to conceive infinite extension in any direction, we are perhaps less staggered, though not less defeated; yet it is a necessary conception. There are, however, two indispensable and at the same time imaginable views of God: his personality and his perfection.

When we seek a definite conception of what kind of being the Creator is by imagining him a person, the mind at once finds a resting place. This is, to be sure, to regard the Creator anthropomorphically, to make him an infinitely exalted Being of human kind. But anthropo-

morphism is in some part truth. Otherwise no true idea of such a Being or even of his existence is possible. A spirit cannot be imagined as wanting personality. We can say "impersonal spirit," but the words mean "unspiritual spirit;" that is, they are without meaning. It is easy for imagination to test the accuracy of anthropomorphism both positively and negatively. It has but to form images distinct enough and comprehensive enough to test their coherence and their applicability. Positively, we are able to imagine the extension of a human spirit's powers. At some point that spirit will be exactly what an angel is supposed to be; then what an archangel is, if there are archangels; and, in case the extension is imagined to reach infinity, there will be no difference between this infinitely endowed human spirit and God himself. Nothing more can be ascribed to God than we thus ascribe to this human spirit, nor can anything be denied of this human spirit which is not to be denied of God also. Negatively, there are some who

cannot, or say they cannot, imagine the finite become infinite ; and yet they believe that the eternal Word emptied himself of his limitless attributes, and so by incarnation became truly human. But if the process of limitation is possible to the infinite, that of extension to infinity must be possible to the finite; and in either case the divine and the human would be thought of as specifically one, and only quantitatively different. The anthropomorphism of the early Hebrews is unmistakable, has often been flung at them in reproach, but remains as helpful as ever in enabling us to conceive God personal and therefore appreciable.

Let us, if we must, attempt to imagine God impersonal, lacking consciousness, but endowed with automatic activity like spontaneous nerve action. Let imagination accord to him instinct, but deny to him reason. He is no longer God. He is no longer an imaginable explanation of the universe, but himself a problem more insoluble than the universe. Or rather, since he is thus identified with the universe, he is that

in it which most needs explanation. Instinct is not an explanation, but needs to be explained. We simply cannot imagine God impersonal; we can only say he is so. Pantheism, when long persisted in, always runs out into polytheism, as in India. This is because numerous personal divinities are imaginable, and one impersonal deity unimaginable. Pantheism will often be revived, but will never abide as the faith of mankind; because pantheism defies imagination.

Now when the personality of God is clearly imaged, perfection no longer figures to our imagination as a phase of infinitude, and thus of incomprehensibility, but as exceedingly definite, that is, as delimitation by virtue of excluding imperfections. Thus, if we form a conception of divine holiness, it is not to be pictured as analogous to boundless space, but as moral energy *untouched* by evil. If we would contemplate God's infinite love, we imagine it as a desire for nothing else except our well being. Infinite justice is a not inaccurate rendering of

what is due to anyone. Even infiniteness of knowledge is readily imaginable as knowledge which omits nothing, and wisdom as knowledge which makes no mistakes about what to do. It has already been shown that the eternity and immensity of God are unimaginable only because to finish an image of them is impracticable, not intrinsically impossible. All these definitions are but denials of the finite, and hence are all readily imagined. It cannot be objected that this easy negative way of viewing the divine perfections is illegitimate; for the old maxim of logic stands, "the knowledge of opposites is one;" so that if we formed a complete view of any infinite excellency, the converse conception would be present always, and would be precisely what has just now been alleged.

There is, however, a more positive method of conception, although none could be more accurate. To conceive divine perfections positively is to conceive the excellencies of God as extending over reaches apprehensible by us, and

then as carrying the same character on to infinitude. We have no reason to suppose that, if we knew any divine excellence in its entirety, that which we do not now know about it would differ in any way from that which we now know. Power, wisdom, holiness, justice and benevolence are indisputably what we conceive them to be, whether limited or unlimited. In a word, whatever logical embarrassment may be met in attempting to infer what the infinite excellencies of God will lead him to do, we have an unquestionably correct notion of what these attributes severally are, and may properly imagine God as all-perfect, that is, as a Person infinite only in all that good is.

IV

PROBLEMS AS TO THE RULER

1. Imagination Makes Light of an Old Problem

Of problems concerning the Ruler of the universe we need occupy ourselves with two only. The first of these has diligently sought a solution during at least a millennium and a half. It is the problem of God's sovereignty and man's freedom. I do not say that the religious imagination solves this problem, but that to religious imagination no such problem can exist. When ratiocination takes the matter in hand it finds trouble enough. Always the attempt at rational exposition tends to exalt either sovereignty or freedom at the cost of the other, or else insists on both, only to start the problem whether God is good and wise. But imagination finds no difficulty of any sort. Its

picture must necessarily include all essentials, and it insists on these categorically without allowing one of them to be compromised in the smallest degree by puzzles which vex the understanding. On what then does imagination fix her gaze?

Imagination cannot allow any other state of facts except that God is sovereign and man is free. Try to imagine a man who has not at least so much freedom as this, that he can form preferences and purposes which are characteristically his own. You, oh, clear-seeing reader, do not imagine that such a being would be a man. Well then, imagine God not to be free. Imagine him without at least this minimum of freedom, that he too can form preferences and purposes which are characteristic of himself. Such a being, if imagined, would not be imagined to be God. At once, then, imagination has swept out of her view all the moral difficulties of the problem. As she sees things, man must be free, and so must God. The freedom of man must at least be

freedom to choose according to what he is; and God cannot be free to choose otherwise than according to what he is. All is well. Nothing else so well as this is imaginable. Nothing else would be well at all. An All-perfect Ruler, free to form and to follow, and free only to form and to follow, designs characteristic of his perfection, is the only imaginable security for the well being of creatures. Imagine man void of freedom, and you imagine there is no man. Imagine man alone free, his will the sole arbiter; imagine God not free, or otherwise free than free to be good, or less than free to be sovereignly good, and you imagine the unimaginable; you imagine that divine perfection is divine imperfection; you imagine that the universe is hell.

In a philosophical exploration of this theme the moral difficulty, as distinguished from the metaphysical, is that God's free sovereignty must somehow be responsible for man's free wickedness, or can be clear of such respon-

sibility only by abridging man's freedom and forcing man to do right; — which is to exchange the moral for the metaphysical difficulty, one to be noticed anon. If now imagination undertakes to philosophize, if she invents an origin for evil, she will quickly discover incongruities that spoil her picture. Imagination may, however, forego philosophizing on this problem as one too big for her, as possibly too vast for any being except the All-knowing. But she will be able distinctly and unevasively to imagine that *He* knows an answer. Then the infinite wisdom of God has swallowed up the last alleged unimaginability. To imagination there is no moral problem at all. She sees all the elements in the problem as so many blazing suns. She sees God free, good and wise; she sees man free, bad and foolish. However the badness came about, the freedom of man in becoming and in remaining bad is certain to imagination in this essential sense of freedom, that man has always consciously had his own way. Viewing freedom as the

distinguishing mark of rational beings, a mark common to God and man, the front and face side of the fact that both are persons, imagination can then detect no remainder of the moral problem. Man's way being his own way, he is morally responsible for it, however he came to choose it ; and God's wisdom being perfect wisdom, he can imaginably have a sufficient reason for doing all that he has done, even although his doings include the creation of a race which might and even inevitably would go astray. The assurance which to imagination looms large and cannot be put down is that an All-perfect Person is the free and supreme Ruler over all.

But imagination as readily disposes of the metaphysical stumbling block. It is but a pebble in her path. We may see her step over it, quite unconscious of its existence, although it completely blocks the way for formal logic. Once more, then, imagine a man not free, at least not so far free as this, that he can form preferences ; and you have attempted an incoherent

fancy, you have not imagined a man. Imagining man therefore as free, and admitting that he can be only thus imagined, try to imagine God as designing to make man, and not including man's freedom in his design. Again you are attempting a self-contradiction. The image falls apart; it cannot be held together by force. It melts through any grasp, if it does not prove an explosive mixture outright, as has often happened to the great pain and damage of those who tamper with these incompatibles. If we but avoid imagining what does not exist, and insist on a clear and comprehensive mental image of what does exist, we do not imagine God trying either to clear man of moral responsibility or to save his own sovereignty by limiting man's freedom; but we see him, on the contrary, sovereignly determining that man shall be free. It may help us if we also perceive that, in so determining, God sovereignly chose to limit the exercise of his own sovereignty after man should appear on earth. He might do this if he would; and

apparently he has so done. Not, however, that this is anything else than a sovereign act still. The self-limitation is part of his plan.

What we must and alone can imagine, as to the metaphysical difficulty in holding at once to the supreme will of God and the free will of man, is just this: whatever God designs to achieve through *man*, he designs to achieve through *men*, that is, through free persons. To rational imagination God is as sovereign as though man were a stone, and man is as free as though there were no God. If one is tempted to say that man is as free as though God were a stone, he should call to mind the stony Buddha, with feet curled under him, hands spread palm downward upon his knees, eyes closed in a dreamless and eternal sleep; and he should reflect well that Buddhism is the most relentless system of moral and mechanical necessitarianism. Indeed, we cannot find freedom provided for man in atheism either. The source and guarantee of our freedom is that our Maker is free, has made us in his own

image, and cannot imaginably will that we should be slaves. The imagination accepts all that there is in the problem, — save only God's undiscoverable motive for letting evil enter the world, a motive which God's infinitude forbids imagination to look for, yet provides for, — and so imagination finds no problem at all. To wide-seeing religious imagination the sole reality and the sole possibility is that *God has absolutely decreed a conditional universe.*

2. Imagination Lights On a Distinction In a Newer Problem

Miracles furnish another problem of divine rulership as to which imagination can be of service. Miracles have been discredited and good Christians distressed through unwitting confusion of miracles with magic. These differ entirely as regards the human intermediary, the superhuman doer and the work done. Magic claimed to be both science and art. As science it knew of secret resources in nature, and as art it had skill to use these. This was "white magic."

But the magician might also be able to compel obedience from superhuman beings ; and if this was through a compact with evil spirits, his art was "black magic." Had Jesus cast out demons through Beelzebub their prince, he would not have been a miracle-worker but a sorcerer, an adept in black magic. He needed to vindicate himself from such a charge. We find, then, three distinguishing characteristics in magic: first, the human practitioner makes out by use of mystic forms of words, by drawing geometrical figures, by burning aromatics, or even through mechanical contrivances, actually to compel and control occult forces, natural or supernatural ; secondly, the superhuman agent may be a minor divinity, a false god, but is always less than Deity, for magic never pretended to power over the Most High ; thirdly, the result is characteristic of the actors. If these are good men, good genii, their work is good, in an earthly way, but it is without moral or spiritual significance beyond an occasional trial of strength with evil magicians and their familiars.

How then will imagination deal with the pretense of magic? It cannot be denied that in past times imagination accepted the magician. That a few persons are able to control natural agencies of which the many have no knowledge seemed likely enough then, and to-day is as certain as it ever seemed. But in old times the mystery with which the adept in applied science chose to veil his doings, operated, as was sometimes intended, to persuade the vulgar that he was in league with superhuman powers; whereas, the spirit of modern science tolerates no airs of mystery, turns as much light as possible on dark places, explains to all the world whatever can be explained, and almost pledges itself to find an explanation for the inexplicable. And so it has come about that in our day magic is imaginable only to the ignorant; and if miracles were really magic, they would be just as incredible. But miracles are contrasted with magic at every point.

