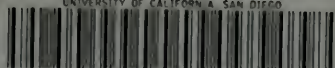


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SYNTHETICA:

BEING

MEDITATIONS

EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND ONTOLOGICAL

BY

S. S. LAURIE, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF

"METAPHYSICA NOVA ET VETUSTA"; AND "ETHICA; OR, THE ETHICS OF REASON"
GIFFORD LECTURER IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH FOR 1905-6

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II.

BOOK II.—ON GOD AND MAN

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE Meditations of this volume constituted, along with an introductory statement giving the argument of the first volume, the Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of Edinburgh in 1905 and 1906.

S. S. LAURIE.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,
May, 1906.

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SECOND BOOK
ON GOD AND MAN.

*PURPOSE AND METHOD OF THE SYNTHETIC
ARGUMENT.*

THE method of ultimate philosophy may be said to be the criticism of Subject-Object. We have to watch Subject in its birth as Pure Feeling and follow its ascending evolution in and through the Object until it reaches the plane of Reason and passes again into Feeling as now supra-rational Intuition. We note at each stage, if that be possible, the Universals which it reveals. We have to get hold of the thread of evolving mind-movements, which is also the evolving of the object in and for subject. I have been endeavouring to do this, in the hope of being able to find that ultimate explanation of experience which we call by the name God. If the method be sound and if I have faithfully followed it, it is obvious that nothing can be said on the ultimate question which does not lie, from the first, implicit in the nature of man as man, however slow and painful may have been the progress of the explicit realisation which we call Knowledge.

Ultimate philosophy as a synthetic presentation does not take the form of a demonstration, but is rather as lucid a statement as possible of what we *see*. Merely to

see is the end of all cognitive activity; but only by a laborious analytic process can man qualify himself for seeing. I do not, accordingly, propose to "demonstrate the existence of God". My business rather is to reveal the necessary universals in evolving subject-object, and accept that as yielding the notion God. If God be so revealed to vigilant contemplation, He is not "demonstrated" by logical argumentation, but only in the etymological sense of the word. He is "pointed out" or shown to be there. The discrimination of the implicates of the "Notion" or "Actual" is, in truth, the unveiling of that to which we give the specific name "God"; and in a sense therefore my task may be almost said to be already done.

But if I would complete for myself my scheme of thought, I must look again at experience: starting from the objective presentation to which we have analytically attained—the Actual as *there*; and by bringing afresh to light all that is implicit in that, to get, if I can, a nearer and a constructive view of the nature of God, the world, and man. We have, in short, to see what is the true content of the Notion God as given in the Objective Actual; which includes Man, for All is One.

It might be said that the method followed by me involves a "creation of God in order to prove His existence," as was said of Fichte's earlier speculative efforts. Is it not evident, however, that there are only two ways of proceeding—either to take the vague concept of God common to all and having ascertained its content to find ourselves face to face with the objection that this God may be, after all, only an illusion of the imagination; or, following the better way, to trace the movements of finite mind as conscious and self-conscious,

with a view to ascertain what these yield as the Universal and Absolute Notion, to which we must dedicate the supreme Name? By so doing we truly find the "Whole" empirically through its revealed content. Its *total* content; for if we are to know God at all, we must look for Him in the total actual as received and affirmed by finite mind: not in any one abstraction from the total.

Let me say further, that it is evident that Man must interpret all experience from his own centre, for the simple, but sufficient, reason that he has no other. In imagination, he would fain place himself at some more commanding point, but it is himself he always puts there. All has to be received and interpreted in terms of Man — who is the Absolute of his own sphere. On the other hand the "universal object" which he contemplates contains himself the subject. The whole mighty movement finds its issue, completion, significance and meaning in the self-conscious being who, all the while, is not outside it, but inside. It is in him as consummation that the universe is to be found. Hence it is that I say that the Notion of Man as summing the Actual—not, therefore, as opposed to the object, but as containing the object (just as the "universal object" contains him) and as sum of the coherent and continuous whole—must yield the final interpretation of our experience and reveal what we mean by God. God cannot be a "somewhat there" over against Man who is a "somewhat here": God is and appears in His own externalisation as that is interpreted in and through His highest creature; or He is *not*. God, then, would seem to be only another name for the ultimate synthesis of Experience.

If there be no objective doctrine of God such as our method should yield, religious emotions and beliefs are all equally valid and veritable—in other words, they are subjective phantasies which cannot be justified at the bar of reason, although they may be tolerated for the partial truth and personal satisfaction they bring, and above all for their practical results in the consolidation of the life of a State.

There are those who hold, in the abused name of “Scientia,” that all we can know is sense-phenomenal fact and series, and these must regard, as a wonderful instance of self-illusion, the analytic of the Actual which forms the subject of our first Book; and it would be waste of time for them to proceed further. They begin by excluding from experience all that I find in it—all that is worth the knowing in it. They put themselves outside the whole question when they usurp the words Experience and Scientia as applicable only to the phenomenal sphere. Science, even in the sense in which the term is commonly used, is not any one all-embracing knowledge, but only a rational statement of various departments of phenomenal knowledge guaranteed by a method; or rather, let us say, by methods, inasmuch as general method is largely determined or modified by the subject-matter of each department of study. It is only in so far as the method of all knowing is one and the same that the methods of the sciences are one: and the method of knowing is an analytico-synthetic process, operative therefore in metaphysical investigation as everywhere.

Spiritual Philosophy has no quarrel with Science,

but only with those among scientists who would extend their interpretation of sense-phenomena beyond the sense-record. Nor, consequently, has Religion any quarrel with Science: all science and all knowledge have finally to be taken up into the philosophico-religious conception. If physical science had completed its task, the questions which we call metaphysical would begin afresh, and in fact receive a new impulse from the recognition of the unity of the world-view within the sphere of the phenomenal. This would be the "Given" which would itself demand interpretation then as now and always.

Why trouble ourselves, it might be asked, about the concept God at all? The answer is, that the content of the supreme Notion must determine for each man his ethical significance and cosmic relations, and for each State its political ideal. It illumines and explains all experience. Were it not for this, the pursuit of ultimate philosophy, which is just the doctrine of God, could not, it seems to me, long engage the attention of any man in earnest with life.

MEDITATION I.

MAN'S NEED AND QUEST FOR GOD.

Man's whole nature involved in the quest—The groping of pre-historic man—Gods and the God of communities—One God—The Man of to-day has the same fundamental relation to the question of God as his earliest ancestor—What is it that the modern mind demands?

AGES before man self-consciously asked the question "What is God?" he was engaged in finding an answer. When we cast a retrospective glance over the history of our race, we are forced to recognise the fact that Man has always felt his relation to an Unseen. We ask ourselves, from the vantage ground we now in these days occupy, What undercurrent of feeling, desire and necessity of reason has been carrying him along, step by step and through successive ages, to the goal of all thought? What does he search for, and why the ever-recurring and persistent question that he puts?

The primæval man, simply because he is man, is dimly conscious of himself as a unit in the midst of a world-process; standing alone, and subject to chances and changes which he cannot control. He is a single individual in the midst of an immeasurable environment: he is in the tide-way of a vast-movement; and he is

helpless. The inevitable bears him on and overpowers all his puny efforts to resist it: at every turn, the arbitrary and capricious seem to lie in wait for him. Invisible spirit-forces surround him, and to these he prays for help in his need, and offers sacrifices to secure their aid or propitiate their wrath. It is not, properly speaking, worship that he gives, but petition, either in words or rituals, for protection from evils. Fear, not reverence, is the motive: reverence is of later birth and always connotes an ethical element. None the less are the primæval religions to be called religions: in truth, is not the primæval religion still the religion of the majority of civilised mankind, by whatever name they may seek to dignify their beliefs?

The science of religion does not yet justify us in recording the successive steps of the development either of ritual observances or of conceptions of the Unseen, but it is, I think, possible, if we speak of man as a whole, to generalise the historical movement sufficiently for our purpose. For we are here specially concerned with the nature of man as determining him, whether he will or not, towards the recognition of the Unseen and the Universal. This is a universal characteristic of humanity.¹

At the root of all manifestations of relationship to the unseen and universal lies (I think) that *feeling* of man's existential unitariness and dependence to which I have adverted above; and, involved in this, an awareness, faint and shadowy it may be, of Being-universal

¹ No tribe or nation has yet been met with destitute of belief in any higher beings (*Tiele's Outlines*, Carpenter's translation, p. 6).

within which each individual being lives and moves and does his anxious daily task, and which, in its incomprehensible sweep, impresses him with a sense of mystery and awe. He does not, of course, envisage the fact of Being Universal—the Unconditioned supporter of the finite. He is too immature for this ; but he *feels* it in the mysterious life of himself and things, and recognises it in the superhuman, if not supernatural, spirit-powers that encompass him. The prehistoric man, in short, is dimly conscious of a Universal in the very act of transferring his own conscious life into the things of his environment. Nor is this all ; for, simply because he is on the dialectic plane of mind, he feels Universal Being as Ground of the existent and apparent.

With the growth of experience, the extension of a knowledge of the world beyond the narrow limits of his immediate surroundings, and the formation of enlarged communities, man begins, by virtue of the operative reason in him, to perceive a certain law and order in the midst of what had appeared casual, contingent, and arbitrary. This, no doubt, in a very restricted sense ; but yet sufficiently for the satisfaction of his yet undeveloped capacities. The idea of a *one* power or demon or god now emerges — a god who, though arbitrary in his own acts, is yet a source of order and law, and foe of disorder and lawlessness, in nature, in man, and in the spirit world—a special god among many gods. Communities of men, inasmuch as they find that they can exist only by virtue of order and law, recognise this god as sanction, if not also source, of these ; and they find in him a bond of union and also a tribal or national protector, if his goodwill be secured. Reverence has

now entered into the human attitude towards the unseen, and we have worship of a crude ideal.

As separate communities coalesce, the contribution of gods to a common fund of belief swells the current of polytheism. But one of the gods (the god probably of the most powerful tribe) secures pre-eminence as the national god, and is now the centre of political unity and of civil organisation, although lesser gods are not dethroned. He is symbolised in a ritual, borrowed, it may be, from various tribal cults and expanded. Notwithstanding, a belief, not only in minor deities, but in spirits and demons, benevolent or malevolent, accompanies higher conceptions and persists; as, indeed, it does to this day even among the most civilised peoples.

A one God *to the exclusion of all other gods* is possible only when, through the advance of thought on things, the universe begins to be conceived as a one of system. The evolution of the notion "God" accompanies the development of man and the extension of his world-view. It is true of the religious idea, as of all science, that it advances with advancing knowledge; and the end is not yet. We are still engaged in finding God. And if the conception which a people has of God is the measure of its intellectual and moral culture, then to exalt and purify this conception is of all things the most vital for Humanity. So thought Moses, and Zoroaster, and Christ.

The supreme sole Being or Power is ultimately seen by the more thoughtful minds to be not only greater than all individuals, both men and spirits, but greater also than nature; it embraces them all: it is a true

Universal. But the vast majority lag far behind the few from age to age. They are immersed in the concrete and wresting from reluctant nature the means of maintaining a precarious existence. The universal, accordingly, is as yet intimately associated with the various phenomena of sense, and retains its unity with difficulty; it breaks itself up into many shapes; but, even though "there be gods many," one supreme Being is, notwithstanding, finally recognised by the leading minds at a certain stage of mental evolution.

The sense-infinite, whereby man's conceptions of Time are immeasurably prolonged and of Space are immeasurably widened, makes only a quantitative contribution to the God whom man has sought, and finally affirmed, as supreme. These conceptions, as they emerge into clear relief in consciousness, magnify to infinitude the idea of God as source and sustainer of all. Accordingly, we may say that it is God as *a* Being infinite and all-potent in his finite relations, vindicator of moral order, refuge and helper in time of trouble, and as final explanation of the world that, from the earliest dawn of civilisation until now, has, in forms more or less crude, been prefigured and predicted in the self-conscious life of men.

With the continued progress of thought on life the notion of God, I have said, is deepened and widened; but it is the content of the notion God, not the fact and affirmation of a god, or of God, that alters. With the prehistoric man, as with the man of present-day culture, the idea has its roots primarily in a deep sense of solitude and helplessness in the midst of a universe which is too great for a finite and transient creature to comprehend or control.

We may sum up briefly thus :—

In Feeling of Being we have the response of sentient consciousness to Being-universal : in the nascent perception of moral law there emerges the notion of a supreme living source of Law, a rewarder and punisher : in the difficulties of a rational explanation of things there is found the need of a universal solution in a supreme regulative Will—a One in the diverse Many : while, out of the isolation of finitude and the helplessness of suffering, there emerges a sense of dependence on an infinite and all potent Being in whom bewildered struggling man may find support and repose. Every element, accordingly, that goes to constitute our complex human nature impels man to stretch forth appealing hands to the heavens with the ever-renewed question : “ Where and what is God ? ” and, when he has found Him, to bow before Him and to conciliate Him with offerings, sacrifices and symbolic rituals.

As man, at last, begins self-consciously to realise his own moral personality and the problem of himself, the idea of God, as related to his inmost being in life and death, deepens the inherited religious conceptions. God is now not merely outside man and for man, but somehow *in* man. The finite individual is the negation of the One : in the highest form of all individuation—the Ego, it is conscious of the negation as placing it in antagonism to God ; and this is the consciousness of sin. Thus is raised the question of the value and destiny of the individual soul in its gravest form.

The higher animals are organisms of feeling and desire as man is, and evidently have that sense of

unitariness, exposure and helplessness in the midst of a vast unknown which man has. Some instinctively seek relief in herding with their kind, others seek the concealment of holes and of the jungle; and all, from the first, evince a wariness in protecting themselves from possible hostile forces. But they are content with the present and immediate. The animal on the plane of attuition has no impulse to go out of itself and seek that which is source and sustainer of all: it has no spiritual needs that demand satisfaction; it has no questions to ask. What, then, is it in the creature Man that impels him to seek light on questions which can never probably receive a final and definite answer, and drives him to travel anxiously over a rough and weary road whose goal seems ever to vanish into farther distances. Manifestly, it must be *that* in him which differentiates him from the animal of attuition, and to which we assign the name "Reason" or subjective dialectic. In the fact of Reason, then, we find the secret of man's demand for God; and there, too, we can alone truly find the only possible answer. It is Reason, always working underground, which at last comes to full consciousness of itself. Such, in very general outline, seems to be the history of the mind of Man in its errant search for God.

And in these days of advanced thought, of subtler emotion and more complex moral and spiritual life, is not our need the same and has it not the same foundation as in prehistoric man? Is the man of modern enlightenment in a different position from that of the primitive priest-sage? Positive science is, after all, merely the more exact perception and the causal co-

ordination of the facts and sequences which the first observing man contemplates as a concrete of chaotic and casual phenomena influenced, if not regulated, by arbitrary spirits. And when the man of science seeks to explain the ultimate grounds of his own unquestioned phenomenal verities, he is lost in wonder and contradictions similar to those which beset his primæval ancestor. He occupies, doubtless, a higher plane of knowledge ; but the same unsolved problems meet him which threw his progenitors into the arms of superhuman beings, and, which, from the first, pointed to universal Being and eternal Spirit, as sole final resting-place. The series of phenomena arranged under the causal notion themselves demand explanation. An explanation within the series cannot explain ; it is itself under the category of experiences to be explained. The agnostic, deeply sensible of the mystery, may bow before it with awe. He forgets, however, that it must be a Positive "somewhat" that calls forth his reverence : he could not prostrate himself before a Negation.

I might stop here with this brief and perfunctory survey of inner human history ; but it is important to the object of our search to ask what it is that we educated men and women, who are inheritors of all the past, and have attained to a philosophic language of which our remote ancestors knew nothing, seek now and to-day.

1. In the midst of the infinite plurality of things we seek a One. This is a necessity of reason. *Omnia ten-*

dunt ad unum. In physical research we see this illustrated; for the ultimate goal is a conception, static and dynamic, which will give unity to the whole phenomenal complex series, and, by giving unity, explain. This conception it will be possible to trace (if it be possible to attain it) through the multiplicity of things as a one element or dynamic pursuing a one process. It is right that the scientific investigator should hold this in predictive imagination as final issue of his labours. It is, in truth, a philosophic ideal and a kind of religion; for it rests on a conviction of the oneness and rationality of the universe. But even if he attained to it, it would still be within the sphere of the sense-phenomenal, static or dynamic; and this would leave him still restless. He would have to affirm a ground for this dynamic unit of explanation adequate to *its own* explanation and to the rational work which it seemed to effect in an ordered universe. And yet, proud of the demonstrable character of his phenomenal sequences, he might decline to bring within the range of what he would consider pseudo-knowledge this primal One which was, at the same time, All, and which, unwittingly, he is truly in search of. Still, he would be at least forced to affirm it as prius of the phenomenal series, not itself part of the series; and there leave it.

2. We seek a *One* which shall be a Universal. That is to say, it must be in all things and processes while retaining its own oneness. Were it not so, we should land ourselves in a polytheistic pluralism.

3. We seek a *One-universal* in all things which is ground of all as creative and sustaining. A One in some retired corner of the universe, existing over against the universe for which we were seeking an ex-

planation, could only for a time meet our demand. It is a crude conception. A moment's reflection shows us that we are seeking a God who is in and of and through the finite multiplicity we see,—not a Master-builder standing aloof. He must permeate and control the Many and not be exiled from it as an abstract unity. Moreover, such a conception could yield us neither a “one” nor a “universal” containing the potency of all that exists, but only, at best, an arbitrary abstract Will, to which in the moral sphere we should have to pay our court as to a supreme despot.

4. We seek a *One-universal*, creative and sustaining, which shall be not merely an abstract terminus of our own thinking, but a Reality—a non-finite *Object* which is “Being,”—itself containing all finite subjects and objects within its creative process and living life, and conciliating all contradictions.

5. We seek a *One-universal* creative Being which shall be not merely “Being,” but *a* Being; that is to say, not merely a one Substance but a one Subject which has, for its own begotten Object, the sum of finite things, in which as creator and sustainer it dwells, while giving room to all individual activities.

6. We seek a *One-universal* creative Subject who is Reason and is self-conscious :—

Mind seeks to see,
Touch, understand, by mind inside of me,
The outside mind.¹

We finite reasons cannot comprehend a one infinite Subject; but we can *feel* it, and we can rationally affirm

¹ Browning's *Parleyings*.

it ; and, further, we can “know” it, in so far as it has made itself knowable in things and in ourselves.

These are the needs—nay, the insistent demands, of reason in us, and it would not be difficult to show that, as above formulated, they have all entered, more or less clearly, into the various conceptions of God which mankind has, in the course of its perplexed thought-history, evolved.

7. But further, as living self-conscious personalities, we are alone. The Ego in its inmost recesses is always solitary, and, in its finiteness and solitude, it needs and demands a Universal Infinite Being on which it may repose, and in which it may find a larger and a common life. It cannot sustain itself in isolation. Far from seeking to hold itself apart, it hastens to deny itself by losing itself in “That” by which and through which it itself is anything at all. Only in that which it calls God can it truly be itself ; and in Him only can it find the solution of the contradictions of finite life and rest for its restlessness. It ever presses on to fulfil this its destiny — which culminates in the *Intuition* of all in God as Absolute Being—eternal source and bearer of life.

8. As an organism of Feeling in all its mystic range as distinct from reason, the rational subject can find no rest, no repose until it not only sees all in God, but *feels* Him in the depths of its own personality as the pulse of universal Being. Here again, it would appear, the soul, full-charged with emotion, cannot live alone as a bare and barren unit : the Universal is the very air it breathes : the demands of love must be satisfied with an infinite object. Thus it is that a man, whose impulse, as rational Ego, is to make the whole concrete of

experience his own, must also, in sympathy with Mind-universal, find "That" which answers the beatings of his heart, so that, in the joy of a divine love, he may freely lose his freedom, willingly offer up his will, in the mystic elevation of a perfect communion. He is now with God and in God. He is at home. This—the personal emotional attitude to the highest—is Religion in so far as it is to be distinguished from ultimate Philosophy.

This Feeling-consummation of finite mind is proclaimed in the writings of Mystics and is suggested, but far from adequately expressed, by two of our own writers whom I here may pertinently quote, merely premising that their intense emotion is precisely that feeling of Being-universal, dimly experienced even by primæval man, now finding utterance on a higher plane of mind-evolution. In the familiar words of Wordsworth—

Magnificent

The morning rose in memorable pomp,
 Glorious as ere I had beheld. In front
 The sea lay laughing at a distance: near
 The solid mountains shone bright as the clouds,
 Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
 And in the meadows and the lower grounds
 Was all the sweetness of a common dawn—
 Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds
 And labourers going forth to till the fields.
 Ah, need I say, dear Friend, that to the brim
 My heart was full: I made no vows, but vows
 Were then made for me: bond unknown to me
 Was given that I should be, else sinning greatly,
 A dedicated Spirit.

Again: "I was utterly alone," says Richard Jefferies, "with the sun and the earth. Lying down on the grass,

I spoke in my soul to the earth, the sun, the air, and the distant sea far beyond sight. . . . I prayed: the prayer, this soul emotion was in itself not for an object: it was a passion. . . . I was rapt and carried away."

Now, what is this that so agitates the soul of man? What is it which he seems to hold fast, and which, yet, eludes him? What is it that finds out the inmost inner of his being and takes possession there to the exclusion of all other interests—even of his own free personality—and which can be only remotely indicated in words? Whence this emotion, so deep, so high, so soothing and yet so disquieting? It is Being-universal—the mystery of infinite Being—the eternal Real that reveals itself in the shapes we see—in the blade of grass as in the vast forest, in the cunningly formed insect that alights on the leaf of the tree as in the lion that crouches under its shadow, in the magnificent arch of stars above us as in the green pool at our feet teeming with life. All "lies bedded in a quickening soul". It is through *feeling*, not intellect, that we, mere units of Being, finally commune with Universal Being, the Ultimate Reality—the Mystery: ever to remain a mystery; for by its very nature it rejects all logical forms: these are its finitude. In this region, so empty yet so full, the mystic dwells rapt, oblivious of all finite relations: the antithesis of subject and object is hardly discernible.

9. Man has to act and to co-operate with his fellow-man. To find the law of his activity is left to himself. It is a difficult problem; but the answer rises ever into clearer light in the course of the ages. To find and proclaim this law was the function of the prophets of old, as it is of the ethical philosopher to-day. And, when we have found it, we have to do it. But the law for

man is The Good for man ; and every thought he thinks that leads to action, as well as all his acts, have to be animated by the End, which is The Good. As a self-conscious reason, man necessarily projects ends in all his activity. It is thus that as ethical beings we truly live. But we know our failures : we scarcely ever have to record our complete successes. Nature is too strong for spirit. In our hesitating affirmation of truth and in the weakness of our wills, we feel the need of a universal guarantee for inner Law in a One Universal Being who is ethical in his essential nature and is ever ready to fortify our spirits.

10. Again, man's final ends are ideals—always ideals ; he seeks The Truth and, in the very act, ever affirms Absolute Truth ; he seeks The Good and, so, ever affirms Absolute Good ; he feels and longs after Beauty and, so, ever affirms Absolute Beauty. He does this : he must do it, because of the impulse at the heart of the will-dialectic which, in finitising, infinitises. Where is the guarantee of these ideals to be found ? Only in an infinite Being who is immanent in His own world-ideals,

The Power which pricked
Nothingness to perfection.

11. Pure Reason in Man demands satisfaction ; and just as the triumph of physical science would be the discovery of the one of principle and process which explained the myriad diversities and apparent contradictions of the phenomenal world ; so the triumph of metaphysical science is the revelation of that One of principle and process as Absolute Being and Spirit, which wells up in the finite spirit of man.

12. Finally, Man is not only a reason with its demands and an ethical being with its ideals, aspirations and hopes, but a sentient creature capable, by virtue of his very reason, of infinite suffering. The fears and pains of the wandering nomad, in the presence of irresistible destiny and of incalculable natural forces, are as nothing to those which beset the daily life of the complex and subtly woven being into which man has in the course of the ages developed. Helpless and dependent as the nomad was, still more helpless and dependent is man as he now exists, burdened with the melancholy past as well as with the anxious present and the dark and perilous future. This need is a need engendered by reason on the basis of feeling, inasmuch as it is through reason that man is capable of immeasurable imagination and boundless sorrow. In all those experiences in which his finite possibilities are exhausted and he can do no more ; in helpless suffering ; in all distress and perplexity ; in the dark night of despair, and in the hour of death he needs—nay, he demands—an Eternal Being who, source in some mysterious way of all his woe, is yet a Father to whom he, as a son, can appeal, and who will somehow vindicate for him His Fatherhood.

Such, it seems to me, is the record of the need—the hunger and thirst that arise in the reason and heart of man for the living God. This divine need is urgent now as in the beginning. It is folly, then, to imagine that we can evade the question ; and the true answer to man must satisfy *all* his requirements. The final notion of God, if we had it, would not only explain the universe and afford quiet and rest to the ever-

questioning reason, but satisfy ideals and be a home of refuge for the heart. And looking at the whole problem without pre-judgment, but coldly and scientifically as simply a cosmic fact among other facts (but the supreme fact within the highest cosmic organism known to us, *viz.*, man), it surely must be that, if there be God, he must somehow make himself known to us. If there be no God, then the cosmic fact that proclaims itself in us is utterly inexplicable: we are the sport of non-rational forces either wholly stupid and unmeaning, or wholly demonic.