Miracles were an affair neither of science nor of art. No one pretended to understand how

miracles were done, nor to compel their production. If they came, they came only as gifts from their real worker. That worker was always God, either directly or by an angel sent for the purpose. Miracles were characteristic of their source. If they conferred a worldly benefit it was not without moral relations or aims. It was to aid somehow in setting up the kingdom of God among men, perhaps by showing love for his children or enmity to his foes, perhaps by reforming the faith and life of his people or at least by certifying a messenger. A miracle, then, if it took place, was an extraordinary event in the physical sphere, and purported to be wrought by God. It must be cognizable by the senses, and its source must be unequivocally divine. If an event fall short of either requirement, it may perhaps be supernatural, may be magical, but should not be called a miracle, and cannot do a miracle's office.

Summarily, magic is by man's art ; miracle is a gift to men. Magic is by superhuman agents subject to the magician's will ; miracle is by God

alone, and at his will alone. Magic is wrought through spells; miracle is granted to prayer. Magic is of earthly meaning; miracle is of spiritual meaning. Whether miracles are imaginable will be considered a little further on. It will be well to make another distinction clear before asking just what burden miracles would throw upon imagination.

3. Faith is not Hope

In overlooking this distinction another also is often overlooked, and imagination is made a source of perplexity and distress. Good Christian people sometimes say that if they had faith enough they too could work miracles, at least could secure some supernatural answer to prayer for physical benefits. They ask for sound health, and then blame themselves for the continued ill health of themselves or their dear friends. They think it is because they "have not had faith to believe" that healing would surely be granted to their prayers. Here are two unfortunate mistakes. The first

is that they do not distinguish faith from hope. Faith is trust, hope is expectation. Faith may not only be unaccompanied by hope, but is sometimes strongest when hope is absent. One may exercise the largest trust Godward when he has the smallest expectation of that which he asks from God. It requires a peculiarly deep trust to leave our most eager desires at the disposal of any person to whose help we appeal. But this is precisely the faith which Jesus displayed at the crisis in Gethsemane. He asked that the cup might pass from him, but did not in the least look for it to pass. He had eagerly awaited that hour. He knew that he must drain the cup, although it cost him an agony to think of doing it. And he knew that his Father heard him, but he also knew that he must finish the work which the Father had sent him to do. Did any one ever fancy that our Lord's faith was weak because his prayer was hopeless? And did he ever show trust so complete as when he said, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done"?

I have not overlooked that hope naturally waits on faith, so naturally that the apostle of faith could for once say, "By hope were we saved"; and our Lord also, in an instance to be presently referred to again, declared as reported by Mark, "Whoever says to this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says comes to pass; he shall have it." And yet faith, not hope, is the New Testament's condition of being saved, — whatever it is to be saved. And as to miracles, although, while the period for them lasted, to ask for them in faith was all one with asking for them in hope, after this period miracles could be hoped for only as a result of imagining that there is need for them in one's own day. But such an imagination must be formed, if at all, in view of all the facts.

When therefore one who really trusts in God accuses himself of praying amiss because he seems to pray fruitlessly, most likely his error does not end with confounding faith and hope,

but even extends to regarding the answer to prayer as a sort of magic, and prayer itself as a species of incantation. Just such was the mistake of the disciples who besought the Lord to increase their faith; and just the necessary corrective was administered when Jesus replied that, if they had faith as a grain of mustard seed, they might say to this sycamore tree, or as he had it on another occasion, to this mountain, Be plucked up and removed, and it would be done. What greater disproportion than between mustard seed and mountain? What greater than between faith and a miracle? The receptivity of faith is immense, its efficiency here is nothing. When it comes to constraining superior beings, miracle and magic are utterly unlike. Let not good Christians torment themselves about the inefficiency of their prayers, if indeed they trust in God; and let not skeptics disparage miracles as though they were by art and man's device. They are works of God, recognizably his, if they occur at all, and are wrought for ends justified to his wis-

dom. One who would work wonders to please a Herod would be a conjurer, not the Christ, and his work one of magic, not a miracle. To imagine otherwise is to attempt a wholly incoherent picture which a sufficiently vivid imagination would reject.

4. Imagination's Way with Miracles and Magic

Thus, understood miracles should not be called impossible nor incredible. To religious imagination they present no difficulty whatever. If it is possible to imagine a personal God, it is just as possible to imagine that he can work miracles. When we look about an ordinary room we see no object wrought by nature, except perhaps a man's face and hands, a pot of flowers, with a glimpse of tree or patch of sky out of doors. Everything else in sight is artificial. Our food is artificial, at least brought by art from afar. We do not dwell where Kingsley humorously fancied that some did, in the land of the Do-as-you-likes, where they lie

under the flapdoodle trees, and let the ripe flapdoodle fall into their mouths. Man does no end of things which nature cannot do; cannot God do as much? A miracle is a divine artifice; can the artifice of man compass nearly everything that concerns us, but God achieve nothing artificial for either us or himself? Surely, an empty question to the imagination which begins with imagining that there is a personal God.

Whether miracles ever took place is a question of fact; and yet, if this question of fact is made a question of imagination, we try in vain to picture the beginning of life, sentience, or rationality, without an intervention of God. Chemistry is producing by synthesis many a substance hitherto known as organic because in nature it is a product of life. Imagine, then, the artificial production of every compound in living bodies; and imagine these compounds united as life unites them; that is, imagine with scientific seriousness the success, in some rudimentary form, of the experiment which

Mrs. Shelley's weird fancy ascribed in elaborate form to Frankenstein; and when the artificial organism is ready for life, it is ready also to decay. It is in precisely the condition of organisms from which life has departed. Is it any easier for a scientific mind to imagine life coming into a compound artificially prepared by synthesis, than coming back to a naturally prepared organic compound after life has once left it? And what difference if the organic compound were not artificial, but a natural happening in advance of life? Certainly, if contravention of all experience lays a burden on imagination, just such a burden is laid by those who ask us to believe in spontaneous origination of life. And to this bulky burden must be added a detail, the happening of that organic compound. Nature never produces any such except through the process called life; and then only by the action of chlorophyl, the singular substance which makes the leaves green, the one substance which can manufacture organic matter out of inorganic. In face of such diffi-

culties, which do not leave out of account anything that God is now doing in nature, — in face of such difficulties it is fair to say that neither nature nor nature's God gives any sign of now doing anything which makes the origination of life long ago imaginable, unless God then did something more than he is doing all the while. Some special act of God is immeasurably easier to imagine than the entire absence of any special act of God throughout the entire history of the universe ; but such a special act would be a miracle.

In this day both of queer "psychic phenomena" and of physical science we have rare opportunity to test the relative imaginability of miracle and of occurrences essentially magical, if they take place at all. Now, it should not be denied that there are startling facts which fall into certain general classes ; and these facts are so indisputable as to make it likely that there are other not yet verified facts of the same classes. There is no human being who does not experience when he is drowsy the

power of matter over mind; while, on the other hand, the useful or hurtful influence of mind upon body is a subject of grave concern to physicians, and constitutes the type of a class of facts wide enough, in the opinion of some cautious thinkers, to embrace all the singular phenomena called psychic. These alleged phenomena are too notorious to need illustration. A third approximately settled fact is that mind is susceptible to impressions from another mind at a distance without the use of any known or perhaps even imaginable physical means of communication. Apparently a large majority of persons have had frequent experience of telepathy in one of its simpler forms: one obeys a sudden impulse to turn his head and eyes, always to find some one intently gazing at him. The impulse in all cases is so sudden and inexplicable, so utterly unconnected with any physical signal that one is being watched, or with any association of ideas which could induce him to turn abruptly, that it would seem sheer credulity to refer the experience to anything

short of telepathy. For those who have had such an experience innumerable times, and have studied it as carefully as its singularity and suddenness permit, it is easy to imagine that telepathy accounts for all, or nearly all, the strange things in heaven and earth that have no other place in their philosophy.

Of the few things, if any, which cannot be thus accounted for, the least astounding, and perhaps best attested, is that a "medium" sometimes reveals matters not known to anyone present, fully known only to the dead, and afterward proved to be matters of fact. Now it is easily imaginable that the spirits of our beloved dead consciously exist, and that they may like to send back some word to us. It is by no means incredible that some who walk the earth are more facile media of communicating with the world of spirits than are the bereaved themselves. But when the alleged "mediums" make a trade of their gift, exhibit it for shekels to a gaping public, exercise it only with curtains drawn, gas turned low, or such other accessories

as jugglers need, especially when they make the departed spirits talk twaddle wearisome to hear, the like of which these never inflicted while they had voice or pen of their own, then it is not easy to imagine that the "phenomena" are more than cruel deceptions. Or, if it must be suspected that the mediums are "possessed" by spirits not their own, these would seem to be foolish and wicked spirits, and the mediums meddlers with the dark and forbidden art of necromancy, which pretended to disturb the dead. This modern magic, like the ancient, has a heavy task if it is to overcome the repugnance at once intellectual, moral and æsthetic aroused by performances that benumb imagination with horror, or make it sick with disgust.

Now, contrast these pretensions with the miracles which the Bible records, in particular with those of the New Testament, for the New Testament begins the present age and belongs to it. They were not done in a corner, if done at all. They were wrought in the light of the sun. They were identifiably God's gifts to

men, gifts worthy of their Source, suitable attendants on Heaven's costliest gift, the all-inclusive miracle, Christ himself. The right-minded would prefer to believe in them, and in him. In other words, it is imaginable that there is a personal God; that he can work miracles; that he has wrought them; that they are an integral part of the most alluring vision of his nature ever afforded to mankind. To which it may be added that this vision is not only consonant with the highest religious thought, but is regarded by careful students of religion as itself the source of that thought, and thus of the purest and most ennobling influences which have ever blessed our race. The imaginability of miracles, thus understood, is so complete, that for those who think according to Christ, to avoid imagining them has ever required greater adroitness than plain Christian folk can command.

But we are thus brought face to face with another class of problems.

V

PROBLEMS AS TO THE FATHER

1. Will He Let His Children Perish?

Any other test of the divine fatherhood than its imaginability might require elaborate painstaking. Of books on this theme the genealogy is endless. But while it belongs to the highest range of religious thought, that fact has its advantages to thinking. Spiritual vision is clear in this upper air. The religious imagination will be found more at home with the truths involved in the fatherhood of God than with any thus far considered. This is only to say that the better we know God, the easier it is to know still more about him.

God is the Father, and the good man is the child. Whatever warrant is in the Bible or out of it for calling God the Father of all men, whatever fatherlike compassion he may feel

for wicked men, and whatever more than father-love he may show in giving his Son to deliver them from sin, it is certain that a peculiar and near relation exists between God and the good, a relation which all will agree in styling paternal.

Has God made his child immortal? The eye reads only "No." To the eye death seems more triumphant over man than over any other creature. No other triumph so complete, none so appalling. No tree that crumbles in the forest, no fish that rots on the shore, looks so dead as a dead man. So it seems to the eye; how does it strike the imagination? If a man is bad, imagination does not grasp for him the perpetuity of life. The endless existence of the wicked is, I believe, sufficiently evidenced, but the evidence does not appeal to imagination. Wickedness and death seem near akin. The effects of immorality upon the body cannot but appear to imagination as the natural fatality of violating law. Organic laws are the order of life, and violation

of them is a process of destruction. It is because matter is indestructible that its laws cannot be broken; but organic laws can be broken, because organisms can be destroyed. Now, in so exalted a being as man, relations to law have moral quality. This connotes his rank. But such preëminence involves corresponding liabilities. Certainly it must seem so. From a great height the fall is far. Immorality must do a man a hurt which the same acts would not incur were they without moral significance. That is to say, in imagination it must be so. I do not argue the point. No argument is needed. Mental debasement cannot be bodily good. The mind sees and cannot help but see that if violations of physical law mean physical death, violations of moral law have analogous consequences. It is matter of fact that moral degeneracy is the result of moral delinquency; and imagination finds abundant congruity between destruction of moral worth and destruction of that in which moral worth, or worthlessness, inheres. In

other words, spiritual degeneracy cannot suggest to a sound imagination continued exemption from death. A bad process looks toward its own terminus in the dissolution of the seat of the evil. Imagination cannot, therefore, expect for sin any issue but ruin. It may be either a literal or a metaphorical ruin. The words "immortality of the wicked" do not present any coherent fact to the mind's eye. Continuous existence and immortality are far from the same. Immortality is exemption from death; but in the case of the wicked continuous existence can be imagined only as continuous death, or dying. It need not be extinction of being, but a state fit to be called "spiritual death." Such a state imagination readily forecasts for evil men, so readily that they are not infrequently filled with forebodings of it as precisely appropriate to themselves. However we interpret the words, "The wages of sin is death," no utterance is more compact with truth. It is so vividly true that the mind is entirely occupied with the picture which it

presents, and finds in it no flaw, no unreality. Imagination persists in the picture notwithstanding the horror of it. Custom may stale but age does not destroy it. Sin ought to die.

On the other hand, righteousness and life are close akin. Observance of law is the complete fulfillment of life's proper ends. It is itself the vital process. And the representation of Christianity that life is the reward of righteousness lends itself as completely to the imagining power of the mind as does the expression concerning death which was just now considered. Indeed, one of those teachings would hardly be credible if the other were not so. Pagan philosophers went into endless reasoning on the problem of life after death; but it is noteworthy that the New Testament does not give this problem a thought. As, to the wicked, death is more than sheer non-existence, so, to the sound Christian, life is more than mere existence. The Christian imagination never lingers over visions which would satisfy Socrates. On the contrary, it is with a shock of

not altogether pleasing surprise that one reads the mystical tales of our day which attempt to give reality to the life beyond by describing it as an unbroken continuance of the present life without sense of interruption or change. Tales like these can be made to appear true only if the reader is willing for a time to paganize himself. Existence beyond the grave must be imagined as organically connected with our present existence in the body, or it will not be imagined as our own existence; but at the same time the Christian conceptions of death and life are so profoundly spiritual that the "second death" must be conceived as in some sort spiritual, and eternal life as transcendently superior to life on earth. The next world is to be imagined as a world of undisguised and unfolded reality, while this world by comparison is a world of concealment and illusion. This is surely the picture which Christian imagination has ever drawn, or sought to draw. If anyone finds hint of a lower conception in the chief source of Christian thought, the Sacred Scrip-

tures, that hint has escaped the myriads who have studied the Scriptures as the Book of Life. It has taught them to use the largest scale and the richest colors in their picture of the future life. What the Church has found it fit to imagine concerning the better world may be known from her hymns. She has been constantly singing of heaven, from the essentially poetical representations of the Apocalypse to the slow growing, exultant *Te Deum* which the sixth century first heard complete; from Bernard's *De Contemptu Mundi* in the twelfth century, so scornful of this world, so enraptured with "Jerusalem the Golden," to the quiet song of the sixteenth century, "O Mother dear, Jerusalem;" while the last two hundred years have yielded a continued outburst of hymnody which has sought even out of the mouths of babes and sucklings to make the praise of heaven perfect; and the refrain is always

Glories upon glories
Hath our God prepared,
By the souls that love him
One day to be shared.

Both in the Book and in consequence of the Book imagination has been indulged to its utmost. To expect it now to abandon its large, free style for a modern "realistic manner" is to expect that the genius of Christianity will change. For what its genius is can always be seen in its spontaneous imaginings. Anything like the dreary limitations of the present world can never be accepted by the picture-making faculty of Christians as a fit representation of what the love of God has in store for his children. It cannot be a virtual annihilation, by the unconscious retraction into his own substance, of spirits which emanated from that substance; it is not a metempsychosis, a life in other bodies or in the outer conditions of the present; but it is heaven. If the present life were as Buddhists conceive it, a misfortune with submission as its chief virtue, then Nirvana might be the destiny most to be desired. But if life is a manful conflict chiefly with moral evil, its issues should be as active; Nirvana would be a penalty, and holy joy, in a perfected body,

among exalted companions, its only suitable and its only imaginable reward.

One might allow himself for a moment the odd conceit that, if a human life were flawless, completely rounded and sufficient in itself, this finished product would not need to continue beyond the grave. But the best lives are not so fatally complete. No one pretends to absolute perfection on earth. The lives of God's dear children are both too good and too defective to let us imagine him content that they should end as they are. So it seems and must seem to the imagination which imagines God as Father. How imagine him content to let his children perish? The only problem is, can we imagine that there is a good God? If we do, we must also imagine the eternal life of holy souls.

To this must be added that the resurrection of the body, which has always appeared and still appears to philosophers fantastic, just as powerfully appeals to ordinary imaginations for acceptance. Every theory of the resurrection

leaks like a sieve; but it is a resurrection which makes life beyond the grave imaginable. So entire possession of Christian imagination has been secured by this belief that without it to Paul nothing would be left of Christianity, and to modern Christians no charm would remain in the future life. No one wants to be a ghost, but perhaps all Christian folk would be glad to be clothed upon at once with their house which is from heaven. The reality of resurrection is to imagination the reality of life. The disembodied state is, and seems to be, death.

2. Will He Speak?

But will the Father speak to his children? To imagination this is certain. A Father voluntarily dumb would be demented. How can we imagine the all-wise Father forever silent? Ideas so incongruous were never successfully coupled in imagination, and never will be. The Christian faith in the Bible is not due to arguments. Few Christians know any arguments for the

Bible. Faith in it is the work of imagination fortified by experience.

How this matter presents itself to imagination may be illustrated by fancying a case some features of which have repeatedly occurred. A certain father has to leave his children for many years while they are too young to recollect him. He is rich and he is wise. He makes every provision that forethought and wealth can assure. They have a suitable house, all equipment for health and comfort, servants in plenty, and teachers both learned and apt. He leaves with them everything save a word from himself. They may be taught everything except something about him. They must guess at what he is from what he has done. It is unimaginable. They may ask all the questions about him that they please, but no information is ever to be given them from those that know the father well. They infer enough to long to know more ; but they must not be told. They may yearn after him, may try, as children do, to send their love to him ;

yet no assurance is ever to be accorded that their message goes, least of all may any message be brought back. It is beyond imagination. Trouble comes, the worst trouble. The servants grow faithless, the teachers betray their trust. The children are stripped of their goods, taught lies, trained in vice. They know only that they are distressed and degraded. They cry out for their father. They want to know what he would have them do, what be, and they beg for his help. He knows all about it; but he closes his ears, will not utter a word of instruction, of help, of hope. Such a thing cannot be dreamed of in the maddest dream. There never was such a father. There could not be. He would not be human; he would be a beast. Oh! who can imagine that God will never speak? He hears our cry, he sees our whole estate. Who can imagine that he turns away his face, closes his ears, and seals his lips? And who can prefer to imagine that he will not speak? He will send a message. He will find a way to send it. To

a healthful imagination there is no problem at all. Revelation, illumination, inspiration, what you will, are a certainty; their lack alone is beyond belief. Even when we think of earthly fathers who are not utterly vicious, we can understand the challenge once addressed to our imaginations: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

If imaginability makes it sure that messages have been received from heaven, it will certainly be asked why imagination may not settle it that such messages are coming to-day. It must be admitted that, when Jesus promised revelations by the Holy Spirit, he set no date for them to cease. But it is also true that when he promised miracles, no period was fixed beyond which they would no longer be performed. So far as the assurances of the New Testament are involved it would be enough to say that both miracles and revelations of new truth are still possible. If then one believes that he has received a fresh

revelation, let him tell it; or if he thinks miracles are still performed, let him show some to us. We will believe in both when there is evidence enough. But such a reply would be quite too obviously an attempt to evade the point made against the trustworthiness of imagination as to issues of fact: namely, that an appeal to imagination proves too much, if it proves anything. The issue is, are not both miracles and revelations as imaginable now as ever they were?

The perspicacity of imagination is quite adequate to meet such a test. There is now no imaginable need of miracles; there is every imaginable objection to them. The moment we imagine the state to which society would be brought if the great works ascribed to Christ were repeated in our day, with the publicity which he faced, and which alone would make them an appeal to the day, we must be satisfied that the sensation which would be caused, the running to and fro of reporters, the telegraphing, the scientific inquisition, the distraction of inter-

est from the spiritual objects of religion to such earthly interests at best as miracles might provide for, — these all would reduce Christianity to a gazing-stock and be its undoing as a power for righteousness. The Master himself over and again tried to avoid the consequences of public wonderment. It is imaginable, it is certain, that, however indispensable in their time as an attestation to Christ, miracles ceased none too soon, and if repeated to-day, would be the sorest hurt that Christianity could receive.

As to revelations of new truth in our day, a steady appeal to imagination is all which imagination requires in support of her verdict. Is the situation one which in a single particular imaginably calls for new revelations? Picture the situation, and question it closely. Are not the "oracles of God" ample enough for all instruction that men veritably require in either morals or faith? Could the most elaborate code of casuistry relieve conscience of all need to answer questions? And if a code were voluminous enough to cover all cases, would it

not be far too voluminous to use? Is not morality provided by the Sermon on the Mount with foundations deep and wide enough, and equipped with tests searching enough, to meet all requirements of practical ethics? Or are there outstanding problems in Christian doctrine which ought not to be longer left to theology for a doubtful solution? Is any doctrine about spiritual things missing which could help us, upon the whole, to make more sure of spiritual good? Was the Bible ever meant for a textbook in speculative, or even philosophical, divinity? Would it be better had it taught doctrine not only when such teaching had a practical aim, as it did, but when it might have stated an authorized theory, as it never did? Is there any spiritual interest which would be promoted by an answer from heaven to any of the open questions of this age, or to those which kept inquiring minds busy in former ages? For my own part — and I think the opinion is supported by the explicit and unvarying testimony of church history — imagination can discern no net

advantage to any age, past or present, in any addition to the deposit of religious truth which has been committed to the church. Meantime, the Spirit of God is affording deeper insight into the revelations long ago imparted ; and not even imaginably does the church need any further enlightenment than is so supplied. Underderstanding is deepening, discerned relations widening, and knowledge as always heretofore runs as far in advance of obedience as is well for the church or the world.

3. Will He Come?

Thus we reach the highest problem with which imagination ever dared to deal: Will the Father come to his children? Many religions teach that the gods have visited men, but only the Christian religion has ventured to teach that the true God has come and dwelt among us. Jews believed in him, but did not believe this of him, nor do they to this day find it possible to believe. Paul well said that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the

heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Not things in heaven, but one thing on earth; not a prospect for the future, but a reality achieved in the past. The Father came, and they who saw the Son saw the Father. When once this had been made known, no other idea ever so captivated the imagination. The Father has come! The vivid thought of it has taken so sure possession of the human mind that it can never be dislodged. Not a few of those who feel compelled formally to forego this faith, are imagining something like it, and the new thing is to make an imagination of the fact serve every purpose of the fact, — and no questions asked. Never was the power of religious imagination so supreme, so sufficing in every interest of Christian truth, as the Ritschlian "judgment of worth" now shows it to be. Thus may be understood the invincibility of belief in a doctrine which has revolted many earnest thinkers. To reason, it is the reproach of popular Christianity; but it is the chief recommendation of

Christianity to the popular imagination. This explains another remarkable fact in the history of Christian beliefs.