It might be said, then, that the need for God is simply the sum of the needs of Man as a feeling, as a rational, and as an ethical being. This is true: but not only, nor yet chiefly, in the sense of the need of help for a helpless creature, a support for the weakness of the feeble. For Feeling seeks God that it may be filled to the fulness of its own vast capacity; finite reason seeks Him in order to make intelligible to itself the fact, and to furnish the completion, of its experience; finite Will seeks Him that it may be strengthened for its tasks. God as All *in* All can alone satisfy a man. We need Him; nay, we even insist on Him as our due. Accordingly, it is truly in the *strength* of reason and the manly aspirations of the soul that God is demanded, and not in the paralysis of our wills or the weakness of our flesh. The God-affirmation in all its width is a virile affirmation: it is the strength by which the strong man lives; and, even in the case of the feeble and over-worn, they demand God as the strength which stands between them and the death of the over-burdened spirit. It is the moral elevation of the downcast, and not his abasement, that exclaims: "In Thee, O Lord,

do I put my trust, and my hope is in Thee". These are not the words of the puling child or the abject slave, but rather, in the hour of the soul's dejection, the very exultation of reason.

MEDITATION II.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM.

Man as a Concrete whole, is our guide to the knowledge of God ; not any one thought of Man—Varying notions of God in the progressive history of Mankind—The Abstract notions of the Philosopher—Man is (in a sense) the Measure of God—The Objectivity of the Subjective.

It has been often objected that, even in the more fully developed religions, God is merely a reflection of man and his desires. If horses invented a god, says an ancient Greek thinker, he would have a horse's head ; if a triangle could speak, says Spinoza, its god would be triangular ; and in Browning's *Caliban upon Setebos*, we have the modern rendering of the same thought. Is God, then, but

A guess of a worm in the dust, a shadow of its desire ?

It is true, God is always in the likeness of man ; for where can any finite being find God save as the reflection of his own essential nature ? Do I better matters by finding God in some dynamic which I myself, a mere man, have discerned in the processes of the phenomenal and which is, at best, only *one* of my thoughts—an abstract from the concrete whole ? Do I better matters by generalising the ordered process of the phenomenal and calling that "*law*," and, as universal law of my

experience, identifying it with God? A mathematical conception, which might seem to a pure mathematician to measure God and reveal His processes, cannot be greater than the mind out of which it came. The concept of "Cause" also is a concept of man's, but yields a poor abstract as God. If, again, I call God the Soul of the World where do I get the idea of soul? If I identify God with Infinite Energy, whence the fact and thought of Energy? If I call him Absolute Ego or Absolute Experience are not these also notions transferred from man to God? It is evident that man cannot get rid of himself; but this he can do: he can decline to take this or the other inadequate part of experience for the rich and complex whole, and to constitute a single thought God instead of "Being" and the Dialectic as given in all experience and which, as specifically constituting man, is at the root of all possible thoughts. When I take the fact "Being," and the thought which *is* man in all their comprehension and call that, under the category of the Infinite, God, I must be on the right track. I am speaking, it will be seen, of God immanent, of God as revealed: of God absolute and transcendent our "knowledge" is restricted (as we shall see) to the narrow limits of the "*That*" and the Potential.

The notion of God is, like all knowledge, progressive. Every religious faith stands in a definite relation to the stage of development at which men have arrived, Spencer truly says. We can illustrate this to ourselves by considering the growth of children. I also believe with Spencer that all forms of faith are members of an evolutionary process which is, as regards mankind generally, far from complete.

In the crude beginnings of the time-development of man, his God has like passions with himself. As the *idea* of man, as man, emerges in the progress of thought and becomes explicit in self-consciousness, it reflects itself into the universal, and the notion of God is then liberated from sense-conditions: He is no longer finite—a being made with hands, nor yet generated by *Natura*; but Himself the Prius and Ground of *Natura*. The reflective mind now seeks new expressions for the fact of God. In the recoil from the inadequacy of a finite conception, however, God is often placed far from man, and immediate relations with Him cease. God is now limited *by* the finite: He is outside it.

The racial element also enters into the conception of God. For example, the Chinese speak of the "Great Extreme" or "Heaven," which is principle of order, and they virtually exile God from the daily life of man. He, or rather It, is merely an abstract *ordo ordinans* at best. The Hebrews, on the other hand, to whom conduct and personality were more than nature, conceived God as Moral Law impersonated and so rose to a perception of the spiritual relations of the divine and human. In like manner, the ancient Persian, under the teaching of Zoroaster, saw in the idea of God a Being of intelligence and morality—universal Light which is reason and truth as well as purity. The Hindu fixed his eye on the unity presupposed in the manifold of experience—The One; and, combining this with the feeling of Being as opposed to the flux of the phenomenal, conceived a kind of static "All-One". "Not by words can we attain unto it," he said, "not by the heart, not by the eye. He alone attains to it who exclaims, IT IS, IT IS." This abstract thought cuts

off the concrete world from God ; and the Buddhist, advancing on this, makes the finite an illusion and morality complete abnegation of sense. In both alike, nature and the individual are cosmic blunders. Human emotion as distinct from reason, and the Infinite *in* the Finite as a revelation of God, find no place in any of these conceptions.

The reflective metaphysician, again, in his first apprehension of the resultant of the Dialectic in him—an ordered whole of experience, which, to be ordered, must be grounded in one—tends (like the Brahman) to speak only of “The One”—an abstract One. Or, it may be, he emphasises One Universal Being, as the All, with no dynamic principle in it. The moments of the Dialectic movement also throw some light on the varying philosophic concepts of God. Confining himself to the first moment, the philosopher may find a God who is Abstract Will or Efficient, or (if he restrict his view to the mechanical conception) he may regard Him as the initial *Primum Mobile*, because an infinite retrogression of movements cannot explain itself: He is the Unmoved Mover. But thus to conceive God as ultimate “Efficient” is to make Him an abstraction. Taking the mediating moment of the dialectic, another may conceive of Him as formative and informing Cause; while the last moment of the dialectic finds its reflection in the exclusive conception of God as Eternal Purpose ever fulfilling and fulfilled; otherwise, Perfection or The Good. Again, Pure Thought or Form (as with Aristotle) or Absolute Spirit in its whole organic Dialectic (as with Hegel) is God.

Some, in these days, ignore the dialectic and, taking the fundamental characteristic of conscious subject, tell us that God (or at least The Absolute Being) is a kind of Sentience! With others, He is the unity which holds together multiplicity, and is either the static, or dynamic, principle of a system of relations.

Finally, finding that the highest product of the objective dialectic process—the supreme category—is a self-conscious subject, *viz.* Man, we then may say that God is the Universal Self or Absolute Ego; and think Him as Personality containing all differences.

It is only in the teaching of Christ that we find the possibility of the supreme doctrine. The Hebrew abstract moral Law and the Persian Light are by Him taken up into a higher conception—that of immanence and love: the sparrows and the lilies of the field are full of the Divine, while the relation of man's spirit to God is expressed by the idea of Sonship; not solely in the Greek or Hebrew use of the word, but in an emotional and spiritual sense.

Thus, it is evident that by whatever name He is called, God is always a partial thought of man on things; or, He is the very reflection of the distinctive man-being himself, in part or in whole. There is no escape from anthropomorphism. "Undoubtedly," says Professor Pringle Pattison, "there is a rude and uncritical anthropomorphism applied both to Nature and God, which amply deserves all the reprobation it has received. We must not, like the savage, transfer the fulness of our personal life to the forces of Nature, nor, as we are too apt to do, must we make God altogether in our own image. Our anthropomorphism must be critical; but to seek to escape from it altogether is as futile and,

it may be added, as gratuitous as the attempt to criticise the validity of thought as such.”¹

The truth is, that God is not any one of the above conceptions, but *in* all of them ; and this as an immanent self-revealed God. What He may be as “Absolute Being” is another question. Hegel says : “Religion is not a discovery of Man, but a work of divine operation and creation in him”.² This, however true, is an *obiter dictum* : the How of the operation is not shown. It might be a supernatural act of divine grace. The divine operation of God in man, let us say, is through the compelling of him as a reason to take up the world as “Being” and after a certain way—the way, namely, of the subjective dialectic.

Thus we see that, in whatever partial, inadequate, or erring forms the idea of God may present itself to man in the slow time-evolution of mind in him, and however this idea may be further debased by the barbarous life and temporary environment of races, the search for God and the fact of God are persistent ; and search and fact alike are under anthropomorphic conditions. The provisional content of the idea, be it what it may, is the highest expression of a nation’s life for the time : it largely determines its social and political condition and is constantly used, in fact, as supreme political, as well as moral, sanction. And what essentially is the God whom all men seek ? The noumenal in a phenomenal system : and this can never be anything save the reflection either of the thought of man on his experience, or, when it reaches its highest form, the feeling and thinking process itself in part or in whole. God is the

¹ *Hegelianism and Personality.*

² *Philosophy of Religion.*

Object as revealed on each ascending plane of finite mind. If we distinctly see that man is the last and highest mind-term in a continuous system that pours all itself into him, we shall see that it is God that is so poured. Man is the vehicle and reflection of God—all being a continuous one.

And Man must find the *whole* of himself in God; not Dialectic alone. Feeling, Emotion, The Good and the Beautiful do not lie outside the infinite Reality. If so, whence and what are they? If God be not in the Actual as given to man, where is He? If we do not, as we open our eyes, see Him, if He does not touch our hearts as well as inspire our reason-activity, what is He to us? A mere algebraic sign to mark an unknowable.

Objectivity of the Subjective.—The above remarks naturally suggest the question, What shall we say of the objectivity of the subjective conceptions of God? I think that the objective reality of the content of the Notion *God* can be shown only by demonstrating, through an analytic of knowledge, that finite mind *must*, whether it will or not, take up or subsume all experience under certain necessary universals.¹ Doubtless, varying content has been given to the Notion of God during the long history of man. Without discussing this question, I would venture to say, that from the time man reached the reflective stage, there has been a substantial accord among thinkers, and that differences arise out of the necessities of a great teacher's inheritance and environment. Nay more, I would venture to affirm that when social environment, political necessities,

¹ See First Volume.

and subjective race-tendency have contributed to a prophet's utterance, they have done so chiefly by causing him to emphasise one element in the Notion, while yet other elements are to be found implicit in his consciousness. Accordingly, the varying conceptions of the content of the Notion, God, when rid of vulgar popularisings and historical necessities, may truly be said to have been partial and inadequate rather than erroneous.

It is necessary in this connection to emphasise the fact that in a knowledge of divine things, as in every other department of knowledge, man is a progressive reason; and the question is, "What content does the human mind, after the laboured and painful experience of the ages, now assign to the supreme Notion?" The steps by which man gradually evolved out of the crudest beginnings the idea of the universal "not himself" which he called God, is certainly a matter of historical and scientific interest; but we are not to put our finger on the elemental notions, compound of fear and wonder, and say, "this is what Man has to say of God". We do not invalidate the astronomy of Copernicus and Newton by pointing to the astronomical notions of primæval man or Chaldaean priest. What man has to say on God—the true utterance which is to flash God in all its fulness of meaning on the world, does not arrive, save in the process of the ages. What we truly affirm of Him *now*, is the truth of this stage of man's progress. But even our present-day thought, old as the world may be, is not final any more than our thought on physics is as yet final; and yet it approximates more nearly to finality and absolute truth as the centuries pass over us; and, like the present truth of physics, it takes up and explains the possibility, nay, the necessity, of prior conceptions.

Let us go outside and take a large view : The truth of man's thought is always objective, because all is One. It is "subject-object" that we interpret. The cosmic Whole reveals the nature of the creative Source. The primal Energy which we call Mind proclaims itself in all creation inorganic and organic ; it tells its story in the rock and the ocean, and then in organic life and consciousness, in ascending spiral series until it reaches Man, its highest achievement ; and through him it finally *speaks*. His speech it is which, as externalisation of feeling and thought, affirms the truth of things as given in the reality and truth of all that finds its consummation in him and calls on him to prophesy. In the beginning, with dim vision, he beholds the cosmic Whole, and in faltering accents he stammers out its meaning ; but, ever as he advances, his vision is clearer and his utterance is more adequate. Man is not to be measured by his infancy but by his final achievement ; which is not yet. And the final achievement is God Himself speaking through man. There is one God and Man is His prophet. The God of man is man-God or God-man, whichever you please. Man, not this man or that man, but Man, is, in a sense, truly the "measure of all things". Just as God is immanent *in* all things, so is the Notion of God immanent in Man and for Man, awaiting the fulness of time. And I, here and now in these latter days, as one member of an importunate race, ask the great question once more and try to put in form what God means to me in the hope of getting nearer to a solution of the great mystery of which man himself is the most mysterious factor.

What then ? Would you carry what is in man up into the nature of the Infinite God and say *that* is the

whole? I answer that I attempt no "synthesis of the Absolute" and that the full thought that is adequate to God is impossible to man; but I attempt an "absolute synthesis" and can know God as revealed in His creation. Not only would I carry what is in man up into the very heart of the Infinite God, but I would carry the finite of a stone, a tree, or a worm in respect of universals. But this, you reply, would yield only a vague analogical symbolism about a "something or other that transcended experience". I rejoin, symbolism if you will, but neither more nor less of a symbolism than the whole creation, including man with all his aspirations, is a symbol of the creative One.

Let us recall the argument of the first Book and ask, What do we mean by Objectivity? That table is object to my subject, but this is psychological objectivity, and not what we mean by metaphysical objectivity. The self-conscious Ego which we call Man is *within* a system—a system of which he is the final term. What is subjective is *ipso facto* objective in this large sense. That is to say, it is the truth of the system: it is reality: it is actuality: it is Objectivity. And the supreme illustration of this is the subjective dialectic. I do not apply the dialectic to the record of experience, as if a chaotic manifold were awaiting my advent to be set in order. It is the other way round. The necessity lies here, that I *must* take up the record of attitudinal experience, as dialecticised—already dialecticised. The universal Dialectic is in all things; but in the man-organism it attains to consciousness of itself. It individuates itself in its purity as Will-process in the subject, and so makes man as a self-conscious entity possible.

The objective Dialectic finds itself subjectivised. There is no breach of continuity in the great movement. This would be a banal dualism. Man is not outside his world looking at it as a strange and alien thing. All is one. The world is in him and he is in and of the world. The universe becomes conscious in him. Finite subject as self-conscious and all-comprehending is the universal Object, and includes man himself. All is reflected into the unity of himself, and the "all" includes the unseen implicates of his sense-experience. Those unseen implicates—those metaphysical realities are God, in so far as He is apprehended as opposed to His own externalisation or Object, which Object is simply the Infinite Subject made manifest to Himself and to you and me. What else could it be? And the function of all finites is to return, in life and act, to the One out of which they have issued; but this always through *their specific differences*, i.e., each according to its kind and constitution, and through and by virtue of that constitution.

The conception of God, then, although (in a sense) anthropomorphic, is not based on a crude analogy with man approached from the outside. It is revealed in and to the mind of man—evolved in the successive revelations of subject-object—the necessary given universals of each moment of subjective mind from pure Feeling upwards. And *only* there; for man can never transcend himself. It is revealed in the nature and essence of mind as Feeling, and as pure Activity dealing with all experience. I do not construct a notion and objectify it. It is given to me. I find the notion in the object as that object is presented to mind. Man is greater than he imagines: he is verily made in the image of God. God reflects Himself into Man.

MEDITATION III.

THE DIALECTIC—SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE.

The Dialectic Impulse—(1) The Necessity in the Dialectic impulse to find the Idea—(2) The Necessity in the Dialectic to construct the Ideal—(3) The Conception or Imagination of a Whole : whence and how? The relation of the Dialectic to the Whole: “The Absolute” in its various senses—(4) The One—(5) The vital significance of Finitude—(6) The subjective Dialectic as a One Thought-Concrete is Objective.

BEFORE proceeding to consider more closely the question “What is God as revealed in Man,” it is necessary to resume the consideration of the Dialectic ; but now in its specific relation to the *synthesis* of Experience and the Notion, God.

Phenomenalism, whether we call it sensationalism or positivism, instead of restricting its interpretations to one plane of man-mind—the attitudinal, its sole legitimate field, constantly transgresses the bounds of its restricted territory and would take possession of the whole field of philosophy by a kind of *coup de main*. It requires no argument to show that such a philosophy, if it understands itself, must reduce the function of man in the cosmos to that of an animal adapting itself, as best it may, to its environment. Its only logical conclusion must be materialistic fatalism in its doctrine of Will ; a denial of the ideal as Reality ; and agnosticism

as regards God, for it is already an agnosticism as regards ultimate philosophy.

The emergence of Will-reason (whose birth we signalised), through which Man rises to the "notion or actual" of each and all with their contained Dialectic, is for much higher purposes than the mere co-ordination of the record of sense and the institution of social rules of conduct in the interests of self-preservation. It has a profound significance.

First of all, such a conception of Man makes possible, and *alone makes possible*, a true idealist philosophy—a philosophy, that is to say, which shows man to be *supra naturam*, a being lifted out of the dynamical series by the free act that differentiates him.

Secondly, this Will-dialectic gives man dominance over the whole field of attuition. It is true that from a cosmic point of view man as a will-dialectic is himself determined: but it is into freedom as his essence that he is determined. Other things are determined as existences involved more or less in the bondage of Nature according to their degree in the scale of Being.

And thirdly, it is only through Will-dialectic that the question of God arises at all: it is, indeed, only through its insistent demands that philosophy arises. To believe in ultimate philosophy and to believe in God are one and the same act.

It unquestionably has been customary to speak of the Reason which differentiates man from animals, as if it were a piece of machinery superadded to animal consciousness for the purpose of grinding up the materials presented to it. It is as if you were to take a musical box already containing a mechanism which threw out

notes numerous but confused, and inserted a still more cunning piece of machinery which intercepted these notes and converted them into a tune. If we look at reason from this point of view, it is hopeless to attempt to explain its vital characteristics. The act of percipience, the pursuit of the idea and the ideal, the constructive impulse, the all-comprehending ambition to know, the purposed energy in the regulation of conduct, are all left without their explanation. When, on the contrary, we accept the conscious or attitudinal "subject" (common to man and animals) and contemplate as evolved in it the pure act of Will with form of End implicit, we see for the first time the true nature of reason to be a *Will*-dialectic. In the system of nature, the higher product, while it is an evolution from the lower, always carries the lower with it: so it is when we come to the highest product of all and see Man—an attitudinal or animal subject, with all its content of sense, feeling, desire and emotion, being evolved into reason as a self-generated act of Will. Reason is, as such and relatively to all other products, self-creative; but it always carries with it the empirical attitudinal subject and all its content into the higher sphere of the Reason-self—the Ego. It has not separated itself off: it leaves nothing behind. The higher, indeed, is already immanent in the lower.

This genetic theory of reason seems to me to explain much. It answers many questions which resist all possible solution on the usual assumption that "reason" is a kind of syllogistic electric battery inserted into an attitudinal subject. For example, the most thoughtful writers have said that free-will in man is simply intellect. So far, then, our analysis shows them to be on the right track. The fact, however, is that intellect is itself Will

and its "form" of activity ; and what we call Free Will is the whole concrete dialectic. And yet, this view preserves all that is vital in the untenable, but popular, conception of Will as a kind of independent entity moving about in man's brain and pouncing arbitrarily now on this motive, now on that, for the effectuating of desire—a volition *ex nihilo*.

It is solely because of its bearing on the Objective-Dialectic that I now recall what has been already said in almost similar terms in the first book. I rest the whole argument of these Meditations on a criticism of knowledge, that is to say, on the analysis of the evolution of Universal Mind *as* subjective finite mind, from pure Feeling upwards ; and this is the analysis of subject-object and its ever-growing revelation. If we are to know God as more than Being absolute and immanent revealed to Feeling and Sentience, it manifestly must be in and through the Dialectic movement. I do not purpose to dwell further on this evolution of Mind as finite mind : I merely desire to put in evidence certain facts of man-consciousness with a view to showing that these are capable of explanation as mere facts, only if we conceive of reason as a formal *will*-dialectic which prescribes its own end, and cannot be satisfied save by the identification of *itself* with the world of experience. The Nature of God, in so far as that is knowable, is thus, and thus only, revealed.

The facts of consciousness to which I refer are the pursuit of the Idea and of the Ideal ; the conception we have of a Whole ; "The Absolute" as the Whole, etc. ; and I ask attention to the genesis and possibility of these phenomena of man-mind.

(1) THE NECESSITY IN THE DIALECTIC IMPULSE TO
FIND THE IDEA.

The Attuent mind, we found, receives, reflexes and associates diverse wholes, and, outside the field of reactive recipience and psychical chemism, there is a *feeling* of indefiniteness of space and objects in space. It remains content with this: it asks no questions. How is the restful contentedness of a cow to be explained? By the fact that all mind, as attuent, is within the sphere of physical and mental dynamics and adequately completes itself as a veritable harmony within that sphere. The worship of certain animals just because they exhibit this rounded life, is intelligible. The elephant in the primæval forest "browsing majestic and calm" seems to embody a self-complacent and harmonised natural order—the calm of divinity itself. It is the intrusion of subjective Will-dialectic into the drama which completely changes the aspect of things as they have appeared to Attuition, and raises all our problems. The conscious subject has now burst the bonds of the natural life; and subject, as generating Will, is now self-driven to seize, to discriminate and to know. It *must* reconstitute nature in its own form of movement—the form of the dialectic.

The primary end of this Will-movement, as regards the sensed object of experience, is a percept. The subject is now no longer content to be (virtually) lost in the object. It seizes it and affirms "that presentate *there is*". The crowd of other objects furnishes the occasion for persistence in contemplating the selected object or sensate; and the percept of that object is itself, again, but a starting-point for the question, "What *is*

it?" It is a complex; and the energy of Will, under the stimulus of the implicit form of End, divides it and reduces it to its elements that it may elicit the many in the single total, which is then and thereby raised from being a mere synopsis of sense to a synthesis or unity of reason—as yet, however, only a synthetic aggregate. The method or procedure is analytico-synthetic. But, always and ever, the provisional syntheses are, in their turn, starting-points for a deeper analysis which shall yield the ultimate truth of the many in one. This, that, and the other element are the "what" of the thing, but they are not the "specific is-ness" of the thing. I can find the same elements elsewhere, scattered over the face of nature. The unique "is-ness" which I now seek, under the eternal prompting of Will, is the ultimate differentiating is-ness or essence or idea which holds the synthesis in a rational objective unity—the "one" in the many; and I drive home the dissecting knife of Will as if I were bent on laying bare to its roots the specific and ultimate being of the total existence before me. And this essence which I am compelled to seek is the teleologico-causal "form" whereby the thing is what it is and not any other thing. As essence it is at once cause and idea and end and truth and identity of the thing. It is the idea, then, of the thing which I unrestingly pursue—the "one" in the many; and it is Will, whose own essence is freedom or pure activity and which is itself the first moment in the dialectic, that imposes this task. The Dialectic cannot rest, because its principle is movement, and its contained and concealed spring is End as formally implicit in its first moment, Will.

The idea—the determination of Being—if I had it,

would be the "one" in the many of the complex concrete existence or actual presentation; but it could not, in its bareness, constitute the thing, seeing that the thing is a many as well as a one. The bareness of the idea is, in relation to the many in the thing, so bare that we can express it only as formal, *i.e.*, as formally conditioning and causative ground. It is, in brief, "specific or determined being": Being Universal determined thus and not otherwise. It is in the region of Thought; and the identity of a concrete "thing" lies ultimately in its process as determined by the idea. So long as phenomenal elements are present—whether atoms or energies—we have always to think each and all under a like necessity of dialectic procedure: and we can rest content ultimately only in the thought of *Being as determined thus*. And this ultimate goal of our knowing is itself Absolute Being determined into (and in the large cosmic movement determining or reflected into) the sensible elements or phenomena by which, as taken together in their physical causal synthesis, we know the object—Absolute Being now immanent in difference. The ultimate essence, idea, cause, is, therefore, Being determining itself through a formal or rational process whereby its particular end—"the concrete thing"—the Determinate or Actual exists. The idea and its sum of synthesised phenomenal units or elements thus constitute the concrete total of the thing; which total, from the subjective point of view, we call its Notion—its filled and fulfilled concept. But it is not an aggregate of units, but a teleologically grounded synthesis.

Now, what is true of the individual "thing" is true of the externalised Whole. Objective Being and Dialectic

would not find entrance to our thought at all, were it not that the objective is also subjective, and in subject reveals to us its true character. And if it could not be shown that the subjective dialectic functions in every presentation to consciousness as Being dialecticised and finds itself *already there* in the presentation, it would be futile to spend endeavours to find God as Reason in the world of our experience.

(2) THE NECESSITY IN THE DIALECTIC-IMPULSE TO
CONSTRUCT THE IDEAL.

If we say that the idea of each and all is Absolute Being determining itself as a dialectic in certain moments, it is incorrect to say that the idea is in one moment more than another. But speaking of the process (as we must do) under the Time-category, we emphasise the mediating and determining moment as the genetic prius of the mediated and determined idea; which idea as so determined is the determinate or *telos*. This *telos* we are ever driven on to seek and affirm; just as we are also driven to seek the *arche* (primordial actuals).

Thus are we forced to construct *ideals*. An ideal is an idea in its adequately fulfilled corporeity—the *perfected* sum of the concrete whole as a one in many—in brief, the “notion” as fulfilled in the sphere of finite thought.

All nature reaches us clothed in the *a posteriori* categories; in other words, as a thing of sense. Imagination (reproductive or representative) is simply the recurrence or reinstatement of sense affections. But the imagination also *constructs*; it is productive in the spheres of

Sense, Emotion and Knowledge alike. The purpose of this construction is a perfected whole ; that is to say, it is the idea of a thing or things either logically or sensuously fulfilled as a harmony—a one in many. In other words, it is the *telos* of the cosmic movement (in parts or in the whole); and at *the same time* “idea” or *arche* (*principium*) carried forward into its concrete corporeity. The necessity in reason to pursue the ideal is, consequently, due to the teleological moment in the dialectic : in other words, the Form of End which is implicit in the Will-nisus. Without this there could be no productive imagination.¹ Given a phenomenal concrete at all, the necessary impulse to form an ideal is primarily contained in the teleological moment of the dialectic and nowhere else ; and our ever-unsatisfied persistence is due to the infiniteness implicit in all finite judgments. We cannot help ourselves. We *must* push on. Whence the intellectual ideals which are the previsions of scientific genius ? Whence also the ever-ascending ethical ideals by which and for which we strive to live ? These are not machine-made, but the creation of a free energy in us. And even if, as practitioners in life, we finally became the automatic slaves of these ideals, we should *ourselves* have put the monarch on his throne and given him our consecration.

So with Art or Poietic ideals. It is the finite *Will*-dialectic that pushes on to the idea and the ideal—infinitely. *It will* not be content till it has grasped the particular and the whole in its own form, and discriminated “ends” as well as beginnings in the matter of inner and outer sense. It reads itself into all

¹ See Appendix, Note 1.

experience ; and it finds itself there. The goal towards which it ever strives is generalised in the words The True, The Good, The Beautiful—that which *ought to be*. And every *Ought* is an *Is* in the creative counsels. Descartes' "idea" of the infinitely perfect may be thus vindicated by a true analysis of reason. It is of the very essence of reason. The ideal of life in me does not "constitute my Ego," as has been said ; on the contrary, the ideal itself is constituted *by* the free pure activity of my Ego as itself already containing the Will-movement ; containing it, because Ego itself is the *resultant* of the Will-movement generated in the merely attuent subject and subsuming it.

The impulse, then, let us say, to construct ideals is primarily contained in the subjective dialectic as a Will-movement with Form of End implicit ; and nowhere else. Nay more, this same impulse contains in it the prediction of final achievement ; if not here, then elsewhere. For the pursuit of Truth contains in it the prophecy of Truth absolute : the pursuit of Goodness contains in it the prophecy of ethical Perfection : the pursuit of The Beautiful contains in it the prophecy of Beauty consummate. These things are immanent in all our reason-activity, properly understood.

As to The Good—not in the Hellenic sense of the fulfilled end, but as The Good for man in the ethical sense, it is further of importance to point out that the conception of The Good is the resultant of this same dialectic in the sphere of feeling and emotion. So much is confusedly written of Feeling, Emotion, Desire, Sentiment, etc., that a careful analysis of what we mean by these words is demanded in the interests of religious belief as well as morality. Some men, for

example, talk as if religion might be divorced from the guiding light of reason because the emotions, etc., demand an object of their own and have rights independently of reason: it is, accordingly, incumbent on us to point out that emotions are vague non-rational feelings in consciousness, wholly non-significant for man save in so far as they are dialecticised. Trace them to their source and you will find that they are generated by simple feelings and appetitions common to man with animals; and, as attitudinal products of inner sense, they are analogous to the confused attitudinal record of outer sense. For both alike the dialectic exists, for purposes of rationalisation. These Feelings and Desires and Emotions are the raw material of ethics only, and the dialectic seeks to discriminate the "idea" of each, and the "ideal" of the whole, thereby giving each its due place as constitutive of the inner life of man and motive of his willing in conduct—the outer expression of the inner life. The idea or essence of inner Feeling we can ascertain because our consciousness of it is immediate, not mediated by outer sense. The result of our search is an ethical idea. Thereby we find our way to that inner harmony of ethical ideas—the ideal which is the truth of the man-being. In the religious sphere, consequently, it is incorrect to talk of emotions, sentiments, and so forth, as if they were pigeon-holed substantive realities apart from the dialectic, and demanding separate satisfaction in despite of reason. It is reason which constitutes the ethical and religious out of the anarchy of feelings; and it is only when reason has done its work, that these uncoordinated and licentious feelings have any standing ground in man as a rational unity. Their discrimination and harmony is

The Good ; and The Good contains the ideal and the infinite, simply because it contains the dialectic.

It is with the Beautiful as with the True and the Good. In nothing is the creative initiation of man more conspicuous than in Art. This energy of mind does not admit of explanation on any theory which does not reveal Reason to be a *Will*-Dialectic.

Do ideals exist in and for man and nowhere else? Are they merely subjective? The fundamental conception which runs through these Meditations answers that they are objective. The great Whole, *including Man*, is a One seeking to live and to fulfil itself: the distinctions are within itself as a One. “Natura” attains to its reality in finite mind as sentient; to its actuality in the same mind as reason, and, through the dialectic activity of reason, it reveals itself as idea, and *as a system striving towards ideals*. While in building up these ideals for himself relatively to himself as an organism man determines his own ends—his own true life, he, by the same act, proclaims the teleological and ideal in the object which gives him his mind-content.

In man, its highest product, the Universal finds its Truth—Natura finds its own idealism as Object, just as on the sentient plane it found its own realised modality. For the ideal is the summed reality of the object mediated through the man-subject. What is *here* is *there*. And yet object *and* subject endure: no specific entity can be confounded with another.

All is One Being, One dialectic, One process—the process of Absolute Being as now immanent in its own finite negating differences. *Within* this we find Man. And the intensest form of self-identity and negation—

the Ego, is itself used as an instrument, in the Absolute Whole, for proclaiming the One and the Universal in presence of which it suppresses its very self, veiling itself in adoring awe. The Absolute God, having committed Himself to the other and finitude, can recover Himself only through that which is other and finite, and He receives back the tribute of His creation through Man. Through him he mediates Himself for Himself, as a *finite* living God. Through devious, strange, and seemingly anarchic events, He holds on His way, and it is for you and for me to search out His purposes and to satisfy His demands.

(3) THE CONCEPTION OR IMAGINATION OF A WHOLE. WHENCE AND HOW? THE RELATION OF THE DIALECTIC TO THE WHOLE. THE ABSOLUTE IN ITS VARIOUS SENSES.¹

But now what of the conception of the Whole—the universe of things including myself, in other words, The Absolute?

The attuent subject, aware of diverse wholes, takes them as they offer themselves in all their separation and finitude, and, though having a “feeling” of an indefinite beyond of Being and Space, knows nothing of “The Whole”. It is in the dialectic, then—the reason-plane of evolving mind—that we must seek for the genesis of the appearance in consciousness of the notion or imaginative concept of the whole—an absolute whole.

(a) The primary resultant of the dialectic is a percept. Percipience is *de singulis*. It determines that which is present to consciousness as a discriminated *unit*. But the presentation is always, as a matter of fact,

¹ What follows connects itself with Meditations xii, and xv., Vol. i,

complex, and of indefinite quantity in respect of number and magnitude. Now, in determining the presented totality for knowledge, *i.e.*, placing the already sensed object (sensate) a second time in the subject as now affirmed (judgment)—I, *ipso facto*, affirm also (or sub-affirm) an undetermined in quantity (number, space, time) and quality—all already confusedly given by the complex object to empirical or attuent subject. Then, the living activity of Will-reason, urging itself to further and further determination, necessarily affirms an *undetermined* beyond. Experience of this quickly reveals an *undeterminable* beyond, *i.e.*, the Sense-infinite—that which is greater than any assignable quantity; and this is finally seen to be immanent in the knowing *act* as such. Now, in seeking further to determine this “beyond,” I am seeking to determine in and for myself the total of actual and possible experience. Thus the determination of the *single* total in percipience ultimately generates, under the stimulus of the Infinite implicit in all determination, the imagination of an unattainable *Whole* which includes all “singles”. This expands the vision of man: but it is of no further significance. It is merely a quantitative and synoptic Totality—a crude Absolute. It is a mere aggregate, and full of contradictions to thought; for it is here a *total* we strive on this plane of mind vainly to comprehend, not a *unity*. But even so, what a vast chasm is already revealed between the animal and man! This Whole we may call the Perceptual Absolute.

(*b*) The next resultant of the dialectic in dealing with the material in attuition is (we found) a synthesis of percepts—a sense-concept. The singles discriminated in the object fall together again in the totality of

presentation. This is a many in a numerical one—a unity. The imaginative synopsis of a Whole that was merely a “Total,” is *now* through the continued operation of the Infinite in us, transformed and elevated into the imaginative conception or synthesis of a Whole which is a “Unity” of the many. This is a cosmic and, *so far*, also a *rational*, conception. This new concept of universal experience is, however, no more than an aggregate of particulars which are now bound together: totality is contemplated as a *quasi-mechanical* Unity of the manifold, and contradictions abound. This we may call the Conceptual Absolute: a merely numerical “one *and* many” as a single colligated total.

(c) The final resultant of the dialectic is, as we have previously seen, a caused or reasoned unity of the individual concept as containing in itself initiation (Objective Will as kinetic); Mediation as formal cause and as Determining-so; and *Telos* or End. Thus at last arises the *reasoned* synthesis of an individual object: a “One” of idea *in* the many of the complex individual concept or thing. The imaginative unity of the Whole as a One *and* many, is, accordingly, now (still under the stimulus of the fact of Infiniteness) finally elevated into the *reasoned* unity of the Whole—a *rational* synthesis. Particulars and apparent contradictions are woven into a reasoned unity; and it is only now that we are entitled to say The Absolute is a System—a One *in* Many.

The above, it appears to me, is the subjective mind-history of the conception of “The Absolute” as an expression for the total actual and possible. It is contained and predicted in the dialectic; and it is clear that the intellectual imagination of a Whole can contain no more and no less than the content of my experience of the

individual, raised to the n th power under the stimulus of the implicit Infinite. In affirming, then, this true or rational Absolute, I affirm no more than I affirm to be found *in* every presentate of experience. It is a Reason-One—the Notion. But meanwhile the Infinite, implicit in all determination, tells me that this Absolute is restricted in its sweep by the content which I put into it, and that the “Absolute” in any other sense lies far beyond the range of cognition, and can only be *felt*, as a vague but assured reality, in the realm of the transcendent.

This reasoned Unity or One, then, of the whole of experience which comprehends all existences including myself, I call the “True Absolute”. This is man’s sphere. The True Absolute, then, is simply the Actual which contains all of the objective universal that exists, or can exist, for man and including man. It is a whole with a content of which I can rationally speak; for it is given in my experience. This true Absolute is the absolute or reasoned unity of man’s experience—the sum of the Actual on the grade, and within the orb, of the finite man-mind. And if we will only consider carefully the genesis and generation of ideas and ideals, we shall see that, were it possible for any finite subject whatsoever to grasp “The Absolute” in any other sense, there could be for it neither ideas nor ideals: these would be transformed into actuals. The Absolute as containing the Infinite is, for a finite subject, merely an ideal of the intellectual or rational imagination which we *must* affirm; and then let alone. It is the outcome of the dialectic. It contains all individuals and all experience within my range: but much more; for finitude affirms possibilities which are *not* mine. This is what the word

"finitude," *ipso facto*, contains. It may be said that, in as much as The Absolute is affirmed by man as an ideal imagination, it is within his experience, and that, accordingly, a synthesis of The Absolute, and not merely an absolute synthesis, is possible. But I would point out that what precisely the absolute synthesis affirms is, that "*The Absolute*" as *Totality* is a *transcendent outlying fact*. In this sense only is "The Absolute" within the absolute synthesis.

Man, then, extending his thought under the impulse of the dialectic which generates the Infinite, affirms and imagines the reasoned totality of things. But even so, it never is, and never can be, a reasoned *totality*, simply because any such imagination, however mighty, contains and obtrudes the Infinite and, therefore, the immeasurable. Accordingly, a man must say to himself, "In my imagination of a Whole I delude myself, for this imagination itself contains its own impossibility".

Note that I have been speaking of The Absolute within the sphere of cognition and the conditioned, and showing that the *fact* of its infiniteness and transcendence is all we know. But there is another fact within experience, although the prius of cognition; and that is Being-Absolute. This is Being Unconditioned, and is within the sphere of Feeling. If it be impossible for finite mind to grasp the Absolute of the Conditioned, it is *a fortiori* incompetent to grasp the Unconditioned: it feels it as bare fact—the fact of Ground and Potentiality—the Neutrum which moves into the actual and brings itself within our ken only in so far as it is immanent in the actual. For a faculty of "knowing," which is essentially limitative, to know the undetermined

save as ground-fact, would be evidently a contradiction in terms. True I not only feel but *perceive* the Infinite of progression in the Conditioned and also the non-finite of the Unconditioned; but only as negative percepts—realities of experience opposed to the finite, and mediated through the finite; but of their *content* I can say nothing.

Accordingly, when I speak of "The Absolute," I mean The Absolute Synthesis of Experience which contains at one pole the Unconditioned and at the other the infinite and the unattainable of the Conditioned. Not only Feeling, but Reason, as negative percipience, gives us the Unconditioned or Non-finite as part of the record of subject-experience; but this does not tell me the essence or *way* of Absolute Being as Ground of the Whole. So also with The Absolute, as the Totality in imaginative conception: it can be, and must be, ideally affirmed, and so far it is part of experience; but it cannot be comprehended in fact or thought: it contains its own impossibility of limitative definition.

Now whence all this striving? It is the subjective dialectic which, under an infinite and untiring impulse seeks and ever seeks the One in the Many—the One, not as a non-significant universal—a mere unit, but as "The One Being" out of which, as unconditioned, I may deduce genetically all beings and determinations, and give logical and necessary system to the universe of fact and thought. But it is proclaimed in my finitude that I cannot do this; and it is at the same time proclaimed in my infinitude, as an ever aspiring Will-reason, that I *must* always try. Onward and ever upward are the watchwords of finite reason. Nor is it desirable that Man should have a power of

thought adequate to the Absolute, for, if he had, all would be definite, rounded and logically complete, and for him there would be no mystery, no infinite, no ideals. It would be a contradiction of the very Notion, Man, and subvert his specific plane of Being.

In the great Event—the large Effect, God, if there be God, must be ; and, so far, I may know Him, and endeavour to interpret His ways in order that I may truly live in and to Him, as summing up all *my* meaning as man. My whole effort is to reveal to myself what is implicit as matter of fact in my experience, and, having unfolded this, to say to myself “*That* is God”. But man cannot find out God to perfection. “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the Earth?” When we have done our best, in faithful response to His incessant pressure on us, to find Him and declare Him—our best is only the aspect of God Eternal on this plane of His immeasurable Being. Such God as we can find, as manifest in nature and man, is the “absolute synthesis”: not at all, however, the “synthesis of The Absolute”.

Unquestionably, we are within a “System”; but I make no pretensions to deduce this, or any possible, system from an *a priori* ground-principle which shall give unity and coherence to the Whole. I can speak only of that which is within my system ; and my system reveals a One Being Absolute, and that Being, with its self-generated dialectic, immanent as objective ground of things. But having got these facts, I can say nothing *about* any of them, save as in and of my system.

And let me say, in concluding this section, that it is only by interpreting finite reason as a One of Dialectic process, whose cosmic function it is to subsume experience

into its own form, that I am entitled to say that the universe embodies Will, Idea, End. If I set aside this interpretation, the universe is then to me nothing save a dynamic series blundering into a kind of system—a system which in the case of man is painfully anarchic.

(4) THE ONE.

I would next ask, Whence is the irresistible and incessant impulse of Reason to find the One, which after all it can only affirm when it has got it?

The human mind, unlike the animal mind, always presses forward to a One which may explain the diverse.¹ The search for essence of a complex is a search for the generating "one" of that complex; the search for laws in the natural world is a search for a "one" principle of explanation of this or the other class of phenomena. In like manner, the search for an explanation of the totality of diversities is a search for a One of which the diverse is a manifestation. This impulse of the human mind is explained, some might say, by the fact that in sentient consciousness we always receive the data of recipience into a "one" of subject; or again, because in self-consciousness we subsume all diversity into a "one" of self-conscious subject. This, however, would give a habit of mind only, not explain a necessity. For there would seem to be no reason why, because we receive and subsume the diverse into a one of apperception, we should be, therefore, impelled to reduce the whole of diverse experience to an Objective One in Many (which shall embrace even ourselves). I think the impulse is explained only by the nature of the subjective dialectic whose necessity of nature (in its

¹ See Appendix, Note 2.

mediating moment) is to seek a Ground of this and of that, and finally of all experience; which Ground must be single, otherwise we should have the problem of diversity over again. We seek the cause of each particular; so also, under the same dialectic necessity, we seek the one mediating Ground of the Whole—the absolute totality. This Ground of the total diverse cannot be itself a string of diversities in indefinite regression. It is a One we seek—not a unit; but a One in the true philosophic sense which shall be an immanent and sustaining One—a One in all difference.¹

(5) THE VITAL SIGNIFICANCE OF FINITUDE.

Let us recall again our fundamental position: Finite subject exists first of all as recipient, absorbent, and reflexive of the universal other in which it finds its “reality”; and then as a free energy whose essential character is determination and finitising of the indefinite “other,” that so it may, step by step, make the universal of possible experience its own, and reflect its acquisition back into the “other” as now knowledge and “actuality”; and, ultimately, as personal life and conduct. Thus the free dialectic fulfils itself; must fulfil itself. Were the apprehension of “The Absolute” in the infinite sense possible, the finitisation, which is the *modus operandi* of self-conscious subject in knowing, would disappear, and, with it, would go the infinite of space and time, cause and effect, ideas and ideals. Man would either be sunk to the sub-rational state of Attuition in which no questions arise, or raised to the supra-rational state of Intuition.

¹ See Appendix, Note 2.

A supra-rational conscious subject would simply *feel* an endless (but not unendable) reciprocal interaction of the Many in the One and the One in the Many, in which it was tossed about as an individual atom. The difference between this and mere attitudinal experience would appear to be one of name only. Reason (so-called) would then be only a kind of glorified or apotheosised sentience; and a reason, which voluntarily sought such a destiny, would be seeking for the suicidal sacrifice of itself on the altar of The Absolute. It would be virtually annihilated or absorbed, by whichever name we choose to express the same fact. If this "pleasing, anxious being" of self-reference, self-regulation, and of interpretative and creative power over the elements of sentient experience have any attractions, man can never desire even immortality, if it carry with it a virtual extinction of selfhood. If the highest for us be supra-rational intuition, the intuition to be worth having, must somehow sublate reason; just as finite reason, here and now, sublates attitudinal.

In truth, we hug the finite to ourselves, because it is not only guarantee of selfhood, but also, *ipso facto*, a door of admission to the Universal: it makes the Universal ours while not submerging us in the Universal. For the apprehension of Absoluto-infinite Being, and of the transcendent Infinite which the Dialectic yields, is possible only through the fact and subjective experience of finitude. Both are mediated by the Finite. In a supra-rational, as in a sub-rational, consciousness, the *feeling* of Being-universal would *be*, it is true, possible, because *it itself* (the conscient subject) would *be*, and reflex the universal of "is-ness"; but it would not be

a percept: while the conception of *Reason-universal* would be outside all possible experience.

At the same time, having frequently affirmed that man here is within a certain orb of the Divine Mind-evolution, that orb being determined by the potentialities of his specific being within the all-embracing Universal, it would be inconsistent now to maintain that, in a higher orb of existence, a higher state of being may not be possible in which a supra-rational personality carries the conception of Universal Reason with it into a larger sphere of interpretation. Not only is this possible, but it is in the highest degree probable. Our experience of varying grades of intelligent life below our own, taken along with the fact of the Infinite revealed to us and ever drawing us on, *compel us*, as rational beings, to affirm the probability of this. Only within his own orb is man the crown of things. To say more is arrogance. However this may be, let us emphasise the precise position of man now and here, and point out that what knowledge he has of the Universal, or The Absolute, or God (call it by what name we may), has its possibility in his essential finitude. Without this there would be neither ideas nor ideals, nor the Infinite, nor Cause, nor the concrete Whole which men call "The Absolute". It is the Finite which generates all these through the Dialectic, if our past analytic of knowledge be correct.

If the above conclusions are not evident, then I have failed to give adequate expression to what I have desired to demonstrate as to the genesis and generation of those conceptions which carry man beyond phenomenal relations and particular judgments, and are the supreme realities of finite reason, and also of the Uni-

versal Objective concrete. In any case, let me hope that it is apparent that ideas, ideals, and the Whole or "The Absolute" (including, of course, Absolute Truth, Goodness, Beauty) are generated by the subjective dialectic process as Will-dialectic; which is not merely the "form" of finite reason, but is itself finite reason. For this Will-dialectic as a one thought-concrete is *constitutive* of human reason: it is human reason in its essence or necessary nature as pure activity. The Formal is the supremely Real. But it is a contradiction in terms to regard the Dialectic as an entity capable in itself of further determination by us. This would be to convert the noumenal into the phenomenal. The Dialectic is also *Regulative, i.e.*, regulative of the way in which we must take up and interpret all experience; and, therefore, objective as well as subjective. But not regulative of the way in which we must take up and interpret the dialectic moments themselves. The Sovereign is above the Law and will not be degraded to the status of a subject.

(6) THE SUBJECTIVE DIALECTIC AS A ONE THOUGHT-
CONCRETE IS OBJECTIVE.

The Dialectic, then, as a one thought-concrete, exists to take up the matter of all experience as an Objective Complex which is willed towards ends that are reached through a mediating and determining process. In other words, the Dialectic is the Causal Notion which, as I have previously shown, is neither kinetic initiation, nor mediating formal cause, nor determining-so (formative cause), nor *telos*; but a one movement in these four prime moments. It is, in its total concreteness, the supreme regulative

conception, and also the *constitutive* reality of reason, subjective and objective. I say objective, for the subjective Dialectic does not *give* form to phenomenal existence (this is the subtlest and most hopeless Dualism), but takes the latter up as *so* constituted, and it thus finds itself to be simply the nucleated or individuated reflexion of the cosmic Whole. There is an ontological and dialectic continuity of subject and object, just as there is a modal continuity on the attitudinal plane of mind. All is One and all is Many—One in the Many, Identity in Difference.¹

This is what I call Natural Realism, which conceived as I conceive it, may also perhaps be called Absolute Idealism. It certainly rests on the same foundation as Mysticism.

The Absolute for man, then (the true Absolute), is the Actual, *i.e.*, an objective reasoned unity or synthesis of One in Many: it is the sum of the noumenal and phenomenal, the noumenal universals being God immanent. In brief, it is just the Actual or Notion that has been already explained in our Meditations on Knowledge; and the reader will pardon its reproduction in this meditation as it is a necessary step in our synthetic construction.

¹ An organism, we said, is a one whole mediated through a many, the many being dominated by the idea or essence of the organic thing. Kant says, that the organising activity of Nature has nothing analogous with any Causality as known to us, and yet that we must "think" nature as if it were purposed. On the contrary, the subjective dialectic properly understood, and as objective, explains organism and insists on purpose—*is* organism, *is* purpose,

MEDITATION IV.

GOD IS THE ABSOLUTE SYNTHESIS.

Subject and Object as different but identical: God is revealed to Man as the Absolute Synthesis—The Absolute Synthesis and the Individual—The Content of the Absolute Synthesis.

WHAT, then, is God? He is the Absolute Synthesis; and we have to explicate the content of this expression.

When, in speaking of finite man-mind, we say object is subject, we mean that all that passes into man as a sentient being exists as object in the Absolute precisely *as* it exists in subject to the extent to which the subject can receive it; and further, that the will-dialectic in man is the objective dialectic individuating itself as constitutive of man's specific nature, and raising him to his lordly position. Both the modality and dialectic of the world, then, are reflected into man, and constitute all he is or can be as an actual in the universal system. He gathers the whole up into the one of himself. And what is the matter of knowledge (adequately conceived) save God making Himself the content of each subject-entity to the extent of its capacity? Every thing and process is part of God as externalised, and everything that "feels" is mind and, to the extent of its range, receives and reflects God into itself. Man, the sum of finite mind, receives and reflects the totality of God as revealed on this plane of the Divine evolution.

Were man unable to contemplate *himself* as part of the externalisation of God, he would be as restricted in his range as an animal is; but the dialectic in him enables him self-consciously to grasp himself as part of and within the Totality. Thus what we have called the "Universal Object" includes man. It is the Absolute.

And yet there is Dualism. Even rudimentary Feeling demands a "felt". Subject which receives, reflexes and knows is one actuality in a system, and Object (which is a term used to represent an infinite plurality of presentations and experiences) is another. When, again, we supplement the above proposition of Natural Realism by the affirmation that "Object is Subject," we mean (as I have endeavoured to show in the First Book) that Object is the filling of the Subject. That is to say, phenomenal shapes and events and noumenal implicates and the Will-dialectic itself, are the truth of the universe "becoming" in and for a subject which exists to feel and to know them. There is a One of continuity within the universal system. There is no breach. Nor can I see why or how there should be. And as to the relations of parts in the Whole, it has to be noted that it is Absolute One Being determining Itself that is always presented to us. In this One all is held. All things, including Man, are steeped in Absolute Being.

Let us think this universe emerging out of Unconditioned Being which, therein and thereby, reveals *Itself*. Did this outering of the inner arrest itself at the completion of grades of Being that are unconscious and inanimate, we should have the outering of a God which itself was inanimate and unconscious—a poor and futile thing at best. But God, if He be a living God, a conscious

God, would, by such arrestment, misrepresent Himself to Himself in His creative utterance. At a certain point in His finite evolution we see that He must begin all over again, so to speak.¹ Being and Dialectic are *in* things, but now these must reflect themselves into themselves, if God is to make His finite outurance adequate to Himself.