For with the exaltation of Christ imagination has presently exalted the worth of all he did and bore. It has proved impracticable to exalt him and depreciate either his sufferings or his work, to put disparity between what he was and what he did, or between what he is and does. The history of Christianity as a life enforces the lesson of it as a system of thought; namely, that it is most vigorous when Christ is most exalted, because then the imagination is most thoroughly enlisted. On the other hand, all the compassionate concessions to the skepticism of others or of oneself, that is, all the concessions to the weak imagination of ourselves or others, instead of winning faith to this lesser Christ, make it a matter of indifference what is thought about him. But from this evident and felt bathos of Christian thought imagination is presently found to be drawing Christians up as from a conscious irrationality and disloyalty.

Jesus said that, if he were lifted up, he would draw all men unto him : to be lifted on the cross was to be lifted in human esteem. But it has also been true heretofore in all Christian ages that to raise Christ himself in man's esteem is to raise his cross in man's esteem. Will imagination lead to a contrary issue in our age?

On this subject the most telling of all appeals to imagination was made by our Lord himself in his majestic portrayal of the final test: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." When was anything else so intelligible ever said as to how Christ can stand in our place before God, as his appeal to us to imagine him standing before ourselves in the lowest Christian's place? If we respond to his appeal, if we have learned how to visit the least of his brethren in sickness, in prison, to feed him, to bear with him, to love him utterly and to the end; and if all the while we make it seem Christ whom we feed and clothe, receive and visit and bear with; if we can do this,

and if we do it, then are we able to imagine how God does the like for us. To the heart, if not to the head, the atonement is a solved problem. Discharging such service in such a spirit we no more incline to doubt or to make little of hiding in Christ before the Father's face, than we incline to make little or to doubt of losing in Christ the least of his brethren. Even although such an experience has been altogether untried by us, we can at least call up the image of the most unlovely Christian we know; we can imagine ourselves dealing with him without any thought of his demerit, only of Christ's merit; and when we imagine ourselves doing for him what we would leap for joy to do for our Lord, then our souls melt within us at the thought that in this very way the merits of Christ may answer for our demerit when we sinners take refuge in him. On the strong wing of this bold imagination, lent us by our Lord, we can rise high enough to look into the Father's own heart, and understand how glad he is to do it unto us as though

he were doing it unto his Son. It is a permitted stretch of faith, of the faith which is a religious use of imagination, of the faith concerning which it was written, "By faith," that is, by imagination, "we understand;" *πίστει νοοῦμεν.*

PART SECOND

SERVICE OF IMAGINATION TO RELIGIOUS LIFE

Διὰ πίστεως περιπατοῦμεν.

Paul.

I

EXPOSITORY

1. Walking by Imagination

Paul said "We walk by faith, not by sight": he meant we walk by imagination, not by sight. When we walk by sight we know our way by objects which the eye sees; when we walk by faith we order our lives by objects which the mind sees. It is not commonly noticed that Paul accords such a place to imagination; but that he does is clear from whatever else he was saying to the Corinthians in this part of his second epistle to them. At the end of the previous chapter, the fourth, Paul became unusually exultant even for him. All things, he said, are for our sake. Afflictions work for us an eternal glory of such weight as makes their own duration seem momentary and their pressure light. But this is only while "we look

not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen." It is a matter of imagining. Whereupon in opening the fifth chapter he tells us what are those unseen things of interest so surpassing. They are the "house not made with hands" and the companionship of the Lord. We keep the mind's eye upon that house and upon him. We are so filled with the vision that we would be pleased, said Paul, to be "absent from the body and present with the Lord." Such a vision gives us solemn thoughts too. While the Lord is so plainly seen we seek to please him as though we were where he is. It is really much the same, for at the last all that we are doing will come to light in his presence. It awes us. We are concerned for others also, quite in fear for them. And so, continues Paul, we seek to persuade them to look at what we see, and to walk by that vision as we walk.

Thus Paul lives and thus teaches. From first to last he speaks as the man whose eyes are open, who sees constantly what Stephen said

that he also saw, "the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." It is not the only instance in which the high souled apostle explains the best in him by his use of imagination. In the intimacy of the letter to his dear Philippians he disclaims indeed being a complete and perfect character. Rather he turns his back on every attainment already made, and reaches forth unto the things before, a runner with his eyes upon the goal. It is largely this picture-forming habit of mind which made Paul what he was and enabled him to do with us what he beyond all other men has made out to do.

2. A Definition Defined

The epistle to the Hebrews is Pauline in many respects; but in none does its unknown writer show a more Paul-like penetration than in the great chapter on faith and its heroes. He defines faith in terms which have perplexed many a reader who looked to it for some recognition of trust as the very essence of faith. But

the writer does not define faith as trust, nor does he illustrate it as especially trust; he defines it as that which is the condition of trust, namely, a lively sight of unseen realities; and he illustrates it as such. What is "assurance of things hoped for" except a vision of them as sure as though they were already in possession? And what is "conviction of things not seen" except a mental seeing which is as convincing as a bodily seeing? And so, according to this epistle, faith is imagination of things hoped for, imagination of things not seen. Let all who please follow the trooping illustrations of the chapter from the vision of creation to Noah's prevision of the flood, from Abraham's departure for a land which lay he knew not where, to the endurance of Moses "as seeing him who is invisible"; and when time fails for calling the roll of heroes, read the summary of the trials they bore, and the manifold fidelity they showed, up to its culmination in the "author and finisher of our faith," to whom we are to look away as he himself looked to "the joy set before him."

That is, if imagination served them, and served Jesus so well, let us in turn imagine Jesus; this is the point of it all.

The biblical teaching is that the faith which sees, the religious use of imagination, is necessary to the best religious life. Does not the experience of every Christian illustrate this fact? Who does not recollect some earliest occasion when he saw the Lord, and how it made Christ to him as one for the first time heard of? Who has not since then often enjoyed moments of especial clarity when trite doctrines became shining truths? The confession of every man who has turned from worldly, to spiritual, mindedness is that once he had no "realizing sense" of spiritual things, and that, when the plain vision of them began, then began their ascendency over him. As with one man so with a generation. The doctrine of justification by faith was not Luther's discovery. He himself had been told of it, but told in vain, until at length imagination laid hold of the reality. Thereafter so did it glow

that he lit up Europe with it. It was not indeed a new truth, but a disregarded truth; only, when people began to imagine it, the disregarded truth had the effect on that generation of a message written across the sky. Such is the uniform story of Christian living, when we can search it to the bottom. If doctrines are imagined, they are lived; if unimagined, they are dead. It remains to illustrate this thesis as regards the three essentials of Christian living.

In showing how imagination is a test of truth, I took the precaution at the outset to say that imagination by its lively picturing merely prepares the case for the understanding to pass upon; and I asked leave to speak of imagination as judge, solely for the sake of point and brevity. No such precaution is needed in unfolding the relation of imagination to life. Here no mere figure of speech is resorted to. In the directest way imagination provides for the best living.

This is so evident on the mere assertion of it

that, although the fact is not at all familiar, it will not be necessary to mention imagination once in every dozen lines. What we are to be busied with is not *how* imagination helps, but *how much* she helps. We need no proof, we need illustration, of what she can do. If it were to be a matter of argument, iteration and reiteration might be required, as in the First Part; but since it is a matter of illustration only, no one, I am sure, will need constant reminder that it is imagination which puts us in possession of the bountiful fields which we are about to survey.

II

IMAGINATION SEES IDEALS

1. Christ Offers Ideals to Imagination

The least sentimental of men are ruled by ideals. These may be ideals of something to be worked out to-day, or of rest, it may be of amusement, at the day's end. They may be ideals of self-indulgence or of self-denial; of ends no further off than self-indulgence usually is, or as remote as the aims of self-denial must commonly seem. But all rational beings live, if possible, with some object in mind, and imagination holds this object up to view until another ideal object takes its place. Otherwise existence would be made intolerable with ennui. For the most part life is calculated. Utterly unpremeditated action is rare. The premeditation may indeed be brief, but at its briefest

is sometimes long enough to commit a man's entire life to virtue, or to get him hanged.

Good or bad, every man is like his ideals. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." People can hardly be better than a good ideal, and are not often worse than a bad one. We live for ideals, and are like what we care enough for to live for. It is hardly worth saying, certainly not worth saying here at greater length. What is imagination's part in all this?

Obviously enough it belongs to imagination to picture the ends that shape us. But the real dominance of imagination begins to appear when we note how imagination goes about its practical offices. It is by embodying ideals. A *person* must stand for our ideals. No abstraction can be master of a man. But imagination enjoys this enormous advantage, that the most persuasive embodiment of ideals is far and away the easiest to form; to wit, one's idealized self. No one who cares to be pure dare imagine himself as indulging in vice; and none can find a more stirring incentive to virtue than to

picture himself as great in goodness. Ambition too is kept ablaze by fancying one's own successes, like the Turkish commander in the fiery poem dear to a former generation of schoolboys :

> In dreams through camp and court he bore
> The trophies of a conqueror.

Or if inveterate wrong has become intolerable, it would be hard to guess which would stir the more a dynamic spirit, to imagine oneself bringing society into order, or helpless to do any good. Moral ideals above all others require embodiment, and are therefore most in need of aid from imagination. Reason is competent to pronounce between abstract right and wrong, and calmly gives inexorable judgment between these two. But who will execute judgment between actualities? Who has force enough to see it done? Only one who is inspired by the vision of embodied good, or spurred by the sight of personified wrong.

Now the all-important contribution of Chris-

tianity to this end is that it furnishes an ideal man, an ideal so perfect as to be universal, and universal that all men may identify themselves with him. Christ is the Christian ideal; and so the initial problem for the best living is, Will I imagine Christ? Success in so doing does not turn on knowing what he said, except as a clue to what he was. His precepts cannot take the place of his person. It is all a matter of intimacy with Christ, of taking the pains to imagine him truly and distinctly. His mere presence was ever a touchstone. For him to be among men was to pass judgment. It is inevitable always when men find themselves placed beside a perfect and appreciable pattern. To imagine Christ is to read in him the ideals which are characteristic of Christianity. Some notice of two or three among these will be the most convincing exposition of what imagination can do, at its best, for ennobling life. It will be found that, while possibly every *precept* of Christianity may be duplicated by another religion, Christian *ideals*

are unique. This is certainly because Christ himself is unique.

2. Imagining it Possible to be Strong

One such unique ideal is that moral energy is possible for the morally weak. In the presence of Christ all his disciples felt strong — so strong that Peter could dispute with Christ and say, "Though all men should deny thee, yet will not I." Likewise said all his disciples. All felt strong because he was near. When Peter presently denied Christ, the Master was no longer at hand to his mind. At that moment the Master seemed mastered; and from him, so misunderstood, no strength was to be drawn. But afterward, when the real Christ was ever before the minds of the disciples, their strength did not fail.