Life, accordingly, in all its subtle variations is the next moment in the emerging of a God who Himself is Life: and, in and through Life, the evolving God finds His way to sentience. The psychic evolution then begins. Being and Dialectic now reflect themselves into themselves as Feeling, and by infinite gradations rise, in the self-referent man-subject, to the full exposition of the Whole of God as creative. And this whole of Object includes the subject as feeling and knowing. God as creative is to finite subject God *given*. The knower as a dialectic is within the given; but that which is active energy could not be given to subject save as in and through the active energy of the subject itself. The Objective Dialectic must reproduce itself in the subject in order that it may be a finite experience. And just as the infinite objective dialectic creatively penetrates all with its own form or process, so is it the function of the same dialectic, as self-referent in a finite being, to subsume all in its own form. At every stage of the finite mirroring of infinite fact there is activity; but it is "pure" activity on the dialectic plane alone. Accordingly, the self-conscious spirit of man is, when it understands its place in the vast system, God feeling and thinking His finite externalisation in and through a finite. Man is

¹ The necessity of using language under the sense-categories must be allowed for.

thus the veritable image of God. He cannot create, but he can receive and know what is created and return to God (so to speak) what God has freely given. The unseen implicates "become" for him along with the phenomenal shapes—and in his happier hours he sees all things in their truth ; that is to say, in God, and God in all things. The Universal is in and for him : he becomes aware of himself as in and of the Universal ; and it is no rhetoric to say that, were it not for the natural conditions out of which he arises and which still hold him, Man would float away into infinite spheres in an ecstasy of contemplation. But not for him is reserved this lofty destiny without toil. He has to accept his conditions, and work his way step by step to the highest.

How, then, shall we, in the terms of our philosophy, name God ? We name Him The Absolute Synthesis.

On its finite subjective side, the Absolute Synthesis is Experience in the grip of the Dialectic. By Experience we mean the record of feeling and sense, inner and outer, as given universals : not merely the given of nature : and the given of Experience contains Being Unconditioned, and immanent in the Conditioned. This—that is to say, Experience in the grip of the Dialectic is, on the subjective side, God as *Notion*.

If this be so, then the Absolute Synthesis on the Objective side, as the great Totality, is Unconditioned Being conditioning itself in the modality of Time and Space in the form of the Dialectic. This is God as *Actuality*.

Thus the Ultimate in knowledge and the knowing of God are identical. The infinite Object as revealed in finite subject is God, but inasmuch as the subject has to

realise the Object for itself, we have to distinguish between God as Notion and God as Objective Actuality.

God is, then, The All; and the All is a One of Being, Modality and Dialectic Process. This would seem to bring us close to Pantheism and demands further consideration. And, just as all I have said rests on our doctrine of Knowledge, so it is to the doctrine of knowledge I must go to ascertain the nature of the content of the Absolute Synthesis.

THE ABSOLUTE SYNTHESIS AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

When we say that All is a One of Being and Process, we are merely saying that there is One God. The only alternatives are either many gods or two potent Spirits contending. In the latter case we represent the true God to ourselves as a Being self-derived whose aim is presumably The Good, but who, from all eternity, has found another being already in possession—a Being whose aim is sheer mastery over things—a Spirit of tyranny: the God of Goodness finds a refractory element over against Him which He will reduce ultimately, but which meanwhile is a potent antagonist as the Spirit of Evil and of arbitrary force (the Zoroastrian conception).

It is not the needs of man but the doctrine of knowledge that compels us to say that God must be All; All in All; One; One in Many; Identity in Difference. It is manifest that He must be ultimate: as such, the resting place for thought, beyond which there is naught. There can be nothing truly outside Him, that is to say in its essence and nature; because if there were, that would be another god. The Finite must be held within the Infinite. He must be self-creative—*causa sui* and *a se*; otherwise, the Prius of

Him would be the true God. He must be the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. This is, however, a monistic conception, and the fact of difference is too insistent to allow us to leave the notion of God as we have just put it.

In the contemplation of the presentation we beheld unseen implicated Universals as the ground-reality. We saw Absolute Unconditioned Being determining itself into a conditioned of Space and Time and Motion, breaking itself up into a world of finite individua. Being Unconditioned is now Being immanent in the conditioned. The One of Being and its Will-dialectic in all and holding all—*that* is the Absolute Synthesis.

But how does it hold it? As a system of individua. God as dialectic or “determination” of Being is the essence of each individuum from the atom to man; He is the infinite and sole affirmer; but He is met by the Negation, whereby alone “determination” can become a “determinate” or individual.

And just at this point, we may say, God stops. He is not the individual and particular as such. The “individual” is a synthesis of affirmation and negation. As negation it is not God, and yet within His creative movement; as affirmation or essence it *is* God. Each actual thus constituted is a “for itself,” and has to fulfil itself among an infinite number of individuals. God does not retire: He cannot, without the collapse of His universe. Essence is always there: and essence as determination of Being is the issue of Will-dialectic: it is willed purpose or idea; and its perfect fulfilment, as a concrete and in all its contained relations, is the ideal.

The negation whereby the finite individuum is possible

is not to be trifled with. The individual has to sustain itself and to fight its own way in the Absolute Whole. The condition of finite existence is strife, and this we must accept and try to understand. God, meanwhile, is content to know (if we may so speak) that, in the affirmation, essence, or idea, the nature and limits and possibilities of the individual are fixed. There is in each a "thus far and no farther" in the fact of its distinctive "idea," which contains its positive relations to the cosmic whole.

The finite externalisation is not therefore God thinking, but the "thinking" of God *caught in the Negation* so to speak: it is the accomplished "thought," and has to fulfil *itself*, not to be fulfilled by another, not even by the action of God.

Accordingly, whatever Absolute Unconditioned Being may be in its lonely self-identity, it is, as externalised, a system of real differences and contraries. And were it not for the many, there could be no One; were it not for oppositions and contraries, there could be no Harmony; were it not for evil, the ideal Good could not exist in reality or for knowledge; were it not for the ugly there could be no Beautiful. This is the manner of God-finite: but, meanwhile, the Dialectic in the Absolute Synthesis presents the whole as teleological—as moving towards ends and End by way of these contraries and contradictions. Only *so* can ideal ends be reached, and only as the conciliation of opposites can man think them. Without the teaching of the Dialectic, we should be lost in the confusions of a chaotic experience. Why it should all be as it is, no man can tell. Our business is to face the facts and conditions of our sphere of Being.

The world, then, it would appear, is not a helpless

emanation out of Unconditioned Being ; God is immanent in each and all as Being and Will-Dialectic, and each and all are individuals which have to be reckoned with. Each has to contend for its life in an infinitely complex system. Hence conflict, struggle, pain, casualty, and an imperfect and distressful world.

Were the affirmation (essence or idea) in each individual powerful enough to subdue the negation, the world would cease to be a system of individuals and present itself to us as the easy placid-flowing stream of a one Divine Life ; it would be God emanant, not God immanent. In so far as each idea was different from others, there would doubtless be the negation of those others ; but not negation of God. The finite would not negate the infinite, the particular would not negate the universal. Our interpretation of experience would then be Monistic Pantheism.

When we come to self-conscious individuals—the supreme negation, the dialectic, as now self-referent, throws on them the interpretation and fulfilment of themselves. They have to search for and to find their own positive relations and, subsuming these into their negating individuality, strive to realise the ideal of Man in themselves by themselves, thereby co-operating with the Divine Purpose.

These remarks show the sense in which we say God is the Absolute Synthesis. The particulars are not God in so far as they are negating individuals, still less are all the acts of the individual the acts of God. The Negation is within God, but not as the issue of the purposing Will-dialectic. It is the primal “condition” of the

manifestation of the One as a Many, the Infinite as a Finite. It is as Being only that God is in the Negation, not as Dialectic. The Negation is in and through the dialectic affirmation. The significance of the contradiction in which I indulged in an early Meditation is now apparent: the World as a finite world is God and is not God; or rather is God and God "Not".

When, then, we say that God is the Absolute Synthesis, we mean that God is the system of necessary universals in the particular—not an aggregate of particulars. This latter is the crudest form of Pantheism. "God is the Absolute Synthesis" as source, and as Being and Dialectic immanent in each and all. His method is the method of Individuation with all its lamentable consequences.

To say "God is the Absolute Synthesis" has a pantheistic sound; but if God be not, in some fashion, All, what else is there? Who made the world, the oldest of us ask, just as we did when children. There can be no making out of materials which God has to borrow from some other power. He made the world "out of nothing," we are told—a great and pregnant utterance, whose purpose was to destroy all other agencies and elements save One. We and all things are in Him, nay *within* Him, but *so* that we, as well as phenomenal nature, are the negation of Him, while yet held close to Him in the all-comprehending arms of Being and the Dialectic. The phenomenal negation, accordingly, is *not* God, and yet it *is* God; just as it is Being and not-Being. And when we proceed to ask further questions as to the contradictions and absurdities and evils of this world, we shall find that

it is only by the eternal fact of Negation as necessary moment in Absolute Being, in so far as it is creative energy, that we can get any way of looking at the facts of life which candidly recognises these facts, and gives a possible explanation of them. The fact of Negation is not a hypothesis, but, rather, a fact in and of knowing. Without negation, whereby finitude and the phenomenal are made possible, there can be no veritable difference—nothing save The One. I am speaking here of God as creative, *i.e.*, as revealed in this living breathing world. And, yet, the phenomenon as a concrete *is*; and reveals God. If the universe of Sense be not the modal display of God; if it be not the “idea” written out in Quantity, Quality, etc., we can have no interest in it. Physical Science would be a mere pastime.

“God is His own ‘other,’” we have been told. But the question is, How can we so conceive the One in the Other as to rescue the latter from being the One? Accordingly, we must consider the various elements or moments, which go to build up in us our notion of the universal God, as *more* than the object of our thought, but yet both object of our thought and the subject that thinks; and yet, all *so* that I am and remain an individual, an Ego who can even defy the source and sustainer of my being. The One in Many constitutes not only man’s reality, but also God’s reality as a finite. If I am exiled from God, how can I hold converse with Him? If I am in identity with God, how could the question of God ever arise?

THE CONTENT OF THE ABSOLUTE SYNTHESIS.

“Absolute Synthesis,” I have said, is an empty phrase, save in so far as it symbolises a definite content. On the subjective side, the content is the Feeling of Being and the Knowing of the universal process as teleologico-causal dialectic, comprehending the Negation whereby alone individuals are possible whose function is to be themselves, and, so far as they are individuals, to resist the Universal, while yet living, moving and having their being in it, and truly finding themselves only in the Whole. Thus I complete my Notion of God in His Totality, so far as our argument has yet gone. The Noumenal and Phenomenal, as a concrete, constitute the Absolute Synthesis.

To say that, after all, Man is *himself* the Absolute Synthesis would, perhaps, be misleading; but there is truth in it. There is a universal fact and movement, which we have called the Universal Object (including all finite subjects) in and within and of and by which man, as an individuum, exists. It is not created by man, but it is all reflected into him; and *as* gathered up and reflected back by him into the universal, it is God—the God of man—the true God of the man-sphere of Being. This Absolute Synthesis is God; and there can be no other God. What men have often called God has not been false, but only one aspect of the total content of the Notion. As Time grows old, it is the adequate and full God that we desire to feel and to know as sum of the Actual, including man himself as finite sum and interpreter of the Actual. Analytically, I have seen what the Actual is to knowledge: we are now merely reconstructing that Actual synthetically, and

so revealing God in the sense of The Absolute Whole. The Knowing of Knowing is the Knowing of God.

It would appear, then, that, on the subjective side, "Absolute Synthesis" is only another expression for "Absolute Notion," as I have previously defined the term Notion. It is the vast concrete *including* Man—not merely over against him. The Absolute Notion, then, we may say, is our God. But the notion is a One in Many. The One contains the Many, permeates the Many, while the moment of Negation, as alone making a finite world possible, saves the many for itself; although ever within the One, which it can never escape. When, next, I think the "Absolute Synthesis" on its objective side, I simply repeat the subjective content: it is the whole externalisation including the spirit of man and is the utterance of Absolute Being as creative energy: Being and Dialectic are immanent in each and all. The grain of sand reveals God. In other words, the content of The Absolute is a teleologico-causal content. Grades of existence are the unfolding of the riches of mysterious Being. These I, a finite being, am invited to make my own. Whether the method of evolution is itself a "real" Dialectic, just as we have a "formal" Dialectic, I cannot tell. The fact, however, of ever-growing concreteness, and the ever-greater fullness of what we call Mind or Spirit in the ascending series of things is beyond question. When the movement reaches Man, it reaches a being into whom the whole actuality passes, and who, the dialectic being reflected into him, interprets the secret movement whereby the whole is effected.

Accordingly, the fact of the Dialectic forbids us to imagine the various grades of the Divine existence as

thrown out of the eternal Source arbitrarily, and the infinitely various whole to be a mere collection, like articles in a museum. The phenomenal process by which the whole is evolved is not an unmeaning series. Even if we could grasp the whole of the series, it would be a mere curiosity except in so far as we saw therein the moving and unfolding Spirit. And yet it is at the same time, *not* that Spirit. The thesis and antithesis give us the synthesis which is the concrete universe, just as they yield the synthesis of the individual.

Let us not forget, however, that the Absolute Synthesis, subjectivo-objective, is the sum of the Man-sphere of Being alone. It is not, and it cannot be, the Synthesis of The Absolute. Our doctrine of Knowledge showed us that the true Absolute contains the true Infinite—undetermined, unconditioned Being—as ground ; and further, the Infinite apprehended as a quantitative and qualitative Infinite that insists on entering into all judgments. Thus we know the total “Actual” under the category of the Infinite Unconditioned in primal fact and again of the Infinite of the Conditioned in Quantity and in Quality : and “The Absolute” is this Actual and no more, in so far as it is, or can be, a possession of finite mind.

On the term “Absolute,” see Appendix, Note 3.

MEDITATION V.

NEGATION AND THE FINITE WITHIN THE ABSOLUTE SYNTHESIS.

Negation and the Relation of God to the Finite—Affirmed Negation and the Individual: The Finite is within the Infinite—The World is a Willed, Affirmed and Purposed World in which the Individual has its rights: Monistic Pluralism: Casualty.

WHEN we take an objective universal view, Negation is seen to be the metaphysical principle, the ground and possibility of all difference and individuation: in brief, of the “existent” as opposed to Being *in se* and *a se*.

If God be the Absolute Synthesis, the question of Negation and the consequent relation of God to the finite individual and of the finite to God is the most vital question in philosophy.

The Absolute, in the sense of the Totality, is an infinity of contraries or opposites and of seeming contradictions. It is an infinite Becoming (whose sense-analogue is Motion), and yet it holds itself together as a system. We are constrained to ask, Is there any key to the Whole—any universal conception—under which we may group the Whole? I find Being and the Objective Dialectic; and the Objective Dialectic is the Teleologico-causal Notion.

The resistance of the Negation meets us, but Negation is to be regarded only as a moment in a one concrete

process. This Negation is to be found inherent in the modality of Being One and immanent—modality being the mode and possibility of finitude. As an “abstract,” negation is *Nil*, and the same may be said of Aristotle’s “first matter”.

When the Objective Dialectic emerges as reflected into a finite subject, we find ourselves, as I have frequently said, compelled to take up the universe of experience, as Being Universal and One, determined through negation and by a dialectic movement into individua, and therefore, as a *purposed* Total—a One in Many. The subjective revelation is the objective fact. It is subject-object that we have always present in reflective consciousness.

Let us then, once for all, recognise Negation and the concrete of opposites, *viz.*, Being and Negation as ground and possibility of creative activity. Without Negation there would, and could, be only a One—absolute, self-sufficing, undivided, indifferent; and for knowledge null.

AFFIRMED NEGATION AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

The Actual, then, as we have it, is a dialectically affirmed negation. From the universal point of view, the determinate,—the finite Actual, is a negation of absoluto-infinite Being, while contained within the infinite which it yet negates.

If we consider subjective mind, we may note a similar process: The individual presentate is, as a finite, not only a negation of the non-finite, but of all other individual finites. But finite *A* is not *constituted* by the negation of all the other letters of the alphabet. *A* is first of all *A*, an entitative individuum. In the analysis of subjective reason, we saw that the telos of

the moment which we call Percipience (the rudimentary act of reason) is the affirmed determinate—the positive *in which* is contained negation both of the subject affirming and of all other existences (consequently all negative relations). The negation of all else save itself is *in and through the affirmation* of *A* ; not otherwise. This is the way in which knowledge is founded, and the way also in which (with a difference dependent on the object) it always proceeds. *Omnis determinatio est negatio* does not mean that the determinate “is” by virtue of the negation. Immanent in percipience, as end of the percipient act, is affirmation in and through negation of all else. The positive, the determined, does not rest on the negation as ground of its *reality*, but is determined by it only as ground of its *possibility*. To say anything else is to confound formal with formative mediation. So with the phenomenal presentate : its ultimate reality is in its determined being—its idea, not in its note of negation. So also with the Universal : the Negation is ground of the possibility of externalisation only ; the world is the “positive affirmation” of absolute eternal Being ; out of which affirmation negation issues as possibility of the affirmate or individual.

The individuum is, we saw, a synthesis of the thesis—determination of Being (essence, idea), and of the antithesis—Negation. Absolute Being is involved in the Negation in order that It may become an existent. The dialectic determination as essence, idea, purpose, yields the *positive relations* of the individual to all else, whereby a world of individua is possible as a coherent and teleological Whole. The bald individuality, on the other hand, is the centre of *negative relations*. The individual, as finite negation, is in opposition to the idea and seeks

after its own bare self-assertion, whereas it is only as a positive and through the "other" and the whole that it can effect its idea and realise its full being. The Negation, as itself within Being and subserving the dialectic end, *viz.*, individua, is not a "contradiction" of Being One and Absolute, but a conciliated opposite.

Thus, God is always present in His creation as essence, idea, the Positive ; but, at the same time, His creation is always opposed to Him, as the "other" which, while revealing Him, resists Him, and acts from its own centre. In brief, the One, the noumenal with its moments, is always *in* the many or phenomenal (modality) — the negation whereby the finite and individuality are made possible ; but the individual, as so constituted, is *ipso facto* thrown out from God as Absolute Being and has its own life to lead, its own cosmic function to discharge in and within The Absolute.

The world, then, is the affirmation of, and by, God ; and He is in it and sustains it : it is also the negation of God and opposed to Him. The negating modality is "the other" of God, but it is the positive in it that gives it its specific character and significance for the Whole. The Universal Whole, then, is an affirmed negation : it is the idea in each and all committed to the negation of individuality.

We are speaking of the supremely important : For only by the fact of Negation we save the universe as an "existent" : by that fact alone, individuation and individuality, and, thereafter, Ego and personhood are possible ; by that fact (re-enforced by the fact of Unconditioned Being as Potentiality) do we escape monistic pantheism ; by that fact alone can we explain the casual and the eternal struggle and evil of an imperfect world.

In the painful and ever-renewed search after God, it has often been said that the sum of the finite is God (crude pantheism), and it has also been said that the sum of the finite is a created negation of infinite Being, which infinite Being is God, removed from the finite as an isolated Cause—a lonely mechanician. What I desire to show is that the finite is in its genesis a beënt and an *affirmed negation*—that Absolute Being in evolving the finite affirms Itself in it—(each “thing” being a determination of Absolute Being), and, yet, as therein negated. God is immanent in that which is *not* God, and which yet *is* God. Accordingly, we have a monistic pluralism. In like manner, finite reason affirms the object as “not” itself (the affirming subject) while subsuming it into identity with itself: but, God’s affirmation is the creation of existences, man’s affirmation is the cognition of that which already exists.

Were the negation, and the finite generally, not *within* the Infinite Being, God would be merely a great architect outside the universe, and, as such, finite; were the Infinite Being not in and through the finite, man and all individuals would be castaways. In other words, if the infinite were not in its negation, there would be no God in the world; if, on the other hand, the negation were not held in the infinite, there would be nothing worth speaking about, for we should have only a crude pluralistic individualism for ever separated from God; whereas creation is ever alive with God, and were there a moment’s suspension of the Divine activity, all would collapse.

The World is a Willed, Affirmed and Purposed World in which the Individual has its rights. Monistic Pluralism. Casualty.

We would affirm, then, that the universal object (*i.e.*, the sum-total of experience or "The Absolute") is Absolute Being that generates within Itself the dialectic *nisus* operating in and through the moment of the negation for the attainment of ends. This is the form of "Becoming," which is not a helpless interplay of Being and Nothing. The fundamental category so explained is merely a pictorial way of conceiving the fact of transition.

The externalisation, accordingly, is a caused world proceeding out of a free act (the Will-Kinetic in the Dialectic Notion) containing and mediating, and in the resultant, attaining, End: it is, therefore, a willed and *purposed* world. For the Dialectic notion whereby we grip the world of experience is, as we have shown, a one in four prime moments, each of which involves the other. Cause conceived as mere kinetic is not cause, but only efficient antecedence; and the result of *such* a cause could only be chaos. Being, energising as will-dialectic, "determines" this or that in the mediating moments (formal and formative) of its dialectic process. This determining-so is the idea—the *esse*: the result is the concrete determinate or notion—the "*hoc esse*". The process, then, of Absolute Being as creative is a rational process. And we affirm that it is so, because we cannot help doing so: it is simply the way in which finite reason grasps all experience: and the way also in which the experienced exists.

Meanwhile, as a determinate or actual, the individuum sits itself in the high court of the universe. The explicit

world is in the form of an infinite series of such individuations, each of which has its own specific nature and rights, and, as such, is opposed to the One, and to all other finites. Each mind-matter-monad (primordial actual) contains the meaning and harmony of the whole in its *positive* nature and relations: but, as a negating individuum, it resists the whole. If it were not so, the finite would fall back into the infinite, the many into the one, and there could be no world. Again, were Being not in the "moment" of negation the said negation would be Nil.

Thus we have the infinite in the finite, the one in the many—identity in endless difference; in brief, God in all as Being, Source, sustaining activity, life, reason. Nature, then, is living, not frozen, spirit; it is the vehicle and vesture of a living God—God's modality; it shows Him and does not conceal Him: and we may now see that it must be so. Spite of the resistance of the negation to God as idea, it is overpowered by the affirmation and transformed into an ordered reasoned vehicle of the idea *in so far as this is compatible with negation and individua*. Thus the concrete, as we see it, is informed and formed by the idea; and in its phenomenal vesture becomes a fit subject for physical science, for only through the phenomenal can we know the characters of the essence.

Absolute Being has, we may crudely say, in so far as immanent, given itself away and is locked up in the finitude or negation which is a moment in It as creative: it is thus restricted by its own limitations. This is the world of experience as we have it as a matter of fact, *viz.*, Absolute Being committed to and immersed in the finite as immanent in it—a *living* Being moving on in

Time to ends ; and that movement is in terms of an infinite dialectic that emerges in it.

Such is the result of our analysis of knowing on the one hand, and of our synthetic contemplation of Being on the other as that presents itself on the man-plane of the Absolute Whole.

The visible world or determinate is *not* God. In its primordial possibility it is negation of God, and, again, as determined, it is the negation, and other than God ; it is the "many" of the One. And yet it *is* God ; for as Being-inmanent it is God, and again as dialectic it is God defining Himself by affirming (*i.e.*, creating) things, and further as a visible world it is the truth of God ; for the telos or phenomenal determinate is only the final moment of a one concrete dialectic process.

To recall for a moment the meditations on Essence and Primordial Actuals. The Mind-determination, as the idea of each monad, unfolds itself into the display or phenomenon and is *eo actu* a determinate ; repeating the dialectic, as now in a "thing" of Nature, in a series of physical processes (energies and qualities). The idea as thus concreted is the Actual ; and each "thing," as so concreted, may, from the subjective side, be called the "notion" of that thing. It is obvious, however, that we can never "know" the *specific* essence or idea of a specific thing in respect of its *what*. The "idea" throws no light on individuation, but individuation is there in the phenomenal presentation or determinate — the *hoc esse*. The fact of absoluto-infinite Being man feels and affirms as ground and source of the finite ; the protensive infinite of sense too he contemplates ; the Dialectic also : he can point to the genesis of these

supreme realities in the activity of subjective finite mind : he can affirm them in each individuate as Being and Form ; but of the distinctive non-sensible characteristics of the "idea" which make each individuation unique, he can say nothing. This is a mystery : and we must drop scholastic subtleties that gather round such questions, as they gather also round the inner essence of Absolute Being. Such discussions are prohibited by human limitations : so conspicuously prohibited that any attempt to speak of them is soon found to be the mere disporting of finite categories in a region in which they have no significance. In brief, just as we cannot characterise Absolute Being save as revealed in its immanence, so we cannot characterise the individual "idea" save in its phenomenal aspects—the concluding moment in the divine dialectic process. We gladly give the go-bye to such questions as the "*esse* of the uncreated Socrates".

I have frequently said that the rudimentary, and so far forth completed, act of the subjective dialectic is Percipience. Percipience is of the single and *must* seek the ultimate unit of differentiation in every concrete. But if there were no "many," percipience and individuation with it would be for us non-existent. Attuition crudely senses individuals ; percipience actively discriminates and affirms them ; and, by virtue of the ceaseless and inexorable activity of Will in search of end, seeks to push them home to their ultimates,—even to the atom which vanishes as we touch it. And yet we must content ourselves with the Universal as determined phenomenally thus or thus (*haecceitas*) ; and beyond this explanation of the fact and genesis of individuating, no definition of the individual is possible. Negation is the *principium individuationis*, and all I can know about the thing as an individuated con-

crete is phenomenal or modal (belongs to the negation), and it is the object of the science of nature to ascertain what is there before me in its concrete actuality. The idea phenomenalises itself, and the science of nature is seen to be the science of God as a Determinate.

Casualty.