There was a race energetic beyond all ancient races, possibly at its best more vigorous than modern races, the old Roman race. Their force carried everything before it. To them other peoples were weaklings, and it could

never seem possible for the weaklings to become strong. How regularly they gave way before the Romans. But it is the practical problem of Christianity to achieve this impracticability. It undertakes to make the weakest the strongest. And it has succeeded so far as to keep alive the ideal of such a possibility. Paul was no weakling. A more forceful man can hardly be named. But he had discovered in Christ an energy so surpassing his own native force that he could state the case only in a paradox: "When I am weak, then am I strong." He meant that he was strengthened against a bodily ailment which made him cower, a buffeting of Satan, and persecutions by evil men. With such odds to face, brave Paul could at first think of nothing but prayer that this thing might pass from him. It was while in this extremity that he was told, "My grace is sufficient for thee." He found it so, and learned to glory in his infirmity, because then the power of Christ rested upon him. This superhuman power has been shared by other

Christians since Paul, and has been proclaimed everywhere until the least that can be said of it is that the idea of its possibility is the common possession of Christendom. But for every one of us it is the ideal of a vigor possible only in the companionship of Jesus. One cannot imagine himself as morally impotent while in this daily companionship. It is not that he then lashes himself into abnormal courage, or spurs himself into the passing frenzy of feebleness. It is only that he sees Christ, and in seeing feels the tonic of his presence. Missing the Lord, he must cry as Paul did, "Who is sufficient for these things?" In imagination finding him, not Paul himself is more confident that he "can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth" him. Now, even if one has to believe that you, stout-hearted reader, are mistaken when you say it for yourself, no one can help admitting that you, or he, in a lively and a steady imagining of Christ, will inevitably gain the ideal, or rather, be held by the ideal, that it is possible for any one to be strong.

3. Imagining it Beautiful to be Good

Another characteristic Christian ideal is that moral excellence has æsthetic value. It is beautiful to be good. An ancient race surpassed all other races in appreciation of beauty. Its taste was infallible, its works were classic. We have gone to school to the Greeks and learned all that our duller sensibility could compass. But Greek refinement never received from temple, statue or poem a distincter impression of beauty than untutored Christians obtain from more or less distinctly imagining the moral character of Christ. None of all who knew him left a credible tradition, certainly none wrote an enduring word, about his stature, form, features, voice or bearing; but they have left the amplest impression concerning his character, and that, too, without describing it. This conviction of a beauty higher than physical has never since been lost. It was peculiarly strong in the centuries when artists thought it irreverent to accord any physical comeli-

ness to Jesus. Bernard sang in the eleventh century, —

> Jesus, the very thought of thee
> With sweetness fills my breast.

Pious souls have not more loved than they have admired the Son of Man.

Now to find in moral excellence the ideal of beauty is an unique habit of mind among Christians. And it is of priceless moral value. It has been quite common enough to exalt admiration of beauty into a religion. Many an artist would subscribe to Rousseau's confession that he always thought the good was only a form of the beautiful. But to resolve all good into the beautiful is quite another thing from finding beauty in goodness, even an opposite thing. "Art for art's sake" can placidly look on while virtue and vice display each its peculiar charm. Indeed, the Greek art seems essentially pagan. It is too self-contained, physically too perfect to suggest that anything spiritual can be finer than itself. An idolatry which makes its gods ugly

makes them hateful; but an idolatry which apotheosizes beauty fails to remind us that there are gods, even while it leads us through their perfect temples and shows us their incomparable images. Nevertheless loveliness is forever charming. It is its own warrant to be, to be admired, and to be longed for. Christianity therefore has done well to satisfy at once the highest æsthetic and the purest moral taste by establishing the conviction that no other beauty compares with that of goodness. This conviction has been sung into familiarity in the words, —

> Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
> Upon the Savior's brow.

It has grown to a commonplace among simple Christians. But such persuasion as they feel that it is beautiful to be good they owe to such picturing of Christ as they practice. The idea may lie on the surface of their minds and find expression in cant phrases; or it may penetrate the depths of their minds and be lodged there as

a ruling conviction, if only Christian folk make, so to say, a personal acquaintance, and in imagination keep company with their Lord.

4. Imagining What Honor is

A third ideal is yet more uniquely and exclusively Christian. It is so intimately and delicately Christian as to be hardly appreciable when announced. This is the ideal that honor is in humility. Elusive and all but incredible as this notion of honor is, while Christ is before the mind's eye any different notion is excluded. His precepts set forth this ideal of honor; much more did his person embody and his life glorify it, — that is, for all who imagine him.

The sentiment of honor had its exemplars in the knights of the middle ages. It was fostered, if not begotten, by the institution of chivalry; and chivalry was a Christian institution. According to the most favorable account of it, every youth of gentle or noble blood, if sound in mind and body, was expected to learn the duties of knighthood in the service of some

notable model. When at length fitted by age and accomplishments, after a vigil of an entire night in church at prayer, the aspirant for knighthood in its best form took on him the knightly vows of honesty, chastity and, above all, of valor in defense of the wronged. Though noble by birth he was bound to risk his life for a peasant woman whom he might find exposed to outrage, and often wandered far in search of wrongs to right. This obligation kept chivalry respectable long after it had lost every other title to respect; and although Cervantes set out to make us laugh, he has made us love his fantastic Don Quixote, who was always so amiably fierce to redress a wrong. An institution like chivalry could not but give rise to peculiar notions of personal dignity. It was the moral dignity of duty. Its honor, according to its best exemplars, was essentially in humility.

So long as it was associated with rank and titles, humility could not well be void of dignity. Nor does Christian humility ever

consist in self-disparagement. True humbleness of mind does not exist apart from self-respect. Indeed, humility is the best safeguard against humiliation. It is the reverse of vanity; is nearer to lofty pride than to meanness of spirit. It does not consist in thinking ill of oneself; *it consists in not thinking of oneself at all.* Not to think of oneself, not to be self-centered! If this is the essence of Christian humility, it is evident enough how the ideal of it may be due to a strong and perspicacious imagining of Christ. It is plain, too, that only the self-respecting can afford to be self-forgetful. But these can take the chances, and their boldness in putting self out of mind is a mark of confidence in their own character and aims. If we ask who of all Americans stands highest in the reverence of his countrymen and even, as we please ourselves with thinking, in the respect of mankind, who of all our people stands so high as to be held in imagination as an ideal by all good citizens, it is of course the Father of his Country.

Surely that austere personage was not wanting in respect for his own character. He compelled deference from all who approached him. Not a few described their sensation while in his presence as one of awe. But if we ask who of all Americans has been most vilified, traduced and denounced, again it is the Father of his Country. And the lies cut him to the quick; the abuse made him rage in secret. But did it make him flinch? Did he ever follow his duty with laggard step? When the issue was between forgetting himself and forgetting his country, he remembered himself only to remember what such a man as he could do and could bear for his country. This made him masterful. It led his countrymen then and since to exalt him almost into a demigod, and even now to resent all attempts in the name of historical truth at their disillusioning. And who has been the most *loved* of Americans? It was the plain man whose fate looked out of his sad eyes, appealing not in vain for the people's trust and

love. But the martyr president was hardly less maligned than Washington. Indeed, if the abuse was less violent, it was more deadly, for it was contemptuous. But for Lincoln also the highest honor was in humility. He did not think ill of himself. We know now how self-controlled and how controlling his spirit was. Yet it became almost an eccentricity with him to put a man who had abused him into office, if the abuser could be made useful there. So far as our copious information goes, he always remembered his country, and if necessary forgot about himself. For this no one else will ever forget him.

In religious history the like characteristic challenges imagination in the case of Paul. His self-assertion at times became almost violent; but it was when to assert himself was to assert his cause. He would make everybody bend to it, as he bent himself to it. If an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel, the angel could not escape Paul's anathema; but the apostle was willing "to

spend and be spent" for the childish, contentious Corinthians, and would love them, although the more he loved the less he was loved. It was this lowliness of mind which built the lofty pedestal on which his image stands. He was great because he was willing to be small. Can we then forget Paul's Master and our Master, or that he called himself "meek and lowly in heart"? Did Jesus lack respect for himself? Does he not startle us with claims such as mankind was never willing to listen to from any other human being, but rejoices to hear from him? Yet he "came not to be ministered unto but to minister". And when he was "found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death. . . . Wherefore also hath God highly exalted him, and given him a name above every other name". There never was such humility, nor ever such honor. And we all understand that his honor was *in* his humility, not merely earned by humility. His own precept to ambitious disciples was that he who would be

greatest among them must be servant of all. It was an astute pope who called himself "the servant of servants." If he could contrive to serve all servants, nothing could prevent his being lord of all lords. To the imagination of the great Gregory the ideal was the real.

As regards this particular ideal the most convincing illustration, as in so many other cases, is to be found in one's own experience. Let the reader ask himself when in all his life he was most respectable in his own eyes. It was surely in the hour when he cared enough for some worthy object to be devoted to it at no small cost to himself. And he now honors what he was in that hour as highly as one can sanely honor himself, providing that his object was worthy that for its sake he should smother all sense of injury and affront, despise even shame, and devote himself absolutely to it. One who never did this or something like it, has not yet found out whether he is thoroughly respectable or not; for to leave it in doubt whether one is capable of devoting

himself unselfishly to a good cause, is to keep it doubtful whether he is fit to be trusted by others or by himself. This appeal to the reader's self-judgment has been made without any doubt of its issue. But however whole-hearted the reader's recognition of humility's honor, it is quite as certain that such an ideal is unusual. The reason is clear: imagination is more busy with self-aggrandizement than with self-denial.

Yet it is the fitting and grotesque penalty of abnormal self-recollection that, just when a man's imagination is busy with his own importance, he seems to others most absurd. The more conspicuous his position the more undignified his feeling appears. Our political and military annals furnish enough painful instances of publicly displayed chagrin toward which public opinion has been little better than pitiful, and has often proved pitiless. In the case of Christian ministers nothing short of vice is so unworthy of their high calling as sensitiveness which cannot bear a slight, and will sacrifice everything except itself. The

disciple has forgotten to be as his Master, and even to imagine what his Master was. Such absence of humility is a defect in his ideal of honor.

It is distinctly a lapse from professional honor; for the distinction of the learned professions is that one who can profess especial learning gives himself to the personal service of his fellow-men. Such service at its best on the part of a physician, lawyer, clergyman or teacher, is as distinctly personal as that of the boy who blacks your shoes. Its dignity is, in part, that only the learned can render the service; in part, that the service is so important; but chiefly that it is a service of man to man. A profession is not a trade. Its end is to confer, not to receive, a benefit. Its honor is in its humility. That professional services earn an honorarium and that trade is an advantage to a buyer, that professional men are often narrow-minded and tradesfolk liberal, is all true, and all apart from the purpose. The trade must convey a benefit or no one would

buy, but its real aim is to sell; the profession must have its emoluments or few could follow it, but its real profits are those of the client, not the practitioner. If a profession offered no pecuniary rewards, still some men would adopt it, as members of the English parliament follow politics without pay; but a trade could hardly survive such conditions, and if it did, would become in all eyes a philanthropy, not a trade. Since the service rendered by a profession is so distinctly personal, the client is a dependent on his professional advisers; but since trade aims to make a profit, the buyer is the patron of the seller, and the seller calls him so. Such is the professional ideal when imagination is clear-eyed and busied with the ideal.

All this is now well enough understood to make it seem a violation of professional honor in a minister of the gospel to be controlled by pecuniary considerations. The same motives would bring the same dishonor upon the lawyer, doctor, teacher or politician, if his calling

were recognized as equally honorable with the minister's; and in the proportion that it falls short of requiring disinterestedness, in that proportion it lacks professional dignity, and sacrifices it to the mercenariness legitimate in a trade. Indeed, it is universally felt to be an indignity to a profession for a professional man to give prominence to his pecuniary claims. Politics in particular, which alleges patriotism as its motive, is especially under reproach when the profession of politics is allowed to become a trade. Every one then relishes the denunciation which Samuel Johnson flung against a certain active demagogue called "the patriot," when he defined patriotism as the "last refuge of a scoundrel". In other words, it is essentially hypocritical to set up as a professional man while ruled by motives suitable to other callings. At the same time men of all trades or of none are bound to serve their fellows, and all life is dignified or degraded by attention or inattention to this duty.