Absolute Being, we may now see, holds finite subject and object and all individua in a one related system. But the distinctions of individua are from their genesis upwards : for each is a dialectic determination of Being. It is by these differences that Absolute Being has any explicit content, and although they are not absolute differences (that is to say *self*-dependent) they are yet veritable differences mutually exclusive in the Absolute, without which the Absolute would collapse into nothing save a dim Potentiality. Absolute Being IS *in se* and *a se* : but it *lives* and comes within our ken in so far as it has a content of real differences.

The different is, through the moment of Negation, over-against God, but it is not parted from Him. It is within Him, for it is a determination of Absolute Being.

The World is not let wholly loose from God. From Being and the Dialectic that affirms the "idea" it cannot escape ; but, in so far as it is Negation, it resists the idea, and, in so far as through the negation it is a system of individuals, it contends with all else, including the very source of its Being. Thus, while the world, although *within* the Absolute, is the Other of God, it is so under conditions which involve negation, opposition and consequent casualty. Why the idea should not be at once victorious and triumphant and all be harmony and peace we cannot tell. The teleological moment in

the objective dialectic, however, compels us to affirm that all moves towards End, and this in a world made possible by Negation. We see that the End could not be attained save by struggle and a possibility of chaos. The lot of Man, as in a supreme sense the Negation of God resisting the Spirit, and as an individual fighting for his life (which life is the "idea" of his concrete actuality), is thus determined for him; and through millenniums he has to work out the purposes of God, millions falling by the way and all falling short of the idea. There is surely casualty and disorder here.

Nor are we weakly to deplore this; for without contingency and casualty the world would be a dead and monotonous "fated" world, not a living exhibition of a living God. The way of creation is not set up by God as an amusement. He does not sit on His throne and laugh at the freaks of monads and the antics of man. It is the necessary mode of His life as a finite; and an intensely living mode it is. He is constantly energising in the "idea"; and the "Absolute Idea"—the completed End and the fulfilment of infinitely many ends, must be ever in His conscious purpose. It may be asked what ground have we for saying that there is an Absolute Idea at all—a completed Thought of the universe in Absolute Being as creative? This, that God as Dialectic seeks End; and ends which are not contributory to a supreme End would be present and total chaos.

Let us then conclude that it is by virtue of the Negation that each individual is thrown out into a dependent independence and has to work from its own centre. Freedom of each and all, according to its degree in the scale of Being, is the Method of God.

The true freedom of each is in its idea which is also its telos : its power to go astray (formal freedom) is in its negating barren individuality (cosmic original Sin), and its power to fulfil the divine end is in the subsumption of the idea by the individual, and the cancelling thus far of the Negation. This movement is the transforming of the atomic individual into the concrete ideal. The negation negates itself, and God flows freely ; the individual thus unified with the Universal now joyfully and freely lives its larger life and is at home with God, living and moving in Him just as it has its being and source and end in Him.

I trust the reader will not resent the repetition of much that is already in another form contained in the First Book. It is part of the general argument that the Analytic of subjective "Knowing" (in its large sense of awareness) yields the objective or absolute synthesis we call "God". And as regards the relation of subject and object I seem to see clearly that the object in presentation is a spiritual object revealing itself to finite mind in the modality which is the expression or equivalent of the idea ; finite mind being in modal as well as ontological continuity with the Given. In brief, finite subject and object are (like infinite Subject and Object) an identity in difference—both alike determinations of and within Being Absolute. Any other way of looking at experience, by driving us into either subjective idealism or crude dualism, extrudes man from his place within the Absolute One and estops at the threshold all attempt at Objective interpretation.

MEDITATION VI.

GROUND MOMENTS IN THE NOTION GOD.

Absoluto-Infinite or Unconditioned Being as First Moment in the Notion God—Being Absolute further considered—Attributes of Absolute Being — Self-consciousness as predicated of Absolute Being—Pantheism and Immanence—Mysticism.

GOD, we have said, is The Absolute Synthesis ; that is to say, Being and the Dialectic in all experience — the ultimate in Knowledge. And we have found this God in the evolution of “Subject-object”—the necessary universals in the evolution of finite mind as sentient and cognisant. To each ascending plane of finite mind the infinite Object, which is God, gives Itself to the extent of the growing finite capacity of recipience. Fixing our contemplation on our experience, we see the Object building itself up in a series of moments, which moments are the necessary universals in the subject. These moments our epistemological analysis revealed as Unconditioned (or Absoluto-infinite) Being—object of Pure Feeling : then, when the diverse separated itself in consciousness as sentient and attitudinal, we saw the continuity of the same Unconditioned Being as now immanent in the Conditioned—the world of differences and contraries which, as phenomenal shapes and relations, constitute

the visible universe. These diverse shapes and relations we call Phenomenon—the “appearance” of Being to man ; who is himself also, as an organism, Being phenomenalised ; and in phenomenal and ontological continuity with the Whole. And thereafter, we saw that in all presentations there is, all the while, being revealed to us, as the highest moment of our own complex but one nature, a dialectic whereby we rise to the dignity of Spirit. These revelations of the infinite Object in finite subject are moments in the total Notion “God”. Let us now consider these moments and ascertain more fully what they yield to Man.

I cannot “know” God in the moment of Absolute Unconditioned Being save as the “*That*”. But I feel Him immediately ; I am aware of Him. The Unconditioned has been under a necessity to finitise Itself in an infinite series of finites in order that it may display Itself. The God whom we know lives a finite life, unrolling Himself in myriad ways ; and it is as finite that I can alone truly “know” Him. It is His very Being that He unrolls, His life, *not* a dialectic stream ; but this unrolling is in the form of the Dialectic. The Ground of all the actual and possible is in Unconditioned Being and we may call it Potentiality : it is in the “moment” of Becoming, the form of which is the Will-nisus, that I begin to “know” God.

As immanent, the universal percept, Being (we found) reaches us and is affirmed by us, not as a *per se* and isolated fact—a mere characteristic of things like any

other characteristic. If this were so, the universe would literally *be* God: there would, in short, be no God. Being is the ultimate reality; it is the *reality* or *substantia* of sense-modes and of reason-forms—not lurking behind phenomena, but in phenomena and all their relations. It is the sole Ultimate: it is the beginning and the end—the first and the last. It is the noun-verb of our system—the continuum in a universe of adjectives. It is the non-finite holding the finite: it does not stand over against the finite. God, whom we are in search of, must, as we have said, be the Absolute Synthesis: nothing can be placed outside Him, nor can anything be placed outside any of the moments that constitute the Notion, God; Negation being taken account of.

As first and basal moment of all existence and all thinking and all thought, *Being is*. We do not abstract Being, I say, from experiences, inner or outer, and collect it (so to speak) as a universal. It is *prius* of all perceiving as of all things—*prius* and primal. It is fact and ground of both subject and object. When we reflect, we find that all things of sense or thought, including ourselves, are given to us as Being, determined thus or thus. Being, in brief, is more than merely immanent or indwelling. Being under certain modes or determinations of itself is the parts and the whole of each thing. It is what (I suppose) Schelling would call the common medium of the continuity of all natural processes.

Being, accordingly, as ultimate unconditioned ground and as immanent, are the two aspects of the first positive moment in the absolute synthesis of subjective experience, and also the last moment when the absolute synthesis is finally comprehended as a concrete totality

and as a rational unity. Being is first in the beginning : Being is in every process : Being is last as consummation.

It is the hurry of finite life that prevents our realising Being in its fulness and persistence. You may feel the pulse of universal Being in yourself as in all things. You feel it as the Whole, and not any one differentiated "thing," nor yet the aggregate of "things". The subjective dialectic affirms it ; but it is *felt* prior to the emergence of dialectic activity. This Being-universal, absolute and immanent, is God—not the whole of God, but the ground-moment in any possible notion of God. Not the whole notion for it yields only "*AM*," not "*I AM THAT I AM*".

It may be said that animals also, as sentient, must feel Being, and so far, have a feeling of God. Yes ; so far as the first moment of the content of God is concerned they *feel* Him. Why not ? In a profound sense animals are our fellow-creatures and akin to us. But they cannot perceive and affirm Being-Absolute. Even man's knowledge is not a comprehension of Being-Absolute, but an affirmation of the fact or "That" of the Feeling.

Being Absolute further considered.

What *is* finite mind ? Being individuated as sentient or conscious. Put this in its lowest terms and mind is "Being that feels". Feeling is a notion that contains the felt, or object ; and *that* in its most rudimentary form. Even at that point at which the Feeling-potency may be said to have "become" out of the unknown there must be object, *or* it has not yet "become". To

get down to pure feeling as inchoate or embryonic subject, we have to think away all the predicates of a life-time. When we have done so, we shall see that "Pure Feeling" has, for object, Being indefinite, unconditioned, absolute. I have said this when speaking of planes of mind. Finite mind from the lowest to the highest is recipient of God to the extent of its potency. The first moment in the absolute synthesis which we call God, is Being Unconditioned and Absolute. This is the Implicit of all existence; but, as such, it is mere Potentiality. We can affirm nothing of it save by what comes out of it. Its predicates are the worlds. That Unconditioned Being may *live* and not merely *Be*, it must externalise itself in individuals, and live in them as their indwelling reality. Thus at the very root-beginning of the life of an individual "subject" we find the ultimate Reality out of which all arises: and again, but with a very different significance, we shall encounter it at the summit of human reason where we almost pass into an intuitive vision of the Absolute All-One.

When we try to think the birth of things we think "Becoming"—the fundamental category of the concrete. That which was *not* is "about to be". So the thoughts we think have "become" out of other things and thoughts which made them possible—not out of non-Being. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*. In like manner with the absolute Whole of finite experience: it "became," not out of non-Being, but out of Being as containing the possibility of its actuality. In the words of the Schoolmen, "*Prius est posse esse quam esse*".

All "Becoming" is in and out of Being. Becoming is Being on its way to that which is "not yet". Thus

we find the implicit of the actual and possible, the source and *fons* of things, in the very notion of Being as immanent.

In brief, Absolute Being is All-Potency; but simply because it is the Potency of all existence, it is itself an actual; and not a blind, indefinite possibility that means nothing. It is unrealised Potentiality—the prothesis of the “Become”: it is actuality in its genesis. To speak of it as “Cause” of things suggests temporal conditions.

We must begin somewhere, as Hegel says; and he rightly found a beginning in Becoming. He found in that notion the interplay of Being and Nothing. I have never been able clearly to apprehend the virtual identity of these two moments as in “Becoming”. The fact of Being seems to be jeopardised as ultimate ground by regarding it as a “moment” in traffic with Nothing as its opposed identity. There is no rest, no repose, in it; and above all, there is no potentiality in it. In “Becoming” I can see only Unconditioned Being conditioning Itself: It is the *nisus* generated in Being Unconditioned — which *nisus* is Will with all its dialectic content.

In short, what is presented to thought as the “first” in the Universal Concrete is “Being Becoming”: in other words, Unconditioned Being moving out of itself into the externalisation of what is implicit in it, by way of a process which we call the Dialectic. Thus are we compelled to think Being as absolute, potential, transcendental, *as well as* immanent. Being-immanent is Being-absolute becoming and become. We must, then, contemplate Being as mysterious fountain of all our rich experience, but as itself unknowable save in so far as it is immanent and declared in the world we have.

Creation, accordingly, is not the manufacturing of something out of alien elements however plastic, but merely the making manifest of the potency of Absolute Being in the form of a finite co-ordinated and rational phenomenal series. Nor are we entitled to say that Absolute Being exhausts the possibilities within it in what is spread out before the eye of man—not even if man knew the manifested whole of creation in its full sweep and meaning. *That* man can never do, because he himself occupies only one step of the ascending series ; but, even if he could grasp the whole of the created universe, still he would find himself gazing with wonder and awe at the central and inscrutable mystery of Being, fount of all, *causa sui*, *a se—that*, as Fichte says, “ which is neither subject nor object, but the ground of both and that out of which both come into being ”—the Neutrum of Schelling.

“ Being-absolute is in itself predicateless.” True, but it has in it the potency of all predicates. We may not say that that is “ Nothing ” which is Fons Omnium, that that is inert which is the source of all activity, that that is non-rational which manifests itself as Reason-immanent ? ¹

Attributes of Absolute Being.

If our Epistemology is a true record of mind-events, Absolute Unconditioned Being is given as ground of all possible experience, and the *nisus* of Becoming is the determination of Itself. Consequently when we say of “ determinates ”—the knowable universe—that Being is “ immanent ” therein, the word serves its purpose. And yet it is an inadequate term, for it would be more

¹ See Appendix, Note 3.

correct to say that existence *is* Being showing itself in all the variety and richness hidden in its Potentiality. Every man, whether he is aware of it or not, carries this ground-notion about with him: it is that, as Spinoza would say, without which nothing can exist or be conceived. The tendency of finite mind is to separate it and contemplate it as *an* independent Being—as God abiding with Himself in His inscrutable essence. Held bound by the great thought, he seeks to name its characters, forgetting that it is only a moment in the concrete synthesis—the ground-moment in the Notion and fact God. To assign predicates is to determine that which is given to consciousness first and last as indeterminate. This is an illegitimate and contradictory proceeding; and yet it is not illegitimate to dwell on Being Absolute and to contemplate it in its soleness and universality so long as we bear in mind that it is only *as* ground-moment in the One God that we so contemplate it.

To isolate a moment in a one concrete of movement as if it were an independent entity and then assign properties to it is futile; but to contemplate it as a moment in its relation to the other moments of the same whole and to the existent of which it is ground is quite justifiable. It is only thus indeed that we see distinctly its true character and significance. Accordingly, while we cannot assign “properties” to Absolute Being, to say that it is a blank self-identity is merely a rhetorical way of talking of that which is the fountain of all reality and actuality. Not only does the fact of its being ground-moment yield Potentiality but we can assign to it those attributes which its relation to the finite actual forces on us. To detect a moment in a one movement and then to relegate it to the Unknowable is to deprive it

of all significance in the synthesis which we are endeavouring to build up.

Now, I would define an attribute of Absolute Being as merely a re-assertion of the percept "Being" as it looms up in *presence of its opposite*. The opposite is the finite ; and the attributes, accordingly, resolve themselves into negations of the finite. Absolute Unconditioned Being, we say, is, as absolute, transcendental ; as unconditioned it is Non-finite ; as opposed to the " many " of the finite it is One ; as the not-particular it is the Universal ; as opposed to time and sequence, it is the Timeless or Eternal ; or, to put it otherwise, as opposed to change it is the During. I rightly call Being timeless (just as I say that Being is, as such, One and Unconditioned), because Being as During is not within the time-series. I cannot predicate Time of that out of which all predication and sequence emerge. To do so would bring it into a series, and I should have to look for a fresh beginning for life and thought. Professor Pringle Pattison says truly that a "timeless reality is inconceivable" (in the strict sense of that term) ; but it is immediately *felt* in feeling, just as much as Being is. These things are part of man's deepest experiences and are not to be banished into meaningless vacuity. Such experiences are factors, and necessary factors, in our knowledge of the Universal ; and they cannot be ignored. But it is true that these foundations of all experience are "unknowable" save as constitutive facts. They are the ground-mystery of all things. I *feel* and perceive Being as immanent in the conditioned : I also *feel* it as the primal Unconditioned ; and I *perceive* that feeling.

It is only as immanent in things that Absolute Being reveals its characters. It is itself the Abyss. We might

call it Fons Deitatis, but this is simply repeating what it already is to us, *viz.*, Potentiality. It adds nothing new. Now, the above attributes are not "properties" of Being-absolute in the sense that they compositely constitute it : they are attributes, by which I mean that they are *in* and *of* Being. Each is the whole of Being. They are thrown into relief in our thought,—forced upon us through the fact and the oppositions of the finite and many : that is all. In uttering them we, as a matter of fact, simply go on (like a Brahman) repeating the word "Being" in its opposition to "not-Being" or the predicates of "other-Being". As logically prius of a possible finite and many, they are positive attributes, though logically and grammatically in a negative form ; the grammatical positive being wholly within the system of negation or the created.

Accordingly, of the *modus essendi* of Being Absolute we cannot speak save as eternal Fons. But when I say that God is Unconditioned, Transcendental, Infinite, Eternal, One, Universal, and again, that He is infinite Love, infinite Beauty, infinite Goodness and infinite Truth, I assign to Him attributes ; and this is not an idle scholastic amusement, for I thereby give utterance to all that I am *not*, but which I am so constituted as necessarily to affirm. I, from my finite centre, stretch out to the Infinite on every side, and it would be bad psychology even (not to speak of philosophy) if I ignored the greatest realities of my experience. In assigning such terms to God, I do not use the language of sense and imagination ; for these give us only the indefinite, whereas the affirmation of the infinite is a product of the Dialectic in us : it is a dialectic necessity. Does this

mean nothing in a finite being planted within the Absolute Whole? Is it not his fulfilment as a rational, ethical and æsthetic being? Even if, after all, there were no God, we should still have to affirm these things as the highest—the apotheosis of man's thought.

To say that God is just or good or merciful or holy, precisely as we understand these properties in ourselves, is an illegitimate anthropomorphism; for it is to say that the infinite is finite. On the other hand, to say that He is source of the ethical and æsthetic ideals in man, just as He is source of the Dialectic, is to say that these things are God as immanent in His creation, God *as* finite; and if this be so, they are in God as infinite. All the finite is not only *of* God but *in* God under the category of the Infinite. To say otherwise is to deny the Oneness and Continuity of things.

It is God-immanent, meanwhile, that chiefly concerns us. We are profoundly concerned to know, not what God is in His absoluteness (which we can never *know*), but what He reveals Himself to be in His immanence. The fact and form of that immanence physical, rational, moral, æsthetic, is what we can *know* of God, if we set the right way about it. And that knowledge is the Truth *of* God and *in* God as revealed in the Man-moment of the infinite evolution of the Divine nature.

Absolute Being, Philo and Scotus would say, is above all predicates; others would seem to suggest that it is below all predicates. The supra-rational One of the neo-Platonist is unconscious; and the endeavour to save the purity and honour of God as transcendent is overtaken by the Nemesis of Nothing in the "One above the One" of Plotinus. In Being Absolute we find the deep repose of Being and also the activity postulated in

its potentiality. But *how* it all is in its own self-identity, we can never say. And if we could, the great Object we contemplated might be a transcendent creature, but not God.¹

As with Being-Absolute so with "The Absolute" in the sense of Absolute Whole. I have endeavoured to show how it is that subjective reason affirms "The Absolute," in the current philosophical sense, as comprehension of the total possible and actual in which, if anywhere and anyhow, there is the resolution of all possible contradictions, physical, intellectual and moral. I have endeavoured to show how this affirmation is generated. But to "know" this Whole, I have said, is impossible for a finite creature, just as it is impossible to know The Absolute in the sense of Absolute Being. An "absolute synthesis" of man's experience is always possible; a "synthesis of The Absolute" is for ever impossible, because it would involve, *inter alia*, a reduction of Being-Absolute to determination or categories; while, as regards the Absolute Whole, the fact of the Infinite which accompanies all thought assures us, in the most emphatic terms, that there always must be a further and immeasurable. Doubtless, "The Absolute," in the sense of Totality, if apprehended, would expand, probably transmute, my thought or notion of God, nay, also the character and significance of all finite things; but, as I have frequently said, it could never *cancel* what is the truth on my plane; for the God of finite reason who can be "known" is a moment and actuality in the ever-evolving, ever-living Absolute in its most

¹ See Appendix, Note 4.

comprehensive sense ; and is, consequently, for man the Truth, the Way and the Life within the Absolute whole.

Self-Consciousness as predicated of Absolute Being.

May we not say that Absolute-Being is self-conscious spirit—Absolute Ego ? Certainly the movement out of the attitudinal subject whereby self-consciousness is effected is the highest manifestation of infinite Mind as finite ; but I am not justified, because of this alone, in bringing God-Absolute, who conditions all things, under the category of self-consciousness. I do not know and cannot know what God Absolute is in His self-identity. To call Him or It “Absolute Spirit” appears to me to be dogmatism. Let us keep within critical and epistemological lines. We are in the presence of inevitable mystery. As Absolute, God is shut up in Himself, so to speak ; and when Being-Absolute goes forth into its negation as immanent therein, it does not, as I have said, leave itself and forgo its absoluteness. It merely determines *itself*. We must remember that we are in the region of Pure Thought and be on our guard against imagination. “In all development,” says Hegel, “God never comes out of His unity with Himself.” Being Absolute “is not (again to use the words of Hegel) a mere basis out of which differences spring, the truth rather being that all differences are here enclosed, . . . not inert and abstract but the absolute womb, the eternal impetus and source from which everything proceeds, to which everything returns”. We have a creation as a matter of fact, whose first moment is Absolute Being *as now immanent* in its own negation. It is Absolute as well as immanent

—not, therefore, involved in the Total which it holds in its bosom.¹ The Unconditioned, out of which conditioning comes, is not within that which it conditions. And yet, in terms of our argument, this Being Absolute is not a neo-Platonic “One” above all reason and all sense—an unknowable *x*; for it is Potentiality—the Womb, the Abyss. Accordingly, that which in Being-immanent is revealed, Being-Absolute *contains*, *e.g.*, all determined Being as undetermined; and if it be not a person, it contains personality; if it be not a self-consciousness, it contains the potentiality of self-consciousness. *As immanent*, on the other hand, it can be shown that It reveals Itself on this plane of its infinite activity (see Meditation X.) in the “form” of self-conscious Ego. But all we men can find out is only one aspect of infinite and ineffable Being. Our human plane does not exhaust the inexhaustible. Nor can we ever know what lies behind and above, unrevealed and inaccessible. Not to know the Absolute, it will be said, is to affirm that we have not absolute knowledge. That is so. Were it otherwise and could we grasp the Whole, then Faith, Hope and Ideals would then be unmeaning words to us, and we should vanish from our spiritual place in the vast system.

A potentiality, whose very definition is that it is the implicit of the Whole, cannot be other than full. The Hegelian cannot object to such a conception, for, as Dr. Hutchison Stirling says, the Hegelian Idea is synonymous with Ego, and Ego is “boundless intus-susception of thoughts all in each other and through

¹ The Hegelian Logic does not give the transcendence to be found in the Philosophy of Religion; although it implies it when it is said that the categories are God prior to His externalisation,

or thorough each other but all in the same geometrical point". Let us accept this "realisation" of Ego as a suggestion of the imagination. That the prius, *viz.*, Being-absolute and potential must contain in some way Ego, as it contains all the actual and possible—the Phenomenal, Feeling and the Dialectic is obvious; but that it itself should be Ego after the pattern of the finite Ego is by no means clear. Nay, that it should consist of "thoughts" is an assumption. Universal Being-immanent which gives the reality of the whole is at the same time Being-absolute and potential we have found, and, as such, is Prius and Ground; but when we try to take a step further, we plunge into a mist profound, and nescience seems to me to be the only sane attitude of a finite mind. As I have so often said, we begin truly to "know" God only when He is Act—the Will-nisus of determination into the other of Himself—Absolute Being as Becoming. In His outurance we have His utterance to His creatures.

At the same time, Potentiality tells us something. It tells us that Absolute Unconditioned Being is not a silent motionless sea, for, in effecting a world, it effects what is implicit in itself. It is not, to use Plato's words, "an awful unmeaningness, an everlasting fixture". It is not a numerical unit we behold; not a "somewhat" emptied of even the vague sentience of a protozoon; not a mere negation of the Finite and consequently a blank; not Being equal Nothing. It is Being as a Positive, the Yea of the Universe, *in se* and *a se*,—the Absolute God in the ground-moment of His mysterious Being. We contemplate an AM which gives forth activity and, therefore, *is* Activity. Its predicates are the finite universe which it, as immanent, sustains and pene-

trates and to which as Dialectic it gives form. Our line of argument thus brings us again to the consideration of—

Pantheism and Immanence.

If we hold that the world, as an aggregate of finites, is the Whole of God, we are blind pantheists: if we say that the world is the reflection or image of His entire Being, we are seeing pantheists; but we may, notwithstanding, save the individual and finite for itself, if we include the fact of Negation within the Absolute. If, on the other hand, Eternal Being in creating the world “simply posits itself as its own difference” (as Hegel says) while at the same moment “the difference is eternally done away with and absorbed,” and Eternal Being “does not get to be otherness in any serious sense” we are (it seems to me) thorough-going pantheists, and the individual and freedom are not saved: all the less if we allege that Eternal Being, or “Absolute Idea” or Spirit or Ego (whatever we may call it), determines itself in a necessarily evolving dialectic (*i.e.*, is determined by inner necessity and is “Spirit” only when that necessity has accomplished itself). We are delivered from this monistic pantheism not only by the fact of Negation whereby every existent is the centre of itself, but also by the fact of the moment of Being-Absolute. Assuredly God, as immanent in all and comprehending all, posits therein His own difference; that is to say, it is Himself that He posits and not anything else: but, in doing so, He does not exhaust Himself. He *remains* Absolute and Transcendental Being, the Deep which we cannot fathom.

Monistic Pantheism conceives the world as ema-

nant, not immanent, God. But the world is not an emanation : God is immanent in the world : He is the reality and life and all the displayed wealth of creation ; but not immanent *so* that all is to be regarded as the mere breathing of Being. Absolute Unconditioned Being which is only one moment in the notion God generates in itself the Will-nisus as a Dialectic, and this is the instrument and form of its Becoming. The universe has been truly called the "Thought" of God ; but the total synthesis is not the "Thinking" of God. We have to take account of negation. The world is at once "Thinking" and accomplished "Thought"—a concrete of Being, Negation and Dialectic ; and at every moment it is being re-thought. Only, I say, through the fundamental contradiction of Being and Negation do we save the individual and man for themselves as over against God, and liberate ourselves from Monistic Pantheism. We can no more "understand" Negation as an ultimate metaphysical and physical fact than we can "understand" Being. The truth seems to lie in the contradiction of these two factors constituting one concrete ; but not capable of conciliation save by the absorption of one in the other, which means either an atheistic world or an acosmic God.