That this is the ideal, and that imagination

ought studiously to foster this ideal, finds singular illustration in the excesses to which the sentiment of honor has led. The most farcical and shocking of these is the duello. When resorted to out of anger it is no more worthy of notice than the quarrels of boys or barbarians, except as more deliberate and destructive; but when it is expected to wipe away an infamous charge, the duel is a recognized survival of trial by battle. At this point the requirement of chivalric honor that a knight should expose himself to every peril in a good cause, was indispensable to carrying through this appeal, and is still the only support of an institution so murderous and absurd as "the code." Submission to the code marks the lengths to which self-abnegation can go toward self-assertion. It is Christian humility become diabolical pride; and humility, as we noticed at the outset, is akin to abnormal self-respect or pride.

What cure, then, is there for this well-named "relic of barbarism"? The imagination which fostered it has alone proved able to uproot it.

When imagination is turned to those objects which alone the duellist allows to occupy his mind, it fixes his determination to fight. But when imagination extends its view to the outcome of the appeal, it makes the appeal impossible except to the sottish devotee of class ideas. Fancy the people present when the duel renders its irreversible verdict. See the misery to many lives, the ruin of one life. Keep in view a little while the fact that, whether the victim of insult kills or is killed, the charge against him stands exactly as it did, and soon the intolerable folly of the duel begins to be widely felt. Argument never hit it hard enough. The sorrow it caused, the shame it often published, never sufficiently discredited it. But at length in our clear-seeing and, as we say, unimaginative age the popular imagination began fairly to take in the facts from which it had steadily looked away ; and then the doom of the duello was sealed. To fight a duel now is to be ridiculous, not honorable. If it still prevails anywhere, it is with persons too thick-witted,

for all their pretensions, to see how absurd a figure they cut in the new century's imagination.

I have dwelt at length upon the peculiarities of the Christian ideal of honor as illustrative of imagination's service to life. Here, I am sure, is a field for imagination indisputably hers, and indisputably neglected. For, see: if humility is honor, who can maintain even the ideal? Only he that diligently imagines Christ. The picture must quite *fill imagination*, or it is quite futile. Christ's humility was animated by love; but unless love is felt to be more than a sentiment, felt to be a mark of extraordinary elevation and force of character, it is discredited as fantastic and unmanly, a weakness not a mightiness, and is looked down upon as far less sagacious than self-seeking. How unlearn all this? Christly love and Christly humility must be either grandly imagined, or completely falsified. Only the noble understand *noblesse oblige*. Who then will adequately imagine Christ? Who rise to the pitch of imagining himself to be honorable because humble?

The question recurs as to each of the ideals claimed for Christianity. If any weakling thinks he cannot be strong, is he imagining Christ? If, in a Christian land, anyone is too imbruted to see beauty in goodness, does he imagine Christ? If an artist finds the same charm in voluptuousness as in chastity, has he ever imagined Christ? If, finally, humility seem base and self-recollection noble, have we so learned Christ? To him who concedes that the Christian ideals must be true, but has no "realizing sense" of their authority, there is but one thing worth saying, "Will you imagine Christ?"

III

IMAGINATION BREEDS ENERGY

1. The Passive and the Active in Christianity

Christian ideals impel to action. The genius of Christianity is active. If with Epicureans and Buddhists we believed that the divine Being finds his happiness in impassivity, then imagination would hold up to us placidity or even unconsciousness as the ideal felicity; and in reaction from such an ideal would inevitably spring, as it once sprang, the desperate maxim, "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die." But to imagine Christ is inspiring. A longing to do arises, earnestness takes fire, and energy becomes the note of Christian living.

How wide of the mark is the fling that the Christian virtues are all passive. Such a re-

proach is utterly foreign to the genius of our faith. If the world were but a cruel machine, and mankind its victim, then the only god we could feel sure of would be some Prince Gautama enlightened enough to submit; patience matured into indifference would be the ideal virtue, and a dreamless Nigban, as the Burmans believe, its complete reward. But to Christianity the world stands in imagination the handiwork of a holy, wise and loving Creator; sin is the chief of all evils and source of most evils; warfare against sin is a stern, unrelaxing duty; love is the animating virtue; a holy, unhampered, glad activity the highest heaven. The genius of a religion could not be more passive than that of Buddhism, nor more active than that of Christianity. And futile the Ritschilian attempt to blend them. But, inasmuch as against all odds of fact the character of a good many Christian precepts is made the basis of a denial that Christianity is characteristically energetic, it falls to us to inquire whether a Christian who happens to be energetic has

actually risen superior to the depressing influence of the Christian precepts.

It is true that the precepts of the Bible are largely negative, but the religion of the Bible, not to say of the New Testament alone, has never been negative. Although partly negative in form, it is not so in essence; nor is the requirement of abounding energy relaxed or obscured by the negative form of any among its precepts, for such as attempt to keep its precepts. A little attention to the real nature of the case will make this plain. A sin is no negation. It comes from active preference of one's own way to God's way. Naturally the commandments against sin for the most part go straight to their end by prohibiting the evil rather than by requiring the opposite good. In the Decalogue every commandment which prescribed relations to God ran, "Thou shalt not," except only the law of the Sabbath; and even this law, while positive in its initial word, was negative in all its specifications. In like manner, of "the second table," which dealt with

relations among men, only the injunction to honor parents was positive in either form or content. And yet it would be historically a reckless suggestion that the religion of Israel was merely negative. Whatever the form of its chief code, and however preternatural the submission which that unhappy race has had to learn, all the world knows the Hebrew people and religion are assertive and energetic to the pitch of being intolerant and often intolerable. Besides this, it must not be forgotten how positively Deuteronomy sums up the Godward duties, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might;" while Leviticus sets forth all manward duty in the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Love is active enough, and love is the fulfilling of all law.

The beatitudes of Jesus declare the happiness of those who possess certain virtues, virtues, to be sure, nearly all passive or negative. But what at once follows? "Ye are the salt of the earth;" "Ye are the light of the world." Are

these passive, or meant to intimate passivity, — salt and light? Or are they intended to suggest a penetrating, widely diffused and beneficent activity? This is at least what the company of disciples turned out to be. There are also texts in positive form which bid us do all things heartily, and when we owe service, to obey even men as though we were serving God. But it is enough to ask whether Christ is not the most positive and efficient force that ever moved among men. Is he not the embodied law, and to imagine him — is not this the sharpest spur to activity?

The predominating character of a religion can be known from its tendency. Christians as well as other religionists have the defects of their virtues. Has that exaggerated tendency among Christians ever been toward abnormal stillness and contentment? Has not the haunting liability for Christians been to intense bigotry, to an energy of belief which excludes consideration for other men's beliefs, and with the same vehemence misshapes all

practical relations? Indifference to dissent from her faith and to interference with her aims is never found in the church, except when she loses sight of her Head. The church has ever been ready to take up arms against all enemies. If it were not so, the skeptic would be as placidly neutral toward Christianity as he is toward Buddhism. Except for the energy of its convictions, moral, social and political evils would not find in the church an always organized and fully armed foe, ready at a word to go even beyond her proper sphere and attack any wrong however formidable at any risk however great. If reformers have any right to reproach the church with lying fast asleep when the times call for wakefulness, she sleeps on her arms; and no name can so quickly waken her and fill her with eagerness as the name of him who "gave himself for us . . . . that he might purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous for good works." It is his voice that she waits to hear, and his form to see at the head of her forces. Let her but see her

Lord and be sure of his will, and what is there which she was ever too timid to undertake? So far as conversion of ideals into energy goes, it is all a matter of imagining Christ.

2. Christ Seems Real

There is an especial reason for response of energy to the imagination which holds Christ in view. When romancers attempt to depict an inspiring hero, it is their misfortune to make him seem the less real the worthier he is of imitation. Satan, as has been often remarked, turned out to be the hero of "Paradise Lost." But not only does the good Christian regard the object of his adoring imagination as real, he has an impression of Christ's reality vivid in proportion to his impression of Christ's perfections. It is only by ascribing to our Lord boundless excellence that we have any clear notion about him. So soon as detraction of Christ begins, his form becomes shadowy and the story of his life appears unveracious. But when we begin again to attribute to him the highest

motives and ideal performance, then the story seems true, imagination readily follows his steps, and even reads the secrets of his breast. It is mixture of motives which obscures character; perfect purity makes it like the lucent ether, it conveys and never hinders light. If the New Testament had but furnished a seemingly real personage who embodied all the highest ideals of human nature and was easy to understand, it would have been a service to morals second only to that which has been rendered by the actual appearance of such a being among men. But the character of Christ is in so many ways original as well as ideal, that one of the most impressive arguments for his historicity and his essential divinity was constructed from the New Testament's picture of his sinlessness. [1] The success of this argument, at a time when Hegelianism had undertaken to reduce the image of Christ to a mythical personification of ideals, served to show how impossible it is to imagine Christ as other than real.

[1] Ullmann's "Sinlessness of Jesus."

It is easy to understand that belief in our Lord as real must far more powerfully stimulate our energies than the liveliest portrayal of an ideal Master whom we do not believe ever lived. In fact, imagination could not be persuaded to persist in its picture, unless it were assured that the reality is not to be outdone. To imagine Christ looking upon us while we make our effort to see him, to "realize" that we are actually in his company, and aided by him in some way when we strive to do our duty, to feel sure that we shall see him face to face, and fully know him "even as we are fully known," these are helps which every thoughtful mind can appreciate, they are spurs with which Christianity alone drives energy toward the worthiest goal. It is by no means denied that other religions evoke such energy as to make us look on almost with stupefaction. In our own day the followers of a Mohammedan fanatic in the Soudan have exhibited over and again the daring with which hope of Paradise inspired the immediate adherents of Mohammed himself.

But what Moslem of them all, if there was one who secretly contemned Paradise as a myth, ever flung himself upon the Infidel and willingly died in battle in order to win a place in the happy land of Nowhere? Or what so-called Christian could be brought to sacrifice this world's good that he might lay up treasure in a city which was without foundations, and which was not builded and made by God?

3. The Long Look Ahead

At this point the objection is raised that the imagination of future rewards and penalties, however certain they may be, is essentially selfish, and debasing to virtue. The truly righteous man, it is insisted, does right only for right's sake. The objection is widely current even among Christians who disrelish the campaigning of the old evangelists; but it had its origin with those who rejected Christianity as a faith and desired to lower its credit as a morality.

If things so serious could be diverting, one

might indulge a quiet laugh to find modern skepticism and light-hearted theology so squarely at one with the extremest teachings of that gentle soul and grim theologian, Dr. Samuel Hopkins of Newport, whose memory is kept green by Mrs. Stowe's charming novel, "The Minister's Wooing." This stout old philanthropist and Calvinist insisted that every man should be willing to be damned for the glory of God: the impenitent because they deserve it, the regenerate because "disinterested benevolence" ought to be the law of their lives. But there is a difference. Hopkins made the appalling demand because he believed in hell and heaven, and for one to content himself with whichever God might appoint was the utmost stretch of submission to God and devotion to men; while the modern skeptic and half skeptic insist on men's keeping the next life out of the reckoning, only because they cannot credit this life with so tremendous issues in that life. It seems but justice to believe that, if they accepted the traditional doctrine about these

matters, they would hardly be so preposterous as to urge that to let this brief life be ruled by the interests of an eternal existence is unbecoming selfishness, instead of the highest reasonableness. Why, it will be found that a good proportion of these pleaders for an unselfish forgetting of heaven and hell do themselves explain virtue as at bottom nothing but prudence getting to think of itself as morality. Surely, it must be an especially bitter enmity to old beliefs which makes them so inconsistent as to rate a lively imagination of our future state at all below the topmost prudence and virtue.