Pantheism, I repeat, whether of Substance or of Logic, conceives the created as emanation—a helpless emanation, an exhalation and inhalation. On the contrary, God is immanent as Being and affirmation in a *Willed* world—a world which is the offspring of the Dialectic.

Mysticism.

Were we to restrict ourselves to the notion of God as Being which, as immanent and absolute, we first and

always *feel*, and thereafter rationally *affirm* as a felt, we should, as I formerly said, be mystics. All religion, doubtless, is mystical in its foundations, and, without this fundamental mysticism, man creates for himself gods, but does not see God. The mystic feels Being and awaits its inspiration—the divine inflow. And is it not the fact that, although our finite and petty pre-occupations exclude and occlude the stirrings of Being in us, yet it is ever knocking at the door of formal and limited ratiocination and trying to enter in? Were we, however, to stop at this point of the great argument, we should be mystics I say; perchance Buddhists. We do not stop here. The revelation has more to say about itself. The genuine mystic does not care to analyse the process that goes on in his own inner recesses of mind. It is not worth his while. But if he did, he would find that, in granting the Ground-moments in the Notion of God, he granted knowledge; for he perceives and affirms (which is to know and not merely to feel) Being-universal as content of feeling. Nay, more, if pushed hard and maieutically questioned, he would have to confess that the object “Being” contains more of content in it than he was himself aware of. For let each mystic ask himself only this one question: “Is it *blind* Being I worship as God?” If not, what then?

The mystic is impatient even of creation in his noble passion for the All-One. For creation is particularisation and is, so far, a departure from God—the Sole and Eternal. He abjures definite thinking on principle; for all that defines *eodem actu* limits. Silence is better than speech. Even his own personality he would fain abolish. Thus on the practical side, a genuine mystic is not fitted for the give and take and struggle of life:

his sense of civic duty tends to vanish along with his sense of personality. He is apt to be weak, febrile and self-indulgent, while, it may be, tolerant, sympathetic and kindly. Mysticism, accordingly, tends to demoralise and devitalise by causing abstention from ordinary moralities. It is the sensualism of reason, and it is also inverted Egoism. Its attitude to human life is the luxury of renunciation, not the toil of sacrifice. But the mystic, notwithstanding, serves an important purpose by emphasising the Infinite in man, and bringing down all finite aims to nothingness. The mystic intuition is not the whole Truth, but only the Ground-moment in the Absolute Synthesis.

And yet, the mystic is supremely right. The function of reason is to determine ; but, with all its determining, it can never wipe out the universal and undetermined that lies at the root of subject-object—the positive of Absolute and Immanent Being which Feeling yields to consciousness. In one aspect of things, indeed, Reason is an impertinence. It is the Feeling of Being that first, and also last, connects me with the “Whole” of God ; without this, the conclusions of Logic yield only a barren and detached fragment. “The Real is greater than Thought,” it has been said : I would add “than the possibility of thought” ; for all thought is necessarily limitative. Even the universe as “thought” of God limits *Him*, even though we say that the limit is within Himself. He is more than the universe.

Let us conclude now that Absolute Being unconditioned, and immanent as the universal in the conditioned, are the first two moments in the concrete Notion—God ; and that they are in truth One funda-

mental moment in different aspects. If so, it appears to me that we are far on our way to find how we must think God—the way in which Man thinks, and must think, God whether this man or that man is aware of it or not. But even if it be the way in which Man thinks, and must think, God, will it, after all, be the great God Himself? Assuredly not; but only the man-necessity of Him: that is to say, the aspect of His eternal and immeasurable Being which has actualised itself on this plane of His infinite possibility.

Note.—See Appendix, Note 5.

MEDITATION VII.

GOD AS DIALECTIC.

God as Objective Dialectic, *i.e.*, (*a*) as Will (Kinetic Cause or Efficient), (*b*) as Mediating formal ground, (*c*) as Mediating Formative ground, (*d*) as End—the idea and ideal, (*e*) as Sum of Ideals—Nature of Immanence: Man in relation to this.

WE are in search of the moments in the Absolute Synthesis—the noumenal universals in the myriad modes of externalisation with which (by means of our senses as interpreted by reason) we are brought into that living continuity in which all existence, subjective and objective, is bound in one. And we have now planted our feet firmly on the fact of Absolute Being Unconditioned and Immanent, One, Universal, Infinite, Eternal. This would almost seem to be enough; but the objective record, written by the finger of God in the subject, does not permit us to stop here. The highest plane of finite mind has now its contribution to make.

THE DIALECTIC.

The Whole is a “determination” of Being and the determination is in the form of the Objective Dialectic. We have already spoken of this in general terms; but this is not enough. We must now look at the various moments of the one Objective movement and see their full significance as moments in the process of Absolute

Being as immanent God. Thereby we may attain to a knowledge of the full significance of Objective Dialectic as Form of God-creative.

GOD AS OBJECTIVE DIALECTIC.

(a) *God as Will (Kinetic Cause or Efficient).*

The subjective dialectic when it makes its appearance in man, the highest plane of Infinite mind as Finite, necessarily (we said) takes up and reduces into the subject the total of experience under the Teleologico-Causal Notion, which may be briefly spoken of as a one movement in four prime moments—Will or initiating kinetic with Form of End implicit : Mediation as Formal Ground (the negation of all else save A, the object) : Determining-so or Formative Ground or Cause ; and Telos or End (the Determinate).

Thus it is that conscious subject emerges out of reflexive attitudinal life, *i.e.*, through a movement self-engendered¹ which we call Will ; and which, by its very essence, seeks End after a Way or Method.

Accordingly the third moment in the synthesis of the notion God as revealed in subject-object, is "Becoming"—the form of which is Will. In this initiating *nisus* we find the transition from the first moment—Being as potentiality (Absolute Being) to Being as immanent in actuality, or the concrete of existence. It is thus, and thus only, that I seize for knowledge the actual and possible of presentation : this *is* knowing.

¹ By self-engendered we mean that it is immanent in the lower stage and stages of finite mind as within God's evolutionary revelation of Himself.

Will is a ceaseless movement, an untiring energy—pure activity in Absolute Being appearing as immanent activity in the system of things—the infinite limitation of the infinite Unlimited. Thus in nature we have no point of absolute rest : all is at once becoming and become. The One of Being and Dialectic process alone remains persistent through all.

In the heart of Unconditioned Being there is generated this *nisus* to unfold Itself as a created world of finite differences.

(b) God as Mediating Formal Ground.

The second prime moment in the one Dialectic movement is Mediation. Will in moving to affirmation or end mediates through negation as the formal possibility of affirmation. Speaking under temporal conditions, we say the end is projected, but cannot be effected save through the negation of all else and of the One creative Being.

(c) God as Mediating Formative Ground.

Determining-so and not otherwise is Formative Ground or Idea—that which in relation to the concrete thing or determinate we call Essence.

“Determining-so” or *A* does not emerge out of or by virtue of the formal negation of *B*, *C*, etc. : the negation merely makes *A* possible. It is *that* which constitutes the positive character of *A* which negates *B*, *C*, etc. It is, in truth, the affirmation of the specific being of *A* which necessitates the negation of *B*, *C*, etc. The “Determining-so” negates all else. To imagine

a universe made up of a relation of negations, while Being undifferentiated is common and identical in all, is to imagine a self-annihilating absurdity. A concrete positive resting on a fusion of "nots"!

And yet as in the affirmation of *A* there is the negation of *B* etc., so in the negation of *B* and all else is the possibility of the affirmation of *A*.

The "Determining-so" of *A* can "be" only as the affirmation of itself and, *there-through*, the negation of all else: and in the negation of all else it at the same time affirms "an all else". Thus is presented to us a universe of individua.

But the point to note here is that the second moment in the Dialectic is *Cause as Determining or Formative* resting for its possibility on formal negation: that it is the affirmation that negates, not the negation that contains the affirmation. The Formative ground of the affirmation cannot be separated from the mediating ground of the *possibility* of the affirmation.

(*d*) *God as End. The Idea fulfilled or the Ideal.*
(*Fourth Moment of the Dialectic.*)

The fourth and final moment in the Objective Dialectic is End or Idea fulfilled, *i.e.* the Determinate. Each moment in the one movement is in the other, and End is contained in the initiatory moment of Will, at which stage it is only the empty "Form" of End.

In the resultant or fulfilment of the dialectic movement, the idea or differentiation appears as the affirmed or determinate concrete thing. Objective thinking is now "thought"; the idea is now concrete notion—

the Actual: that is to say, idea and phenomenon. Our Epistemology yielded all this.

When we pass from Universal Mind to the externalisation we pass into the concrete of Time, Motion and Space, and into a finite and sense-given world—a world of Quantity, Quality, Relation and Degree. It is in and through this externalisation that the universal Dialectic creatively expresses itself; just as the subjective finite dialectic finds, in the same externalisation, the given matter which it co-ordinates and rationalises and subsumes as the filling and truth of *its* particular being. The primary end of the subjective Dialectic is simply affirmation or percipience—that the *thing is so* as already there existent: the end of the objective Dialectic is also affirmation—affirmation in and through the negation. And this creative affirmation is that the *thing shall be so*. The relation of Absolute Being as Dialectic to existence may be said to be that of creative percipience: in perceiving it creates, in creating it perceives. The determined concrete totality is accomplished end; that is, the universe—Absolute Being in its modality as moulded by the Dialectic.

If our analysis be true, the externalisation is God in the modes of Quantity, Motion, Quality, Relation, and its laws or processes are the inner dialectic of God as thus externalised. But while the phenomenon thus reveals God, it, as finite negation, resists God. Thus we say that the universe is God and is not God. This is the fundamental contradiction in our experience. If to get rid of this contradiction we eliminate the “is” we have an unintelligible non-significant mechanical world of predicates; if we eliminate the “is not” we have monistic

pantheism in which difference and the individual are illusions.

(e) *God as Sum of Ideals.*

The idea or "determining-so" is, as a determinate, idea concentered. The ideal, as distinguished from the concentered idea, is a harmoniously moulded expression of the idea—the perfection of the concrete. I need not repeat here what I have already said regarding the necessary impulse towards idea and the ideal in the heart of the subjective dialectic. But it is necessary to recall this innate impulse in connection with the final moment of the Objective Dialectic—the End which is the idea concentered—the "Determining-so" now a "Determinate". For Absolute Being, *as immanent dialectic*, contains not only the idea and its concrete the Determinate; but also the harmonious fulfilment of the idea, which is the Ideal.

The finite subjective dialectic, we found, ever seeks for the idea or essence with the assurance that it is there in the attained end; and, further, for the ideal in the assurance that it is possible. The possibility of the ideal is contained in the necessary nature of the subjective dialectic as generating the Infinite in thought. "End" is the stimulus and motive of thinking—the spring of Will, and the Ideal is ever sought for and affirmed. So, Being-Absolute contains, in its dialectic *nisus*, Ends which are the stimulus of the creative initiation—the act of Will. The world is a teleological world in the sense that the end of each thing and of the whole is its own fulfilled self. Theoretically, accordingly, the Whole is a purposed harmony. Whether, to our human eyes, it

truly realises this harmony or not is simply a question of empirical fact. The aim is the Ideal ; the striving is always towards this ; and the full reality of each and of the whole is in their ideal possibilities.

Thus it is that we are constrained to think God as the Sum of Ideals, as well as the source and sum of Ideas.

And yet, as a matter of fact, we see that in this sphere of God's infinite activity, ends are never wholly fulfilled as ideals. They are only on their way. This is obvious. If this our plane of Being be the final evolution of God as finite, the world is a failure.

Thus the final moment in the Dialectic, while completing the notion of God as End and Idea, yields to us, also, God as Sum of Ideals—Perfection. He is interwoven with the emotions of men, rational, ethical and æsthetic. We are sometimes asked to worship the “Spirit of Good” as our God. This is to worship Him as Sum of Ideals.

Note, that if our reasoning has been sound and we exist in a One of system and process, the characteristics of the immanent God are moments in the Objective Dialectic, and are not mere subjective phantasies. For Absolute Being as immanent proceeds by way of a Dialectic and the moments in that Dialectic reveal Him as not merely Will or Kinetic Cause, and mediating Formal and Formative Ground ; but as End ; and, finally, as Sum of Ideals or perfected Ends. And if the great cosmic movement, in which and of which we are, does not contain this at the heart of what may be called “The Absolute Idea,” the state of man is desperate. This *is* The Absolute Idea—the eternal beginning which is also the end.

Under the category of the Ideal, God attracts the adoration of many who can discern nothing else in His nature on which they can dwell. Be it so. Thus far, they live with God. So with the mystic who feels and has for object only Being ; so with the man who sees only efficient Cause : so with the submissive moralist who sees only Will as Law. These men are all with God ; but each abstractly and partially. The Teleologico-Causal notion, which is the form of the Dialectic, or rather is the Dialectic, contains many moments ; and God is no one abstract moment, but the total movement.

*Nature of Immanence: Man in relation to this.*¹

The immanence of God in the world does not mean that He dwells therein as a constant formative of every *new* causation ; but merely that the world is an effluence of His nature and Will to which the idea and its contained positive relations are constantly being given ; but all things have to effect themselves. Each ultimate actual and each complex thing is itself a potency of causes and of the recipience of causal influences from all other things ; that is to say, they are recipient of motions and transmitters of motions : in other words, all is in reciprocity. God, meanwhile, is there as idea of each and of the Whole : He is not gone on a journey, nor asleep. What we see is the very form of His Life as creative ; and, were the primal creating energy withdrawn, all would go to pieces, and chaos would reign. Speaking under the category of Time, the immanence of God is a continuously repeated pulsation.

¹ See in this connection " Primordial Actuals " in the First Book.

That is what is meant by the immanence of God. It is a protest against the doctrine that God created the world, turned it loose, and then retired to eternal contemplation of His own Glory. He, on the contrary, always is and must be *in* it, because it is part of Himself, one aspect of His mode of Life—the finite aspect. The ever-presence and omnipresence of God is the theological way of affirming immanence. God as Dialectic must be ever affirming each actual; but that actual has to do its own work without further interference. He does not create a thing and then supersede it. The physical and moral order alike have to be reckoned with by each and all. We men have to accept God on His own terms, and hard terms they are.

God mediates His ideas as He mediates all His ends, through the modal Negation. As Negation each thing is a *per se*: in its idea or positive relations, it is One with the Whole, contains the Whole, and thus we have an ordered world. Each actual, we saw, is a synthesis of the idea and the negation by which its individuality is constituted; and the subsumption of the idea by the individual would be the ideal fulfilment of it as a concrete. Man, for example, being the very Dialectic in subjective form and so endowed with a regulative “idea” has to mould his own life by finding the ideas (or laws) in his concrete experience and subsuming them into his individual Ego as active forces.

Meanwhile, let us remember that it is God Himself who is thus ever moving towards ends in and through His creatures. Finite reason ascertaining ideas and ideals, and seeing them in God as eternally beginning and end, source and fulfilment, thereupon rests in this Universal Notion, and finds the significance

of finite personality and all finite life to be its participation in an infinite and divine movement. This is the life eternal: this is Religion. It is only then that morality—the prosaic and pragmatic morality of ordinary life—is illumined and is exalted to be veritably the Truth of and in God. It is obvious that the common moralities must have, first of all, arisen out of ordinary experience and their direct bearing on the material interests of society. As such they still hold sway over men of the understanding alone; and it is well for the safety of organised society that they do. It is only, however, when elevated into ideas and ideals, and seen to be the Truth of Feeling and the Truth of and in God, that these moralities find their ultimate expression. Life in them, so conceived, is life in God.

We contemplate the sum of ideals as immanent in the cosmic movement, and pursue them as Truth, Goodness, Beauty. After all, it may be said, these things are in their *fulness* of reality (their ideality) mere illusions—the will o' the wisps of finite mind. On the contrary, the mere affirmation and pursuit of them contains the postulate that as realities they, in their absoluteness of perfection, *are*; and we know, as a matter of fact, that by them Man can alone grow to his full stature. Man is the interpretation of his own world, and the “ought to be” is the true significance for him of the circle of the vast Whole within which he lives and acts. Nor do we require to pass into the region of emotion to justify the ideal as actuality; for it is contained in the Dialectic in which the Telos or end or, briefly, the Good (in the Hellenic sense) is emphatically affirmed;

and in that affirmation the fact of Infiniteness necessarily revealed.

This Dialectic is objective. The teleological movement towards the fulfilment of idea as actualised ideal is a Universal. It is only because it is an objective fact that the Dialectic can possibly arise in the consciousness of man. The "stream of ideal tendency" (to use a phrase of James's) is *there*. Crude Dualism, by putting man and the object in antagonism, has therein put God and Man in antagonism. I am merely a particular in a universal objective movement which finds its final term (in this sphere of the Divine evolution) in me as feeling subject and knowing subject and doing subject. All is one. The subjective ideal is the objective ideal—God's ideal mediated through a finite recipient and knower. God's ideal is not in the air, but immanent in the possibilities and "ought" of each created thing.

We do not need to study history and pre-history to know that these ideals change, and that the progress of the objective idea in subjective man is not a steady evolution in time, but sometimes a regress; because we see all this going on in our own children, nay, in ourselves. But there always *is* an ideal—must be, by the essential nature of the Dialectic. God moves *in Time* in and through the Negation towards the fulfilment of Himself in man, as in all things. The Finite is within Him as being the Absolute Synthesis: "The *earth* is the Lord's and the fulness thereof". Out of Absolute Being gushes forth in a perennial stream the living universe, determined as to its form and nature by the Will-Dialectic; just as the one central pulsation of the heart sends the blood circulating through every part of the

human frame, determined as to its various functions in each particular tissue.

Absolute Being then as creative, in other words, as the God we "know," has, for end, the idea of each individual as a concrete, and, further, the ideal or The Good (in the Hellenic sense). The achieved dominancy of the governing idea (the Will-dialectic) in the "many" of inner sense and feeling is the end of man. The elements which constitute the negation in the concrete man-individual, are summed up in the content of the attitudinal plane of mind out of which the "idea" has emerged: this is, relatively, chaos, and it is only by persistent activity that we can reduce this to law and order. Our human task is the sublating of the idea into the negating individuality—the bare atomic self or Ego, so that thereby the "self" may become a full concrete personality. Man's life, accordingly, is a pursuit and an endeavour after the actualisation of the Divine intention in his own life of feeling and thought and action; to which he is ever-approximating, if he will. In so far as he does not strive, he is not *man*. A subjective vague conviction that all this is so, may suffice to stimulate and to inspire: but the business of philosophy is to demonstrate that an adequate epistemology reveals these things to us as the supreme verities for finite man, as they are top and crown of the creative activity of God Himself on this plane of His evolving Being.

It would appear then that man if he is to be man, and not merely the highest animal, must ever seek Absolute Truth, Goodness and Beauty; but he will never find them until he sees God, and, seeing God, sees all in Him.

MEDITATION VIII.

GOD IMMANENT AS FEELING.

- (1) Feeling, neutral and pathic—(2) Feeling in all things and all stages of Life; Ethical Ideals—(3) God Immanent in the Universals of Feeling: (a) in Intellection; (b) as Pathic: the Dialectic and Pathic meet in Ethical and Æsthetic Ideals—(4) God mediates His ethical Ideals through Man—(5) God is an Ethical God; but the predicates of God are not properties—(6) God is not mere Reason.

(1) *Feeling Neutral and Pathic.*

IF Absolute Being as Creative God reveals Himself to us in the Universals of experience we must take the whole revelation. I endeavoured to show that if God be "Life" He must outer Himself *as life* in finite things or leave His universe an inorganic mechanical mass; and further, that if He be infinite Mind, He must complete His externalisation *as finite mind*. When we begin to ask what we mean by the supreme Notion, God, the material of our thought is the Universal Object: that is to say Subject-Object. The Object is God revealed in and to finite subject. It is the infinite Subject living as His own finite Other. And just as we find His modal presentations revealing to us the inorganic, mechanical and chemical, so we find them revealing organism, life, and mind. And finite "mind" we find to be at root Feeling of an "other"; and, all through its successive

ascending steps, Feeling persists as the note of finite mind, which, even in its highest activity, so far from transcending Feeling, finds in Feeling the prevailing characteristic of supra-rational Intuition.

Neutral Feeling is the basis and accompanying note of all mind as recipient and reflexive intelligence : Feeling as pathic, that is to say as desire, as pleasure and pain and as emotion, is at the root of all activity and is its accompanying note.

If, then, the Infinite Object presented to us be determinates of Absolute Being, each containing those positive relations of recipience and activity whereby it contributes, through the fulfilment of itself, to the fulfilment of an ordered universe, in so far as the negating individuality of each permits, then a kind of feeling is in each according to the stage of the evolution of the life of Absolute Being which it occupies. But at what point in the unfolding of God, as a finite series, pathic Feeling enters into things, it is, I suppose, impossible to say. To speak of physical atoms, or even mind-matter monads, as feeling, desiring, and so forth, is to re-introduce the anthropomorphic Love and Hate of Empedocles, and to bring confusion into thought.

That the purely dynamical atom—the primordial actual exhibits actions, re-actions, affinities and antipathies, is an illustration of the one-ness of the externalising process. For, these characteristics of the physical are, it may be said, an anticipation and prediction of what is coming in the fulness of Time—Life, Feeling, Consciousness, Self-Consciousness. But, although we may hold that all that is in the fulfilled End of the externalised system is immanent in the beginning, we are not, there-

fore, to scatter about our terms to the confounding of exact distinctions. We must make the distinctions which God makes.

When a Feeling "thing" (determined entity) appears on the cosmic scene God has then begun to realise Himself as finite *mind*—to reflect Himself into an inchoate subject, and the evolution of finite mind through all its grades, as a fulfilment of God-finite as subject, starts on its way. Mind, diffused in all things, now finds a centre in which it shall be "for itself" and hold a "mirror up to nature"; and each succeeding step in its gradual evolution goes to the completion of the record of God in His outurance. The Object, which is always God, fills each grade of mind to the extent of its capacity, and constitutes its Reality as a concrete—its fulfilment in the absolute Whole. I, here, speak of Feeling in the widest extension of the term as awareness of the other. But it has to be noted that, when an organism exhibits pathic feeling (feelings of pleasure and pain, desire and aversion), feeling thereupon constitutes the dominant and governing source of activity and, consequently, of life within the organism; until a self-conscious subject appears on the scene and determines ends for itself in the matter of Feeling.

We have seen that the animal mind, even in the highest form of attuition, is simply a reflexive and assimilating subject. It is still within the natural series, although the anticipations and predictions of a higher plane of mind, though not always obvious, may frequently be detected. The fulfilment of the organism is left to a system which is dynamical, although in terms of feeling and consciousness. But the elements are so balanced

and in their parts related, that the organism can fulfil the ends of its existence by sentiently responding to the promptings from within and from without; but not as *self*-regulating. This means that the Objective Dialectic or Reason is "in it" and "for it" as instinct: the organism is swept along in the broad current of living things.

These pathic feelings, in all their range, are connate in man as in the animal, but in him they seem to exist in an anarchic multitude. But they are not so in themselves or in their inner relations: it is only as the basis and material of a higher plane of mind that they are found to be, relatively to that higher plane, chaotic: God has finitised Himself as subjective Dialectic in and for them: and when He finitises Himself as the very dialectic in an organism, man is *ipso facto* evolved.

If, however, this higher plane of mind had for its function the regulation of the conflicting feeling-elements of the lower plane merely, it would be worse than useless. For the animal is more harmonious, and therefore more fulfilled, as an organism of Feeling, than man can ever be. Man, as Will-dialectic, finds that his "idea"—this very dialectic, has to fulfil *itself* by help of the matter, and in the matter, of the lower non-rational planes of the Divine evolution which are built into him. Thus it is, that it becomes of prime importance to ascertain what the true nature of the subjective dialectic precisely is. And when we have found it to be Will-reason with its resultant Ego; and its form of life to be Will, mediating Ground and End, with ideas and ideals as its substantive actuality, the lower plane of attunition is at once seen to be a standing contradiction of that life until it is subsumed into it

as thought, and receives its thought-determination as motives of activity. The lower plane, accordingly, may be said to have *become* lower merely through the emergence in the subject of a higher whose function is the organisation of the lower, not only in its own interests as an organism, but for the satisfaction of its own dialectic necessities. The dialectic, which on the lower plane was "in and for" organism, is now liberated from nature-conditions, and has the duty of knowing, organising and fulfilling ends thrown on it as a free self-regulating energy—a magnificent but fatal endowment.

Leaving this line of thought (already often considered by us), we recognise the fact that Man is a free dialectic energy or form that finds the matter of its activity, as knowing and doing, in the given of inner as well as outer Feeling. And inasmuch as we are engaged in looking for the elements which go to form the notion of God as a Concrete One-Whole, we would now ask, Is God Being and Reason only, or is He also immanent as Feeling in the pathic sense?

Man is not a Dialectic alone: his "Notion" comprehends feeling and emotion of which he is all compact, and hence it is that he seeks for some response in the Universal to his own unsatisfied longings and boundless capacity for emotional as well as intellectual love. The mathematics of astronomy will not give us the stars, nor will Dialectic give us a God equal to the demands of the human spirit in all its reach and depth. Man needs an infinite Heart on which to repose.

Is God, at best and highest, a self-conscious process—an Absolute Ego living the life of "Notions"? When

we are told that "logical notions" are an exposition of God in His essential nature before the creation of the world, the facts of experience compel us to say that, by their help alone, God could not have created the living breathing world we know. He is not simply another name for all-pervading, all-comprehending Dialectic. Let us, then, put the question : Is Absolute Being immanent in the finite externalisation as Feeling as well as Dialectic ?