Indeed, it is a kindly habit of mind and heart, as general as any other among these thinkers and teachers, to be particularly interested in behalf of those whose poverty is at once a penalty and a source of vice. When they see how the "submerged tenth" are living, who can outdo the eagerness with which they urge upon the reason and the imagination of their wards the duty of thrift and of forethought for "a rainy day?" Does, then, circumspection

lie at the basis of all decency in this life, and become at once degrading selfishness when it looks toward the coming life? In what single particular does vivid imagination of eternity bear the character of selfishness? Is not selfishness an undue self-love? But who is the fantastic moralist that forbids us to love ourselves at all? Is not selfishness a disregard of other men? But in what smallest particular does imagination overlook other men's concerns when it keeps one's own future concerns in view? Did not Paul, at least, say with perfect candor and propriety that "knowing the terrors of the Lord we persuade men?" Or when did any Christian make his own eternal interests secure without promptly showing an eagerness which, so long as he kept eternity in mind, amounted to a passion for assuring these same interests in behalf of his friends and neighbors? It is this extremity of concern for others which so often takes no account of social conventionalities, and drives its well-meaning work with a tactlessness hard to profit by or to bear with;

but these pious souls will still go on undiscouraged, and will continue to show the same energy so long as their imagination is busied with the same overwhelming theme.

It is, then, no unworthy vigor of self-seeking with which imagination inspires him who believes in future states of misery and blessedness. But this is the very least that can be said for the ethical value of a long and a persistent look ahead. Practically the interests of ethics are bound up in our estimate of consequences. It is a law alike of the vulgar mind and the most enlightened to estimate the importance of moral action as we estimate that of physical action; namely, by its results. To the physicist energy is that which "works." The resultant work is the precise measure of the energy. In morals no other measure could be rationally held. Consequences are the standard of conduct. These consequences are within the man and without him. An evil deed makes him more evil, as much more evil as the deed is, and impairs his relations to an equal degree. A good deed

does his character as much good, and proportionately improves all his moral relations. It must be so, it ought to be so, and it is felt to be so. When anyone begins to doubt the gravity of the penalties which his sins incur, he will presently doubt the gravity of the sins; and when the heinousness of sin is lessened in our eyes, the worth of holiness goes down at the same rate. "The knowledge of opposites is one." Goodness is no more than the converse of badness. The goodness is worth no more than the reward it wins, the badness is no worse than the penalty it incurs. Of course this estimate of consequences refers to all sorts of consequences, not those alone which are physical; but neither does it leave out of account any physical results which may suitably follow. To object, then, to the energy of interest which imagination takes in the future life is practically a fantastic mistake which no helper of his fellow men ought to be capable of falling into; while theoretically its inconsiderateness amounts almost to levity.

It cannot however be denied that modern ways of viewing this solemn matter are more spiritual, and so far are worthier, than the ways of even half a century ago. If imagination is to anticipate the physical conditions of the future life, she will not now draw her representations with so confident a touch. The physical good or ill which belongs to the final estate must correspond to the nature of the organism which the soul is hereafter to occupy and employ. He who believes that man is dual and will need a spiritual body for his completeness, if not for consciousness, must expect to find some suitable home for that spiritual body. But how can imagination picture that home without some knowledge of its inhabitant, the spiritual body? And if any are to be wretched in the world to come, the soul has not so unimportant a relation to their bodies as not imaginably to involve the body in the ills it suffers. But here, too, the admission of such a possibility as physical evil in the next life leaves the imagination without any clue to the

nature of that evil, because we have no clue to the nature and liabilities of the bodies which the wicked are to receive in the resurrection.

Modern thought wisely turns from speculation on the physical characteristics of the future life to the moral and spiritual certainties of that life. And, of these, the one which promises the most happiness, and at the same time precludes all debasing of the prospect through making it one of pleasure alone, is the certainty that Christ is the light of that true temple, the dear companion of that true home. The problem of awaking energy is the problem once more of imagining Christ. The holiest aspirations are assured that to see Christ as he is must make us become like him. The most cautious and least enthusiastic of those who fear that anticipations of pleasure will hurt the soul, must feel safe in looking forward to intimacy with Christ. It was Christ himself who bade us lay up treasures above, and it cannot be that he unwarily gave advice which exposed his disciples to degradation.

Of this we have complete certification in the fact that he said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again, and will take you to myself, that where I am ye may be also." Even if it were not well for us to think of the place he went to prepare, it must be the best possible for us to imagine being with him in that place. Our modern thought, which seeks to substitute spiritual realities for crass visions of physical good and ill, can ask no fuller answer to its exacting tests than it finds in the supreme good of nearness to Christ. It need be no further argued that if what Christ is, what he is to us, and what he is to be to us, does not stir in us the utmost spiritual energy, it is because we do not imagine him as real, but we let the announcement pass by without caring to keep a picture of the fact before our minds. Beyond all other explanations of sloth in the lives of Christians none is so complete as that they will not imagine Christ. The religious use of imagination is the element in faith which

they need more even than they need increase of trust. It is at bottom a mental indolence which turns their hearts cold toward their Lord, and leaves their lives inert and useless. If the child of God walks as his Father would have him, it is because he walks by imagination, not by sight.

IV

IMAGINATION ENLISTS PERSEVERANCE

1. We also Can

A man of ideals without perseverance does not know his own mind. A man who perseveres in ideals only is but a sentimentalist, a voluptuary of dreams. But perhaps the most futile of mortals is one who is susceptible to ideals and can make a show of energy, yet lacks persistence; for now and then he tries, and is bound to fail. Of all reputable but ineffectual folk this is perhaps the commonest kind. There are few indeed who have no abiding desires; of mere dreamers there are not so very many; but fruitless spurts of energy are discouragingly common. Perseverance seems the impossibility; that is, perseverance in the energetic pursuit of high designs. There is no end of obstinate

people, people bent on some commonplace object, or stubborn in resistance of what they happen to dislike. Yet the impossible is the problem for religion. Moral impossibilities brought Christ down. And to imagination either of good or bad the impossible becomes the easy. In the extremity to which vacillation reduces the highest interests of mankind the religious use of imagination finds its crowning opportunity. This crucial test can be met with supreme success. He that looks unto Jesus as the author and finisher of faith, will surely run with patience the race set before him. The point is of unsurpassed importance, and the point can be made. How Christian imagination can come to the support of Christian perseverance is well worth asking.

Great successes awaken emulation, that is, ambition and assurance. This is preëminently the case with successes of the moral and spiritual order. We are rarely moved to become a little better from seeing some one

who is only a little better than ourselves; but the motor influence of high achievement is felt whatever there is to achieve. Rare physical prowess, even, is as likely to inspire emulation as discouragement. When a famous musician comes, the master, let us say, of an instrument which many people know how to use, who is most thrilled by his performance? Allowing for a few exceptions, it will be those, of course, who themselves play on the same instrument. Who should most appreciate masterpieces of sculpture and painting? Without doubt those who dabble in wet clay, or are adepts in the mystery of palette and brush. Or when a great orator moves his thousands, which of the throng must exult most in the godlike gift of eloquence? Surely the man whose business is to speak in public. But why so? Someone will think it is because every man rates most highly successes in his own line. This is a partial account, providing the spectator can witness successes in his own line without feeling jealousy. Another will ex-

plain that everyone should understand best the secrets of his own craft, and notice "points" in the performance which all but adepts miss. True, too, if we allow for the special charm of masterfulness in the estimation of a critic or connoisseur who makes it his business to comprehend the business of other men. But the artist or professional man who witnesses a signal achievement in his own calling feels a joy which a critic cannot share, at least is not entitled to; and this is the joy of saying to himself, as he looks on, "I, too, can do this." And so in some increased measure he can, if he keeps the consummate achievement always before the mind's eye. It is thus that the greatest masters develop their powers. No musical composer, however original and lofty his genius, fails to train his gifts by close study of Bach and Mozart, of Beethoven and Schumann, and now of Berlioz and Wagner. The dispersion of Greek literature and discovery of Greek statuary have large share in the credit of modern literary and plastic art. Italy

in its turn has been thronged for generations by artists who spare no pains to learn how her masters painted, as well as to catch the inspiration of their lofty spirit. And if orators do not study the foremost exemplars of their sublime art, it is because these are not at hand to be studied. The orator, however, who sets out to make the most of himself, does not fail to find out all he can about them and to emulate their training, even to trying his voice, like Demosthenes, against the tumult of waves, or, like Clay and Beecher, astonishing hills and fields with his declamation. In all these cases industry and endurance are stimulated by the hope of doing finally what the greatest models have done. When every other stimulus fails as a spur to toil, self-confidence can always be renewed by imagination of the very highest which has been achieved, and gains little by weighing the worth of lesser successes.

It is a pitch of audacity from which faith never shrinks, when faith is a religious use of the imagination. The precepts of the Teacher

are not encouraging; nor is his example, when his example is to us merely an enacted precept, that is, when we look at what he is doing, rather than at him. A veteran who had endured hardness as a good soldier, still felt himself to be in the thick of the fight. He hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and his friends thought he had been wellnigh filled. Not so he. When he read the Beatitudes, he said, it threw him almost into despair, and again and again he fell upon his knees and implored God to teach him how he might be what Christ thus required. But I never heard that the face of his Master threw him into despair. The precept reminds us how we have failed; the vision of Christ shows us what it is to succeed. The best of it is that to see Christ is to see our idealized selves; and to see ourselves Christlike, even though it be only in imagination, cannot fail to revive and sustain our energies at their best. If anyone has not found his strength renewed by imagining Christ, he has not veritably imagined Christ. Imagination in viewing our

Lord supports perseverance by persuading as that the highest attainments are suitable and possible for ourselves.

2. And Must

To imagine Christ ensures untiring effort in another way very characteristic of Christianity: when hope notifies us that the highest ideal can be realized, conscience insists that we *must* realize it. Our highest privileges are interpreted by Christianity as duties. It is the equally true counterpart of this fact, that our most exacting duties are our highest privileges. Nothing can be a privilege except that which is fit for us; and it is our bounden duty to be the best that we are fitted to be. This is undoubtedly an extreme view of duty and of privilege too. The average Christian has a feeling that, while he ought not to do anything forbidden, and is bound to do everything expressly required, there is a wide range of goodness which one can make his own greatly to his praise, because he may neglect it without blame.

Protestants do not formally distinguish between the commands and the counsels of Christ. Their theory of virtue has no place for works of supererogation. They do not dream that voluntary celibacy, poverty, or obedience to a religious superior are especial ways of acquiring merit in the sight of God. They look upon their possessions as their own either to keep or to give. They cite convincing Scripture for this. They leave toil for the heathen abroad or at home to men and women mystically "called." They even count it presumption for a young man to ask for a place in the Christian ministry, if led only by such views of duty as ought to guide any man in deciding for any other vocation. And, so, too many Protestants have inconsistently settled down to views of duty which they formally repudiate. They do not hold themselves with set purpose to the duty of getting the best net result from life. Their contented average of moral efficiency and spiritual fertility is obviously enough due to keeping only an average of excellence before the mind's

eye. But to imagine Christ is to feel called to higher things, and to feel that his call cannot be blamelessly disregarded.

In lands ruled by monarchs a royal invitation is equivalent to a royal command, and we republicans read now and then with bewilderment that the king has *ordered* some favored subject to come to the palace and dine. An old-time illustration is perhaps not too familiar to bear recounting again. A Scotch Earl of Stair late in the seventeenth century enjoyed the reputation of being the finest gentleman in Europe. Louis XIV., whose court the earl visited on some errand of diplomacy, contrived a test of his right to this high repute. The Grand Monarque invited the Scotch noble to drive with him; and when they came to the royal coach waved his hand for the earl to step first into the coach. To do so was to break a rigid law of courtly etiquette, and to break it in dealing with the stateliest king in Europe. But the earl obeyed. He stepped into the coach before the king; for he knew the king's invitation was the

king's command, and he held the king's command superior to all the rules of the court. And so Louis was satisfied that the Earl of Stair was the finest gentleman in Europe. The application is plain.

But the regal way of showing courtesy has its inconveniences for all concerned. When such invitations happen to be irksome they must be accepted as though welcome ; and the king cannot know whether the acceptance signifies grateful enjoyment or sullen submission. It has been somewhere related that, among the ladies in waiting of Queen Victoria, one who had lately come from the provinces to join the queen's household, was owner of a beautiful and cultivated voice. Her majesty loves music, and to please herself as well as to show a courtesy to her attendant, invited the lady to sing. But to the dismay of everyone present, the lady, new to courts and overpowered by diffidence, stammered an excuse. Whereupon her majesty drew herself up with the air of authority which all accounts accord to her, and said, "Sing,

Madame." And the poor woman had to try. When your pet canary does not feel like singing, you may whistle and chirrup, but you will gain only a chirrup in return to show that your attention is appreciated. How can one make music when his harp is on the willow, and his artist soul sunk in the artist sleep of apathy? A semi-stupor is ever threatening to settle upon spirits ordinarily characterized by moral intensity. Spiritual fervors and raptures are often paid for in reactions of chill and heaviness. The invitation to be glad would seem in such moods a mockery, and the duty of rejoicing could be imposed only as a cruel hardship. Whatever force men may owe to alert and hopeful spirits, these sensitive souls are subject to depressions which amount to a disability. But for them and for commonplace temperaments there is a sufficient remedy in opening the eyes to the Master. No one can be depressed in his company; no one can lose courage at his side. And enduring energy to obey our King's invitation is given to all those

who hear the invitation from the King's own lips. He in turn has the privilege in this case of knowing that his overture is welcomed with alacrity. If his invitation is a command, his command is rated a privilege. Such a fact leads us to notice a third particular in which religious imagination provides for the noble grace of steadfastness, the too rare grace of unflagging perseverance.

3. And would Like to

Imagination wins us to persistence not chiefly by assuring us that Christ can make us strong, nor even by pressing our privileges upon conscience. It makes us persevere through relish of the objects which it offers. This power it owes to the growing attractiveness of true religion for the truly religious. Religion is dull to those alone who pay little regard to it. When it secures a large part of our time and thought it becomes intensely interesting. They weary of it who have least to do with it, while intimate familiarity makes it a source of refreshment and

delight. If there were no hope of securing to religion its due except through stiffening men's wills into purpose to serve God up to the limit of obligation, the hope of unrelaxing perseverance would be more futile than it has actually proved. It seems an unworthy measure of a religion's success, but the rule is that men will give to a religion only that degree of attention which they can enjoy. If they give it any more than this, it is because they are afraid to give any less. But who is there that will not follow with unwearying steadiness an object which he eagerly longs for? Or who will not keep on doing that which he does with unfailing relish? Children are capable of such resoluteness as this, to the great annoyance of those who are responsible for them. It is mere stubbornness, and children are sometimes the more perversely stubborn the smaller and less reasonable they are. You may hear a mother complaining, "This child of mine will tease, and tease, until she wears me out, and I have to say Yes. Sometimes I am alarmed at her willful-

ness, and determine to make one more effort to break it down. And how do I succeed? Not at all. I fear she will keep on insisting on whatever she likes until she is a spoiled girl." I never yet heard a woman applaud the resolute soul of a child which persisted in nagging its mother until it got whatever it pleased. And I risk this homely illustration in the hope that it will make plainer than a more stately one could that even a religion may secure unflagging fidelity from ordinary people if it has capacity to grow more attractive the more familiar it grows.

Any normal taste can be cultivated until it discriminates with vehemence between the better and the worse. A boy will stand before a street organ as long as it remains to play, or will follow a military band as far as he dares; but after musical taste has been carefully cultivated it is a rarely good street band which does not smite the ear as with a blow. Yet this susceptibility to pain is also capability of delight in symphony and oratorio. And so with painting. What quiet child in his tender years has not

seized upon a rainy day to smear the pictures in his book with all the colors which he likes best? Men's faces shall be stained a pale yellow or a deep orange with that wonderful gamboge; their classic togas or Indian blankets shall be done up in shining green or vermilion, and every gaudy discord worked out according to the native depravity of the infant taste in colors. But after one has studied painting the distress which crudities in color, drawing or design inflict is but a counterpart of the enjoyment which good art affords. Even the taste which resides in the palate can be refined into fastidiousness, and thus develop an equal capacity for disgust and gustatory enjoyment. Conscience is credited only with judicial functions, but it is also an organ of taste. Its business may seem to keep a man wretched, and rarely to make amends by approving this act or that. But conscience, in the popular meaning of the term, may be indulged in its own imaginings. The delight with which one may image himself as ideally good in the particulars which he most

honors, is as lively and elevated a delight as imagination can furnish. Such self-imaging awakens an inappeasable appetite, what Jesus called a "hunger and thirst after righteousness." And happy, said he, is that man. Thus conscience, becoming a source of moral enjoyment, provides for perseverance, not by the sternness of her demands nor by sore prodding of sensitive spirits, but through the sheer beauty of her day-dreams.

No religion can sustain the devotion of its follower unless he lays its objects to heart. If it would warn him against offending the gods, the devotee must be taught thoroughly to dread their fury, and imagination must keep his apprehensions alive; otherwise the penalties of another world serve to point a jest or supply a particularly coarse style of profane swearing. If it opens alluring prospects of delight, far, it may be, below the spiritual joys of the Christian's heaven, imagination will need to draw the curtain often from the celestial scene, or Paradise will soon be disregarded, and then

despised. Much more when the aims of religion are high is it needful to keep the sensibilities alive; for with habitual inactivity an unconquerable dullness steals over them, and they finally seem atrophied, as Darwin confessed had occurred to his own appreciation of poetry and religion. Bnt if familiar vision of God teaches us to feel his reality and long to please him, then all that faithfulness can do will be done, and patience, which is the passive form of perseverance, will "have her perfect work." To walk by imagination, not by sight, is to walk with God.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Imagination and Unity of the Faith

The aim of these pages has been essentially historical. This aim has been to show that the imagination has always been sufficiently at the service of religion to account for the persistence among Christians of certain elevated beliefs, but not sufficiently to provide for an average of piety and virtue proportionate to the elevation of those beliefs.

As to the beliefs the significant facts are: first, that in each instance these characteristically Christian beliefs strike the imagination. Secondly, ideas which imagination keeps in full view enjoy in this way quite exclusively the advantage, or incur the disadvantage, of being put to the test of experience. Thirdly, having been so tried and attested by all the Christian centuries, these salient, imaginable, and charac-

teristically Christian ideas are for substance steadily held by the church with all the depth and tenacity of conviction which experience alone can afford. It is always possible that learned skeptics may raise against the Bible questions which unlearned Christians are quite unable to answer; but when did Skepticism ever detach from the Book the faith of a man, whatever his critical theories might be, whose experience had proved its teachings to be true? Truth which a man has experienced he knows more thoroughly than he knows anything else, or than he can know this same truth in any other way. The Christian might conceivably doubt for a time the authority of the Bible, but he can never doubt the authority of his experience. He needs only to know what his experience teaches. He may be hard bestead by arguments against the Book, which he does not know how to answer; but he can always say, in the quaint language of old time prayer meetings, "I have found that there is a reality in religion."

Supported by this unbroken attestation to the essential Christian beliefs, no one should fear lest Christianity may fail to win the faith of mankind, or lest the integrity of its teachings be permanently impaired. We all look for advance in knowledge of Christian truth, and every student may please himself with expecting that this advance will be mainly a recognition of the novelty, or supposed novelty, which delights his own fancy; but that advance has come to a stand the conservative should be the last to imagine, for experience promises new views of truth as confidently as it endorses old views. Progress will still go on, and yet the historic faith will endure.[1] In the *tohu bohu* of colliding opinions he who has experiential knowledge of Christ and who keeps that strong and radiant figure always before his eyes, may wait serenely to hear the voice which once reached all the

[1] Said Auguste Comte, "The most certain signs of conceptions being scientific are continuousness and fertility." Quoted in Reed's "Pocket System of Theology," p. 128.

depths of the formless void, "Let there be light;" and light will be.

The conclusion of this whole contention is that the essentials of Christian truth are always apprehensible; imagination catches them, and never lets them go.

2. Imagination and the Average Christian

As to the moral and spiritual achievements of Christianity, it is never to be lost sight of that the average is the actual. The commonplace Christian of any period is the precise exponent of what our religion is accomplishing for that period. Isothermal lines across a map, running up and down by eccentric angles on their way between East and West, bear figures which tell the average temperature of the places through which the lines are drawn. The figures state precisely how much work the sun does at each and every point along those erratic lines. No matter how cold it becomes in winter, or how hot it grows in summer, the

sun's actual work on a given line is no more, no less, than his average work. Similarly every human institution is to be judged by its average results. The loftiest genius may arise among the sternly repressed victims of absolutism, while only a respectable degree of talent may be found for generations in a peaceful, enlightened, virtuous republic; but all wise men judge political systems by their average results. We do not hesitate to compare Christianity in this way with the ethnic faiths, and even to claim for certain types of Christian doctrine a higher average of usefulness than other Christian systems can boast. Christianity itself, not comparatively but absolutely, must stand or fall by the same practical test. The saintliest Christian is not the representative Christian, as the worst is not. The worst may lower the average a little, and the best raise it even perceptibly through the pervasiveness of his influence; but it will remain that the average Christian is the actual and only real fruit of our religion in a generation. If, then, re-

ligious use of the imagination can raise the average of attainment, loyalty to our Lord ought to inspire eagerness to see imagination put to this delightful and exalted office.

Meantime we must take heed not to underestimate the commonplace, unimaginative Christian. It would be to underestimate what our Lord is worth to our day. When the battle of Waterloo drew toward its close, and the French Guards made their last despairing charge down the slope yet held by them, across the valley, and up the rise behind the crest of which lay the household troops of England; and when, at a word from Wellington or some one else, the British Guards sprang "up and at 'em," driving the Frenchmen before them in final rout, does anyone believe that the great emperor with a handful of his marshals could have checked the onset of his victorious foes? No, the battle was lost, and the empire of Europe was lost. The battle was lost and the empire of Europe was lost, because the common men of France had vainly spent their valor

against the long enduring courage of the common men of England. And when our King comes to his own again, and his own shall receive him, then will he say to commonplace Christians, "Ye have done this for me; enter ye into my joy." If we faithfully look for it in imagination now, we shall share it in reality then.

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