(2) *Feeling in all things and in all stages of Life.*
Ethical Ideals.

In the least, as in the greatest, the truth of a complete thing is in the fulfilled idea which contains the law of it. In man, the ethical is not abstract law, descending from the clouds, nor yet is it the issue of pure dialectic ; it is feeling (desire, impulse) and emotion controlled and regulated, by the action of the subjective dialectic (which is the man-idea) to ends which we call ethical ideas and ideals, in which, as truth of man, resides the Law. The ethical, accordingly, is instinct with emotion. Without emotion there would be no ethics ; although there might be, in communities, police regulations with their penalties. Further, not only is the world as we see it full of feeling and emotion, but it is this that is the driving force in all sentient creatures. Indeed reason in its various degrees would seem to exist for the mere purpose of making Feeling effectual under law. Feelings are the immortal horses of the chariot of the Sun : Dialectic is the charioteer.

In presence of such facts as these we cannot stop at Being and the Dialectic, and say that now we have the whole of God in His creative manifestation. The

metaphysical implicates—the noumenal universals of all cognition do not exhaust the nature of God immanent. The Absolute Synthesis contains more. The Dialectic is merely determinative and formative. The world as *given to us* is what we have to interpret; and what we have forced on us is a scale of being from the primordial actual and its mechanism up to man with all his complexity of nature; and at a certain stage of this ascent, we encounter Life and the fact of Feeling. We find this feeling in a rudimentary form, even in the vegetal world; and rising gradually, through an infinite series of sentient existences, to Man. This sentient consciousness has been hitherto considered by us only in its cognitive aspects, and as the soil out of which emerges the Will-dialectic or pure reason. But such a view of sentient consciousness is restricted, and inadequate to the facts.

Feeling of the given, not merely as a given of bare fact and relations, but as yielding to us a content of specific qualitative tone, occupies the field of consciousness. Outer sense and all experience, we have seen, rests on, and starts from, the indefinite Feeling of unconditioned Being, advancing to those specific feelings of differentiates of Being-immanent (sensation of the diverse) which we call the physical world, whose metaphysical implicates we have endeavoured to disentangle. The commonest objects are presented to us with a significance of meaning which we cannot explain, but which I believe to be simply the flash of the meeting of individual conscious being with Being-universal as revealed in things; things being always instinct with the unexplained and unexplainable mystery of Being. There is a feeling-tone—a something which, in high

perceptive moments, makes the heart beat quick. In this lies the justification of the mystic; and, in truth, we are all mystics when we penetrate below the surface of commonplace existence.

But this is not all: for sentient beings are so organised in their separateness as to be themselves well-springs of feeling of a peculiar and pathic character. They are, in fact, organised systems of pathic feeling, and the intelligence they possess seems to be a mere servant of the fit expression and full satisfaction of feeling as recipient, or of desire as active. Even in man, Reason is at once servant and master of Feeling. In the animal, feeling is organised by its instinctive intelligence such as it may be in each (a dynamic of recipience, assimilation, association and reflex action): in man it is organised by the free activity of Will-dialectic; and we call the rationalised content Ethics. Feeling in sentient organisms differentiates itself into particular feelings necessary for the preservation of the individual, the conservation of the species, and the communion of individuals one with another. But not only so: for this Feeling (which is, in its large generic sense, also the root of consciousness) accompanies all the activities of man wherever they manifest themselves, and instigates those activities. It pours itself out in enthusiasm, and sometimes over-runs its borders in floods of noble or ignoble passion. The history of humanity is always the history of Feeling—sometimes regulated by Reason, oftener uncontrolled.

Again, Feeling, root of all conscious life, exhibits itself in various ascending degrees as organic desire, moral and religious emotion, the emotion of reason, the emotion of the ideal and of Truth. It thus accompanies the conscious life of man in all its reflexive possibilities and

rational energies. Its highest form is the emotion of pure reason—the joy of knowing as such, which, when carried beyond logical limits, passes back, as apotheosis of reason, into Feeling. This we sometimes call Intuition, an attitude of mind in which finite reason lays its tribute at the feet of an infinite emotion.

Further, a feeling of a specific kind and known as the feeling of the Beautiful is experienced by man alone among creatures known to us. It is a something over and above the mere “awareness” of the forms, colours and combinations of nature, and distinct from other pathic feelings. As a Feeling it defies all definition, and admits of explanation only in respect of conditions, characteristics and evolution.

In fine, when we contemplate the life of man, we find that Feeling in its various forms chiefly governs it, and that pure reason with difficulty raises its head above the conflict of appetites, passions and emotions. Feeling seems to occupy the field; and, even when we, as thinkers, have apparently reached, after long prosaic toil, some abstract knowledge, even this becomes suffused with emotion; and, but for emotion, would lie dead and barren within us. For, of all forms of Feeling, the most potent in a being of reason are those which are inherent in ideals. We accept the tradition that these ideals are summed up in the words Truth, Goodness, Beauty; and Man cannot think for one passing moment of these ideals without being raised, by a breath of emotion, above the prose of life. To live in presence and pursuit of these ideals is, in truth, to lead the life divine. In them is revealed the consummation of man’s possibilities on earth; nay, the earnest of a future after death.

The patent facts of experience, accordingly, compel us

to say that Absolute Being is immanent not only as Being and Dialectic but as Feeling in all its modes. Even as appetitive desires God is immanent, determining their range and law for the animal, and proclaiming to man, in accents unmistakable, that he must limit and regulate his own impulses in order that these may live and furnish their contribution to his spiritual completeness. In the higher emotions, again, God is immanent as constituting, through reason, those ideals by which alone man can ascend to his purposed place in the scale of creation. It is as these very ethical and æsthetic ideas and ideals, effected by the dialectic in the *matter of Feeling*, that God is supremely immanent.

The individual, meanwhile, always contains the negation : God is not there, but in the idea. He is not immanent in all the particular illusions and blunders of Feeling any more than he is immanent in all the vagaries and aberrations of the subjective dialectic, but only in the Truth of the dialectic activity, the ideal towards which He is always moving in all things. The truth of man is God as finite, just as the law of the stars is God as finite : but the former has to be excogitated and elaborated by man himself in the long time history of God as finite mind. Ethical ideals are mediated not by God in and through man, but by man for God.

(3) *God as Immanent in the Universals of Feeling* (a) *as in Intellection* ; (b) *as Pathic*. *These two movements meet in Ethical and Æsthetic Ideals.*

We have seen that Absolute Being as creative God is immanent in the world as the universals of sense and cognition. In like manner, He is immanent as the

“universals” of pathic Feeling. I am not prepared to say what the pathic Feeling-universals are, save in general terms; and in what I suggest, I must be guided by our analysis of planes of Infinite Mind as finite mind.

Pure Feeling whose Object is Being Unconditioned is at once intellective and pathic. From this root of all Feeling, we see sensation and attuition evolving themselves; that is to say, the intellective consciousness of shapes and motions in Time and Space as implicating Being. On the highest plane, again, the *feeling* of Being is involved in the dialectic grasp of things; nay, its activity, still more the resultant of the activity in the perception of Truth—in other words the satisfying of the Dialectic—yields a Feeling which is no longer without tone, but on the contrary a joyous emotion.

Meanwhile, Feeling, as pathic, has been evolving itself on its own specific lines alongside the intellective evolution; contributing to the matter of consciousness and cognition, but constantly also traversing and overwhelming mere cognition as such. These open up to us a large field of inquiry and lead to the understanding of the characteristics of individual men and the processes of education. I must be content here with the universals, partly because these suffice for my general argument, and partly because of my ignorance. Indeed, I am well pleased if I can state these universals even approximately.

First.—There is the Feeling of Being unconditioned which lies, I have said, at the basis of man-experience, both cognitive and pathic.

Secondly.—Pathic Feeling becomes, on the sentient plane, Desire arising out of the organism as a whole.

Thirdly.—There is on the attitudinal plane (the highest grade of sentience) where man comes into relation with other sentient beings, Feeling as the emotion of Love. And by Love I here mean fellow-feeling or sympathy, which generates and renders possible Goodwill to others and the love of the Goodwill of others. These are the main pillars of Society.

Fourthly.—There is the Feeling or Emotion of the Beautiful.

Fifthly.—There is the Feeling, as emotion, of Pure Reason or the Dialectic in the pursuit and perception of Truth.

In the last three we see the potent forces in our nature which yield, under the insistence of the Dialectic, the ideals of the Good, the Beautiful and the True.

The True might conceivably exist for us without the stirring of any feeling ; but as a matter of fact it yields the intensest feeling *qualitatively*, although not so broad and diffusive as the feeling of the Good and the Beautiful ; nor so massive quantitatively as Desire.

Now these Universals of Feeling are Absolute Being as externalised, God immanent quite as much (to say the least) as the universals of sense and cognition.

It will be said that the ideals which we call Absolute Truth, Absolute Goodness and Absolute Beauty, are merely the issue of man's reason in dealing with inner and outer experience. Precisely so. But the point is this, that Absolute Being as creative God, finds *Itself* in its creatures and realises its nature and life as a Finite in and through them. This is what the Oneness of the Whole means : any other view is, as I have often said, crude Dualism. When we have found the truth

of our experience and law of our life (and it is left *to us* to find it), it is God we see, Who is in all, but is supremely present in the highest life of His final expression—Man. I do not mean to say that God is to be found in our idiosyncrasies, in our arbitrariness or caprice, our likes or dislikes, our weaknesses and sins : these things belong to the Negation and are individual, contingent and accidental ; but He assuredly is immanent in that which is the necessary condition of an ideal finite existence for man, just as much as He is in the law of the inorganic and organic world. He is the positive idea in the negation. The necessary elements in an ideal finite existence such as man's, are comprehended within the Absolute Idea. God is the Great Affirmation in the Negation. And thus it is that God reveals Himself to us as Feeling, and as the ethical ideal which prescribes the law to Feeling. He is immanent also in those impulses that are the basis of man's life, and are the "matter" of his adequate actualisation. It is God that mediates Himself in Man as sympathy, love, compassion and justice, just as He is mediated as Truth and the Ideal in the midst of unreason, falsehood and failure.

In brief, if God be the Absolute Synthesis, then assuredly feeling, desire, emotion, which are the ground characteristics of all conscious life and penetrate, in ascending degree, the lowest and highest of its manifestations, find themselves in the very heart of the notion of the whole ; and God, as immanent, is in touch with all His creatures, not only as Being and Dialectic, but as pathic feeling. If we put it more popularly, what is it we say ? Merely this, that feeling, desire and emotion, being in the system they must be in God as Source and immanent Sustainer—the One

Universal of the system, if the system be a system—a One of process. It does not follow that I am to expect God to share my loves and hates, my pleasures and pains. His externalisation (as I have sufficiently shown) is in the form of finite individuals and finite relations, which are, in their essence or idea, God affirming Himself ; but each individual has to fulfil itself, and its particular acts are from a universal point of view the casual and contingent. It is in the idea, constitution and end of each that God as Feeling is ever present.

While we find the objective dialectic operative from the primordial elements of the universe up to the self-conscious ego, we find Feeling in all its forms enter into the universe of things, I have said, only with organism and life. At a certain stage of inorganic development, life enters—that is to say, Absolute Being becomes immanent as Life, just as He is already immanent as mechanical law. This inflashing of Life is a fresh pulse in the eternal evolution of God as finite. It is not necessary that Life should be regarded as immanent in inorganic pre-conditions of life ; but it may be so. God is an ever-living God, even in the lava that strews the mountain-slope. In Life there is contained the category of Feeling ; but we cannot call this a new category in the objective dialectic *as such*. The Dialectic is form ; Feeling is the condition of, and avenue to, the Real. A pure dialectic is impotent to yield this new element of Feeling in the finitised life of Absolute Being. It is the starting-point, or germ, of sentient consciousness through which all the matter or real of God's externalisation "becomes" for a subject, and is, in the case of man, woven by the dialectic into the "actual" of thought and

the "actual" of human life. Being, Feeling, Dialectic, are the three strands in the finite life of God which we distinguish, but which are always a concrete One. But the universe, in all its various and successive planes of existence, is an ordered unfolding of the secret content of Absolute "Being"—not of a Dialectic any more than of a geometrical theorem.

In pure Feeling, I have said, the inchoate subject begins its career; and, passing through various stages, yields feeling of awareness of object as not the subject (sentient consciousness) and feeling of inner movements as in and of the subject—pathic or tone-feeling. Both alike arise out of the Feeling-indefinite of Being-indefinite; and each can be traced on its way up, the one to the subjective dialectic that yields self-consciousness or Ego, the other to distinctive feelings of our inner life, up to ethical emotion and the infinite aspiration contained therein. The "matter" of the *realitas-phenomenon* and the *realitas-æstheticon* are alike the data which the subjective dialectic moulds—the one to knowledge, the other to knowledge and life. That is The True; this is the Good. Feeling is not only the great dynamic of the sentient world, but the great appreciator of all worth ethical and æsthetic. It is the Feeling of God not the recognition of the *fact* of God that is the sole foundation of the religious life.

God, we saw, seeks "The Good" in the Hellenic sense, as completion of idea; He also and supremely seeks The Good in the emotional elements so all-potent in a living world. He is as much *in* feeling and emotion as in any other part of the process whereby the universe is sustained and His outurance of Himself fulfilled.

(4) *God mediates His Ethical Ideals through Man.*

God, however, is not immanent in creation as ethical ideals ready made, and presented for our immediate perception. In the non-conscious and the organic world up to animal consciousness, the ideal is already operative in so far as finitude and negation will permit. But self-conscious man is left to constitute ideals out of feeling and emotion in contact with life. God is immanent as elemental feeling, and in the dialectic has given the possibility—nay, necessity, of ethical ideas and ideals to His interpreter Man, and is immanent in that possibility and necessity; and in the Truth when attained. To take any other view would be to lower man to being a merely passive instrument of God as a universal process; certainly to reject the analysis on which these Meditations rest. Man is within the system—in organic continuity with it. God mediates Himself through man by man. He looks to man to fulfil His idea for “His Glory” in the act of fulfilling it for his own completion.

God then (Absolute Being as creative externalisation) is, let us conclude, immanent as Feeling, Desire, Emotion, and as ethical ideas and all Ideals. On this plane of His eternal Being God moves on ethical lines, as understood by man and through man, in an ever-progressive evolution which is the history of Humanity. In this sense, and in this sense alone, can He be said to be “the power not ourselves that makes for righteousness”. And what I have said is not an easy generalisation or a pious opinion: it rests on the nature of God-creative. The form of the Objective Dialectic has revealed to us that God seeks End and mediates His ends in and through things. End fulfilled is “The Good” (in the

Hellenic sense). The End, The Good, the Ideal of Man, He can mediate through the self-activity of man himself alone. So it must be, if man is to be man, and not merely the tool of a supreme external power. Man has to find the Truth of himself for himself, and the Truth is the End, the Ideal, the Law.

In all existence that lies below the plane of the subjective dialectic, God, I have said, mediates the end and ideal for Himself, so far as the negation permits; and man has to find this truth for himself as "science,"—a truth already realised in the object. The ideal or Truth of Man can be mediated for God only by Man himself, but that ideal is the Truth of God in Man. Ethical ideas are as much God immanent as is the mathematics of the Heavens. If only through many errors and failures man gains for himself the truth of nature, is it surprising that millenniums should pass before he gains a knowledge of the Truth of himself? He is being moulded, and moulding himself, to the actualising of himself as Spirit—a task too heavy for him. But, all the while, each man's ethical achievements have value for God.

(5) *God is an Ethical God. The Predicates of God are not Properties.*

When, then, it is said in popular language that God is Just, Good, Loving, we are right in so speaking; but the philosophic mind is not satisfied to speak of these qualities as "properties" of God. This is to conceive of God as a determined being, not as all-determining Being; and it is a barbarism.¹ God has no "properties": we know

¹ But no greater barbarism than is committed by those who cannot think Being as Reality without intruding sense-symbols.

Him only as immanent activity. I say God has no properties as if He were a thing; but as Being Absolute and immanent He has attributes, and I have defined an attribute to be that which is found to be implicit in "Being" as opposed to the diverse and flux of presentations. Each attribute of Being is the whole of Being. Outside these, the essential characters of God are revealed in His immanent activity.

In determining finite existences God has determined each with specific and necessary potencies whereby alone it can fulfil itself as an individual in and through the whole. These distinctive potencies of life are the idea of each, and, as idea, God is immanent dialectic. The idea in each is such that in face of oppositions and obstructions,—nay, rather by means of them, the idea fulfils itself. While much goes awry and many individuals die down in the struggle, the idea will, and must, fulfil itself and effect an ethical, as it effects, on the whole, a physical harmony. In man, towards whom all creative activity is working up through lower forms, the idea fulfils itself in the complex of his "Notion," as Love, Goodness, Justice,—as, in brief, the supremacy of ethical ideals. Accordingly, I say that Absolute Being as creative is immanent not only as dialectic, but as the truth of the dialectic in Feeling — the ideals of Love, Goodness, Justice. In other words, God *affirms* Love, Justice and the Truth of all ethical ideas as constitutive of man—as the End of the Divine teleological finite externalisation.

Just as in the subjective dialectic The True is immanent, so in the realm of Feeling, The Good is immanent and the Beautiful as Art is immanent. The dialectic, as great instrument of thought (as itself thought), fulfils God by positing these ideas, as concrete ideals, in the

matter of outer and inner sense. The Good and the Beautiful are the "Truth" in feeling, just as physical science is the "Truth" in the matter of outer sense.

Accordingly, to assign the moral and æsthetic characteristics of a finite man to the infinite God is not wrong, but only inadequate and unphilosophic. Absolute Being as creative is *conditioning, not conditioned*: in willing a world He is Infinite; that is to say, He is not limited by an "Other," but comprehends that other. He has differenced and determined Himself into a world of contraries and oppositions which is saved from physical and moral chaos by End or Purpose, in which the Truth of Feeling as well as the Truth of Fact are imbedded, and are to be ascertained by His highest creature; *i.e.*, they *necessarily* rise into consciousness in him through the activity of the dialectic. The ideals of God are everywhere immanent in the nature and possibilities of things as inspiring and moulding the Negation—immanent supremely in the idea of Man. And so we rightly say, Absolute Being is immanent in His finite creation as Goodness, Love, Justice, etc. God has *so* externalised Himself; and that with exceeding emphasis. He reveals Himself to be Love, Goodness, Justice, as governing ideas of man's mind-organism—ideas to be excogitated and elaborated, doubtless, out of contraries and oppositions in Time—ideas which by their very nature could not *be excogitated as concrete ideals except through contraries and oppositions*. They have a history as the Truth of the stars has a history; neither more nor less. Rightly, then, I say that the God of this world is Love, Goodness and Justice in the finite sense of these words, for it is of the finite manifestation that we speak; and the finite is *within* the Absolute Synthesis, not outside it. Man

is one with the whole, within the whole,—not a thing apart, but the chief organ of the divine in this finite world ; and in him and through him God speaks.

In interpreting Man, then, we must never separate him from the cosmic whole or put him outside the method of the universe, as those do who deny moral perfections to “God”. “Good” in the human sense is not I repeat predicable *of* God as a “property” as if He were a determined entity, but it is supremely predicable of Him as immanent in the world as a determining activity. Man cannot know the Infinite in the sense of comprehending it ; but he can know the *fact* of it and *feel* the reality of it ; and there can be no difficulty, surely, in knowing the fact and feeling the reality of God as immanent Love and Justice without making them in the likeness of man.

Accordingly, when we say that God is merciful and compassionate in His relation to man, we do not think of Absolute Being as creative God concerning Himself with particular cases, but merely affirm that human life in this world—the pilgrim’s progress, is such that mercy and compassion are involved in the divine process whereby ends are achieved in the souls of men ; although it often appears otherwise—painfully otherwise. Let us remember that Absolute Being, as creative, is always creating and sustaining the finite world, but He does so by continually and continuously giving Himself to individua and letting *them* work out the idea. God, although always present, does not interfere.

Man, meanwhile, in his failures, remorse and sorrows can take God to himself as strengthener, pardoner and consoler when he pleases. God is the closest of friends. But a man must *take* Him, I say ; for he, we have seen, is

as Will-reason self-constitutive of his own concrete actuality. God is always there to be taken: He could not force Himself on man without the destruction of the true manhood. And when a man takes God to himself, he finds Him to be "That" which *feels* the whole in every part and the part in the whole. The mighty thought raises and strengthens him. He is at home with God. In finding God, he finds himself.

Doubtless, this view puts man in a difficult and painful position. But so it is: only thus could Absolute Being effect the larger purpose in the world and man; namely, by being present as if not present. In short, God as immanent is not active save as the constitutive idea and immanent ideal which are always being affirmed in things. This conclusion flows from the Meditations on Essence, on Primordial Actuals, and on Negation generally. Man, then, must bestir himself, knowing that God is always and everywhere present as Helper, for in all things the immanent ideal is operative—the Good is affirmed. God says *Come* unto Me. He will not give Himself for nothing. He respects man too much. Religion is a virile act, not a feeble sentimentalism.

The act of Will, whereby Being moves out of Identity with Itself is the determining of the individuate in which is the moment of Negation—"the without which not"—the Negation as at once source of opposition, defec-tion and evil, and the possibility of a finite world. This world, in and of which we are, is thus not the issue of an arbitrary act, still less of an unconscious movement (misnamed "Will"); but of a Will-dialectic which contains ends and End, which we may sum up as the

Absolute Idea—the mighty Thought which has emptied itself into the Finite. Although it requires no argument to show that these ends are, in the man-sphere, not wholly accomplished, we yet see that they must ultimately fulfil themselves, because they are already contained in the initiation of the Divine dialectic movement itself. The Reason of man sees this and emphasises this with conviction—nay, with knowledge, for ends are immanent in the subjective finite, as in the infinite objective, dialectic. They are *in* the universal dialectic as spring and motive of its active creation. Those who cannot *see* this, *i.e.* know it, may yet attain to a rational “persuasion” of its truth, and eke out their shortcoming with faith; and faith is here the consummation of reason, not a *dernier ressort* of baffled thought, much less a soul-destroying credulity.

(6) *God is not mere Reason.*

It is not to be wondered at that Philosophy should so exclusively have emphasised Reason as if it were the supreme fact in the universal subject-object as given to us; for reason or finite dialectic is itself the differentiate or “idea” of man the philosophiser—that whereby he is what he is among the infinite multiplicity of organic existences. And yet, it is strange that so little should have been made of God as immanent Feeling (except by poetic prophets) penetrating and sustaining by its agitations and afflation the whole system of things—the very breath of the world. A panlogistic God which, if consistent, gives us no negation with its rights of opposition, and also ignores feeling, is a metaphysical abstraction. Look around and you will see that the

energy and vitality which make the world are feeling and those intenser forms of feeling which we call desire and emotion. In Feeling we find the motive power which propels the bark ; reason holds the helm. Reason merely interprets and regulates the inner of feeling, just as it interprets and co-ordinates the outer of sense. Dialectic is not even life. Life in all organic things (even in the plant), love and hate, desire and fruition, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, fill the world. This is the complex matter in which finite reason has to work, and in which it has to prescribe a rule and constitute a harmony. The truth of sense is science ; the truth of the complex of feeling lies in the rationalised ethical idea of it—The Good ; and the ethical idea is the Law, self-prescribed in the sphere of emotion through the operation of the free dialectic seeking the truth, and through truth, the fulfilment and fruition of the man-being as an actor in the great whole. The notion of God as universal dialectic, even if we grasp the dialectic in its concrete truth as generated in Being and having thus a bearer or subject, cannot satisfy the philosophical consciousness, much less the moral and religious need of men. The mistake which many thinkers have made (Aristotle leading the way) arises, as I have said, from this that, since reason is the highest in man, God is legitimately to be apprehended only in terms of the highest, *viz.*, universal *Reason*. “God,” says Aristotle (xii. 7, 9), “is Thought, the Absolute eternal thinking Essence distinct from Matter. Thought ever the same and unchanged whose object is expressed Perfection.” The very term “thought” has concealed a fallacy. Thought is reason—the activity of the formal dialectic ; and subjective “mind” is specifically thinking or thought. Thus God

has been identified with Thought instead of Mind. Mind, however, is more than thought : the whole realm of sense, feeling and emotion are within mind. God must contain all grades of mind ; just as He is All-Being. And if we are to form a notion of God which shall start from His immanence in creation, we cannot exclude that which in ourselves constitutes the *real* of mind in so far as it is a possible ethical organism ; nay, also the real of body as a *living* body. To conceive of a creation in which the Creator is nothing but dialectic, while the creation itself is charged with feeling, desire and emotion, all alien to the nature of its source, is manifestly untenable ; nor can we save a philosophical system by throwing these things in by way of parenthesis. We have, accordingly, to extend the Hellenic conception and apprehend in "The Good," to which all tends, the harmony of feeling as well as of reason ; or, let us rather say, the harmony of feeling through reason. For the latter truly is, as I have indicated, but the servant of the former ; or rather, master by being servant.

I am unwilling to leave this subject on which I have already dwelt perhaps too long. But look around in the finite world, do we not find feeling everywhere ? In the mere dynamic display of nature we see the feeling of God passing into and through phenomenal forms, as if ever striving to reach its consummation in the consciousness of man as alone adequate to its full manifestation. The metaphor also, which nature so amply yields to the poet, is evidence of the community of all things in feeling, no less than in being and modality and dialectic. The truest expression for vegetal life is that it is a kind of feeling ; and the abounding exuberance of

living forms has joy for its end. "The rose is to the summer sweet." In the conscious animal we find feeling in the form of instincts, impulses, love, pleasure and pain—all built into a finite organism—the intelligence being subordinated to the needs of feeling. Nay, it is with *dialectic desire*, too, that the pure reason of man strives towards ends; and, when it has attained them, it has supreme joy in the emotion of the completed activity, whether it be expressed as the *heureka* of the mathematician or the rapt silence of the mystic seer. In God Himself can we doubt that there is a flash of joy in the concrete fulfilment of His idea? And "God saw everything that He had made and, behold, it was very good". "God," says Browning, "tastes an infinite joy in infinite ways." We men scrape on the surface of things and are so enamoured of the few facts which we perceive and co-ordinate and turn to our baser uses, that we are slow to see the profound meanings and the mystery of the common things of experience—things that are all-potent in our lives just to the extent that they are, as feeling, ultimate and inexplicable. What shall we say, for example, of the love of man and woman, which we take as a matter of course, though of such profound significance?

However it may be, this is certain: men will ever turn away from a God who may be compared to a bloodless spider, all set round with eyes, and sitting in the centre of a web contemplating His work with the cold satisfaction of a geometrician—a God who does not love; nor will they find the final resting-place for their thought in the self-same spider weaving a network of dialectic out of a gland which is "being equal nothing". Feeling and desire are in the initiation of all things

finite or infinite. Even Absolute Being can move out of itself under the impulse of desire alone ; the Dialectic as Will is merely regulative—an instrument of Desire.

We are told (Baillie's *Hegel*, pp. 237-38) that "Logic is Religion, that Logic is the self-consciousness of the Absolute Subject in me a finite Ego, and that in Logic I am one with the Absolute". But even if we take Logic in its largest sense, facts compel us to say that the universe is neither a mathematical formula nor a thought-reticulation any more than it is a fortuitous atomic game. Feeling and emotion and the joy of fulfilment are at the heart of the universal dialectic itself : and the dialectic, we may even say, is simply a process whereby emotion may fulfil itself. God-immanent is thus essentially ethical and æsthetic. Suppose we were to say that God is not only primarily and always Being, but that Feeling is the first moment in His concrete whole, who has a right to gainsay it? Let us grant that the Logic of the world is a self-exposition of the Absolute, is there nothing else in us that is the self-exposition of the Absolute, or has He left all that to some other agency? Is the ecstasy of the mystic, the afflatus of the prophet and the inspiration of the poet outside the main stream of the Eternal Life—a mere backwater?

It is also a false, nay, a base and banal notion of God which sees in Him only a "Somewhat" in whom all oppositions are reconciled, so that we are forced to picture Absolute Being as a stagnant sea or an "absolute experience" preserving a meaningless equilibrium among troublesome and petulant opposites.

Let me again insist : Time and the Finite are not outside God. They are within the Absolute Synthesis.

God leads a finite life—a life in Time, and is not *solely* eternal Being in whom all is rooted and reconciled. We deprecate the anthropomorphism which stops short at a God almighty yet finite: ought we not to be equally on our guard against the abstract conception of a God who is only infinite Being to which the finite is a kind of accident? The finite is within God: it is within the absolute synthesis: it is a moment in the eternal Being. It is not enough to *say* this: we must realise it to ourselves.

Man himself and his perfection is one of God's problems. He has endowed him with the capacity to return into union with Himself. The strivings of man are God's strivings in and through His creature; and He is ever-present in those ethical emotions, æsthetic joys and mystic raptures which are truly His own, though under finite conditions. And what is a thinking man's religion save his philosophy vitalised by feeling and inspired with emotion?

It seems to me to be true, then, and a doctrine worthy of acceptance, that God is, as immanent in His creation, and supremely in the man-sphere, a God of Emotion and of Love. The sensibilities which bind us to nature, to each other, and to God have their fount and centre in the great God Himself. I say, "bind us to God," for a pure *amor intellectualis Dei*, emptied of pathic emotion, does not, and never did, exist in any man.

Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt His own love can compete with it? Here the parts
shift?

Here, the creature surpass the Creator,—the end, what Began?
—BROWNING'S *Saul*,

Being, as reflected into Feeling is at the root and also at the summit of the universal Whole. The "Good," relatively to a finite conscious subject, has in like manner its root and fruition in Feeling. In so saying, I am quite alive to the fact that I run the risk of resting the first and the last, the beginning and the end, of the absolute synthesis on Feeling, and that this is dangerous ground because of its possible practical issues in the life of man and in ethics. But I have guarded against this: for it is manifest enough from what I have said *passim*, that The Good is attainable neither by man nor God (immanent and as we know Him) save through a dialectic whose initial moment, as pure activity, is a strenuous Will which, as Will, contains the form of End and, in affirming Truth, *ipso facto* imposes law. "The Love which moves the Sun and other stars," to use Dante's words, can achieve its ends only through Law. "All's Love, yet All's Law," says Browning.

Finite Mind is a determination of Universal Being that *feels* that which is not itself. Beginning with Pure Feeling as inchoate subject whose object is Unconditioned Being from which it has been just let loose, it evolves, step by step, the potency of receiving and reflexing the multiform differences into which Absolute Being has broken itself in the evolution of its inner nature, until, at last, it mirrors the vast Whole including the mysterious Power itself which, as Being and Dialectic, animates and sustains the infinite variety. Infinite Mind and Finite Mind would seem to keep step, the one in the unfolding of its inner Being under the stimulus of Desire (or let us say the Absolute Idea), the other in the evolution of that potency of mystic com-

munion which we call Feeling, Sense and Knowledge. Mystic, I say, because, as a communion of being with Being it can only be felt, never named or defined. The ultimate "That" of the universe is forever infinite, One, and mysterious, in the blade of grass as in the Absolute Whole. And yet it is this undefined and undefinable, contained in the thought of Being, that gives to parts and the whole its sole significance and worth to the human spirit.

Assuredly, if the Universal, the Absolute be only Reason, it cannot be that which Man is ever in search of. Feeling, Life, Ideals, Love, are facts too insistent, and too potent in the concrete of our experience, to be interpreted by that which is merely an abstraction from them, though necessary to their truth of fulfilment.

Thus it is that the synthesis of an analysed experience yields to us a God Who, on this plane of His ever-evolving activity, is Feeling and Love as well as Being One and Eternal, Reason-universal and the Sum of Ideals,—a God Whom we can worship as One Who cares for His creatures, Who ever lives in them, and has so ordered as to help them to overcome the inevitable evils of an inadequate world, if they will only take what He offers, and above all take Him.

MEDITATION IX.

GOD IMMANENT AS THE BEAUTIFUL.¹

Introduction—Beauty is objective : The Feeling of Beauty has its locus in Sense ; but it is more than Sense alone can yield, and more than the Dialectic as interpreting Sense can yield — The feeling of Perfection not the feeling of the Beautiful—Beauty of Nature is the Objective display of the *Sense*-ideal—The Feeling of the Beautiful is a Feeling of sensualised Reason—Degrees of the Feeling as dependent on thought, *viz.*, the perception of Being Universal ; the reflective realisation of the Reason in things ; association—The Educative effect of the Beautiful—*Note on the Sublime.*

Introduction.

ABSOLUTE Being as creative mediates its meaning through the finite externalisation. As Feeling it finds its vehicle in all sentient creatures : the Feeling of the Beautiful is mediated in and through Nature and is a “given” to the rational subject.

¹ My purpose here is to speak of the Beautiful in terms of the general philosophy of these Meditations. The subject is, however, so large and complex that what I say is to be regarded as a series of paragraphs—logically connected, I think, but not worked out into detail. It is, doubtless, a fair subject for inquiry whether we can find in the processes of the external world dynamical relations which of necessity give rise to the feeling of the Beautiful, or, at least, which are always present where the feeling is experienced. With this inquiry I have nothing to do. My interest is in the nature and conditions of the emergence of the Feeling as these are revealed by subjective analysis.

Man, as a Dialectic, seeks to create ideals of Beauty in sensible modes ; and the various directions of his energy are summed up as the Poietic Arts or " Fine Arts ".

Some would seem to hold that Æsthetics, that is to say the philosophy of the Beautiful, is to be sought and found in Art. My interpretation of experience generally does not allow me to accept this restriction. If I am to find the explanation of The Beautiful in the creations of Art, I must first know what I mean by the Beautiful in Nature. I cannot but think that, if we give a liberal meaning to the word, Aristotle is right in saying that the Poietic—the making of a beautiful thing outside one's self, is essentially imitation ; or, rather, let us say, sympathetic reproduction. And this would seem to presume that man must be conscious of the Beautiful in nature before it can occur to him to " make " the Beautiful in Form, Colour, Tone or Language.

Doubtless, if the sensible is mere appearance or seeming, there is a complete divorce between Nature (as phenomenon) and Art. But the philosophy that governs these meditations sees, in the phenomenon, the *reality* of Being and Mind-universal in sense-terms—the final moment in a concrete one. Nature is instinct with God, and the Beautiful in Nature is, like all else, a revelation of God. Accordingly, I must find in that which constitutes the Beauty of Nature the ultimate criterion of the Beautiful in Art.

God mediates " Art " ideals through Man, it is true. It is man's function, as free creative spirit, to form and utter these : but in the Beauty of Nature God is Himself the creative Spirit, and the joy that man has in the contemplation of it is not the work of his own ideal construction, but is " given " to him as God's modality. The

“note” of all fine Art is the Beautiful; and that we already find as the living glory of God in the sensible. In the consummation of His work there is more than the satisfaction of dialectic fulfilment. There is an irradiation which we call the Beautiful. It may be called the effulgence thrown off from the sense-ideal.

When we speak of the “Feeling” or “Sense” of the Beautiful, we mean that an object is presented which, in addition to exciting “awareness” as such, evokes at the same time a pleasure-tone of a specific kind. Following our general interpretation of the relation of subject-object we say, Beauty is *there* in the object; that is to say, the world of nature has in itself those characteristics which, when they touch a conscious subject, are found to have an æsthetic, as well as cognitive, value. The things of sense are much more than mere things of sense finding their completion in that which senses, as we have amply seen. The Object, generally, is God giving Himself to His creature Man; and just as the phenomenal world is the modality of God, so the forms and colours and magnificent display that arrest the eye are the Beauty of immanent God in this His modality. The beauty of the stars is as much the display of God immanent as the stars themselves. The Beauty of God is mediated, I say, through His modality; and we might almost say that it is the expression of the joy of God in the result of His own activity as creative.

However this may be, God is immanent *as* the Beautiful in things.

If Beauty be there in the object and given to us, then the creations of the poet and painter rest ultimately on

seeing. I have eyes as they have, but it is only through their more finely constituted organism that I learn to see the best and finest. But they see only what is there to be seen. Step by step man advances, by the help of his leaders, to ever-increasing subtlety of perception and emotion in the domain of Feeling as in the sphere of science ; but he will never exhaust the riches of nature. The intimate bond that exists between the mind of man and nature, and which appears in its subtlest form in the artist, is a reality ; for man is, as I have said, already *in* nature—a link in the one unbroken chain.

Feeling, we have seen to animate the world of our experience. There are grades of Feeling—Feeling generic and vague : intense Feeling exploding in desire ; Feeling moulded by the Dialectic, which we have distinguished as ethical idea and ideal, in the heart of which is an emotion : there is, further, an emotion of pleasure in the mere activity of reason, and a still higher emotion in the perception of truth. There is also the feeling of which we are now speaking. It has a specific quality which, by common consent, is called the “Sense” of the Beautiful ; but, in so far as it contains in it, as we shall see, the elements of reason, it might more strictly be called the emotion of the Beautiful. The attitudinal plane of mind may have a vague pleasure in single colours ; but the emotion experienced by man, while it is to be found in its rudimentary form in the percipience of the single, is at its full only under the conditions of the Many in One—variety in unity.

Unquestionably the Feeling of the Beautiful in nature has its locus in sense-percipience. But it is something

different and something more than sense yields as a mere capacity of awareness ; it is also more than the dialectic yields as a knowing energy when subsuming sense into its own form. To disentangle this specific Feeling entirely from the mere feeling-awareness of sensible things and from the activity of the dialectic in dealing with the sense-percipient record would be to define it ; but even then we should not wholly explain it. It is an elusive element in our experience.

*The Feeling of perfection or the Ideal is not, as such,
the Feeling of the Beautiful.*

I have referred to the emotion that is concurrent with, or rather inherent in, reason-activity and in the fulfilment of that activity in the perception of truth and the ideal. This emotion exists where the sense of the Beautiful is absent ; and if this rational experience exhausted the content of the Feeling of the Beautiful, that feeling would be brought within the specific sphere of the Cognitive. Were this so, the success of the artist, whether he executed a work of imagination or of reproduction, would be measured by the extent to which he expressed in sensible shape what was seen to be the truest truth of the existent thing before him, or of the imaginative conception to which he was giving shape. Now, the "truth" in marble of an imagined god, in paint of a portion of nature, in tones of a sound-imagination, is not *itself* the Beautiful ; but may we not say that the Beautiful is somehow inherent in the truth, the perfect, the ideal, whether the artist will or will not ? I am disposed to think so ; but with this important qualification that the imagination to which he gives shape and the reality which he reproduces *are themselves Beautiful*

to begin with, that is to say, fit objects for Art. Accordingly to find a key to Art, we are driven to seek for some definition of the Beautiful itself, as I have already indicated.

By the "truth" of a representation, I mean the fully achieved expressiveness or characteristicness of it. But while hesitating to differ from Professor Bosanquet,¹ I feel compelled to qualify this criterion of the Beautiful in Art by the above condition, that the imagination or the object reproduced be in itself Beautiful. To define the Beautiful by expressiveness *plus* Beauty would, of course, be a logical blunder : but I may fairly say that the "expressive" does not exhaust the content of the concept Beautiful. In other words, there is a *quality* in the *feeling* of Beauty which is not contained in truth or expressiveness alone. In the "truth" of the artistic product I find only one, though a necessary, condition of the Beautiful ; and hence it is that I must consider the subjective feeling of the Beautiful in presence of Nature, as a guide in my understanding of the Beautiful generally, and of Art in particular.

*The Beautiful in Nature is the Objective display of the
Sense-Ideal.*

The question, accordingly, now is, What is it that in Nature elicits the response of a feeling of Beauty in me as distinguished from a mere perception of Truth ? And the answer put shortly would seem to be this : while thought

¹ And Professor Bosanquet himself would not admit Beauty in a work of art, however expressive, save under the Hellenic conditions of harmony or unity in variety, which he calls "general or abstract expressiveness".

(subjective dialectic) yields me an ideal of The True and The Good in which an emotion is inherent, mere *Sense-percipient*, also, has its own ideal, and it does not owe this to the self-conscious thinking of the spectator. It is the field of sensuous experience that is the sphere of The Beautiful strictly speaking. Accordingly, the general answer to the above question would be "The Feeling of Beauty is mediated in me by the *Sense-ideal as such*". The affinity between the emotion that is inherent in the contemplation of The Good and The True and that which we call the Beautiful is an affinity only, not an identity. The True is the ideal of Reason; The Good is the ideal of reasoned Emotion; Beauty is the ideal of Sense. The two former are the product of dialectic activity: the last is a Given, and, as the matter of the dialectic activity, it is creative Art.

My epistemological analysis led me to the conclusion that in each monad and in all complex things the idea or essence finds its individuation in its modality (the revealing and negating phenomenon); and this modality, when fully moulded by the idea is the concrete fulfilment or truth of the idea in its individual characteristicalness—in other words, the Actual. This actual in its perfected form is the ideal; which is a fulfilled harmony—variety in unity perfected. If I could contemplate the whole universe of things as the completed concrete expression of Absolute Being, I should have a vision of The True, and the subjective dialectic would have attained the goal of its activity. Inherent in such a world-view there would be, in its highest intensity, the emotion in and of Reason. Now, it appears to me that this vision of The True would be identical with

the vision of the Beautiful, if the sole or the dominant note of Beauty were the expressive and characteristic ; and that to hope to distinguish the feeling of the Beautiful from the emotion of the True would then be vain.

We constantly speak of the "beauty" of The True, the "beauty" of The Good, because of the emotion inherent in all ideals ; but this is not Beauty in its specific sense. Strictly speaking, the feeling of the Beautiful is a deliverance to us through the sense-modes which are the way in which God lives as finite manifestation. In other words, there is a presentation to Sense which is the modality of God ; and just as there is the ideal (perfection) of The True and the ideal of The Good, there is also the ideal of the modality of God—*of sense-qualities as such*. And this feeling of the "given" ideal of sense-qualities is the feeling of The Beautiful. If it be not so, then we must identify the æsthetic feeling with the cognition of rational perfection. The fact seems to be that the ideal "True" must further contain the "Sense-ideal" before it can elicit the specific feeling of Beauty in us.

The Beautiful, then, objectively considered is, let us say, an effluence from the attained ideal of Sense—the modality of God : it is God verily immanent as the Beautiful in the external world.

The Feeling of the Beautiful is a Feeling of sensualised Reason.

The Feeling of the Beautiful in its rudimentary manifestation is to be found in the percipience of *single* lines and curves, *single* tones, *single* colours. I say rudimentary ; for it is only in a complex presentation that we ex-

perience the full sense of the Beautiful—those displays of Absolute Being in sense-forms which furnish a theme to poets and painters. In accordance with what I have said above, I call the display which *so* touches and stimulates the mind of man, the *sense-idealism* of Nature. We have presented to us the ideal of the sensuous in form, colour or motion. The “ideal,” let us remember, is always a One in Many, the harmony of the various in unity: the singles in perception which please us are now gathered into a larger meaning—an æsthetic whole. A rational co-ordination of parts, each “pleasing” in itself, is now presented to the eye and is received by a conscious being who is capable of feeling *rational* co-ordination (which an animal, for example, is not). Accordingly, we may take a step further, and say that the feeling of the Beautiful may be subjectively called the *sensuousness of reason*; and objectively, the Beautiful is sense-modes, *as such*, rationalised into an ideal whole. (Or it may be a single sense-mode, for there is the ideal of *a* form, of *a* colour and of *a* tone, each of which, however, could, doubtless, be reduced to a one in many.) The effluence from the “sense-ideal” stirs the subjective feeling which we distinguish as the feeling of the Beautiful; and it is a feeling of the object as *rationalised* sense-qualities as such; and, consequently, a *reason-feeling* in the subject.

Such I conceive to be the nature and explanation of the feeling of The Beautiful in its purity. The note of objective *sense-idealisation* and a subjective response to the idealisation are always present. It is superficial, however, for it has to do with the surface of things; but it may be very vivid. Just as the pleasurable sensation yielded by single tones, or colours, or forms, may rise in certain organisms to great intensity, so the sense of the

Beautiful in the sense-modes and combinations of nature as such may be of greater intensity in some men than in others. This depends on the sensitiveness of the organism, and is a gift of nature : when the gift is liberal we have a possible artist.

It would appear, then, that we must distinguish the feeling of the Beautiful from the emotion that accompanies the rational perception of the ideal of The True and The Good and, further, restrict the Feeling to the perception of the sense-display as such. The sensuousness of reason is evoked and satisfied by universal Reason as fulfilling itself in sense-modes. I say the sensuousness of Reason, because the ideal can be felt only by Sense which has been sublated into Reason.

*Degrees of the Feeling of the Beautiful as dependent
on thought.*

It cannot be doubted that the feeling of the Beautiful may be more penetrating, profound and elevating in many men than in those whose sensibility to the sensuous ideal yielded by the surface of things is yet more vivid and intense. How and why is this ? Have we exhausted the characterisation of the sense of the beautiful in Nature when we have recognised it to be primarily the objective sense-ideal satisfying the sensuousness of reason ?

I think not : the objective sense-ideal receives a deeper significance and yields a higher emotion where there is Thought. According to the range of our thinking, so do we feel. For example :—

(a) When I contemplate the nature-display as a

manifestation of Being mysterious and unsoundable, the concrete of sense spread out before me takes a new and deeper meaning. It is now no longer mere sense-modes ; it is a revelation of Being infinite and universal. The feeling of The Beautiful is now much more than a joy in the reason-harmony of the sensuous. Thought has transformed it into something more spiritual and more profound, and has given it, moreover, infinitude and mystery. All consciousness of an object is, it is true, a consciousness of Being ; but when our sensibilities are excited by the Beautiful in Nature, the feeling of Being partakes of the excitement. It is raised to a higher power, and that which, in ordinary circumstances, does not urge itself on our attention, now tends to occupy the whole field. The object not only *is*, but *lives*. The community and essential oneness of my particular being with Being universal are now alive in me. Let us take a common experience : The stir of the working day is over and night has drawn a veil over the earth—a translucent veil we shall say. I pause on the hillside. The moon and stars in the darkening vault, the gleam on the heaving ocean, the swelling hills, the sombre woods—all these communicate their varied shapes to my inmost consciousness in a strange, and almost bewildering, harmony ; they vibrate through my whole being and elevate my spirit above all finite things. They convey into me more than themselves. This experience is the feeling of the Beautiful ; but the content is now more than mere *sense*-harmony. For the mystery of existence is in and around me, the sense of something “deeply interfused”. I am a self-conscious atom in a breathing and stupendous whole, and yet in living touch with the whole. What is this intuition of mystery and

universality? It is simply Being: all these things *are*: it is the thrill of the Eternal and Universal that I feel. Being infinite, and in the last resort inexplicable and incomprehensible, is showing itself to me, alluring me into its intimacy through these wonderful shapes and colours—these subtle phenomenal differences and harmonies. Being, ultimate and fountain of all that exists or can be, is translating itself into Sense and passing into me. For I, a man, am in organic continuity with all this; I am in close communion and community with the elemental—the sky, the air, the mountain, and the flood. Being universal, through its solemn, gracious and appealing modes, is seeking responsive being in me, and creates my mood while it consummates Itself in its vesture of Sense.

In truth, Nature and Man are woven of the same piece: in the former man may find all his moods. Thus it is that, at the meeting point of human sensibility and the natural world, there is a touch which startles us into a sense of the oneness of the whole. We are the universe: the universe is we ourselves. Happy contradiction in identity, felicitous opposition, out of which comes all our most living life! Nature is humanised, because before man was, he was already in and of Nature: and Nature is God, fountain of inexhaustible Being, offering to us Himself in all His varied charm and subtle suggestiveness. In the appreciation of the Beautiful we make Him our own in the very consummation of His creative mood as He puts the last touch of light and lustre to His work and pronounces it to be good. He is immanent, we have seen, as life, feeling and emotion; so also is He immanent as the Beautiful. Reality and actuality with the sheen of beauty on them

are there, here, everywhere, if the unclouded eye is open to the revelation in the midst of which we stand, and of which we ourselves are a constituent part. In every flower, in every herb of the field, as well as in the larger aspects of nature, we have the living God showing Himself to us as Beauty. Let us accept the concrete as it is given—the fine modality of Absolute Being as creative.

There are those who, not content naively to receive all this as Feeling, would with their understanding comprehend the whole under some logical expression or some objective analysis, thereby reducing it to terms of cognition: forgetting that fulfilment for a being of reason lies, in the realm of the Beautiful as everywhere, in the feeling of the infinite and unsoundable mystery of Being that rejects definition. Into Being he carries all that he is and all that he has, and loses it there in a final consummating intuition.

(b) The second thought-element in the feeling of the beautiful sense-presentation is reflective: As myself a dialectic, I see the great process of nature as *Reason* emanating from Being-universal and seeking and finding the glorified utterance of the idea in sense-shapes: which utterance is The True and, as end-fulfilling, The Good. Not only the consciousness of mysterious and unsoundable Being, then, which is immediate, but also of the objective dialectic as manifesting itself in sense and attaining its end, enters into the feeling of the Beautiful in the man of reflective thought. The feeling is heightened, deepened, widened, by the contemplation of Absolute Being alive and operative as a dialectic in all the brilliancy of sense modes. The Beautiful in nature is now much more than the co-ordination of forms and colours that appeals to the purely sensuous in me as the plain

man or as the unreflective artist: it is now the eternal process beheld clothed in the garment of the Beautiful as its final and full and glorified expression. It is immanent God I see in all His elusive charm—the True and the Good in the garment of Beauty.

It would appear, then, that it is the alliance of sensuous beauty with the thought which it never fails to excite that gives to a reflective man a feeling of Beauty more profound than those possess who, however highly gifted sensuously, live merely on the surface of things. The advance of philosophical thought thus determines the full significance of the feeling of the Beautiful at different periods of the world's progress. And yet, it is not to be doubted that the feeling of Being and of Dialectic purpose lies concealed in the apprehension of Beauty by all—even the unreflecting; and, inasmuch as they are men, it cannot be otherwise.

Feelings have been said to be obscure “ideas,” and there is a certain justification for this view. In the sphere of consciousness of objects—*i.e.*, consciousness as such,—we have found that there are grades of realisation of the object in and for ourselves, *viz.*, feeling, sensation, attuition, perception, reason. The *feeling* of an object when it is first presented to us may, accordingly, be said to be the genetic moment of an experience which is on the way to be a clear and distinct actualisation in self-consciousness. The various moments of subjective mind as sentient may be said to be obscure “ideas” until the rational act of percipience is reached: and this act is the starting-point of a full *rational* realisation of the object—the Actual, the Notion. It is as feelings in this undeveloped sense—as inchoate ideas that Being and the Dialectic enter sub-selfconsciously into the

sense of the Beautiful in the plain man as well as in the man of culture.

(c) Finally, to re-enforce and expand the pure æsthetic emotion, Association has its part to play. The inner record of our past lives—our joys, perplexities, sorrows, hopes and despairs—is evoked into more or less of activity through the stimulus that is given to the whole sentient and rational organism by the active feeling of the Beautiful in presence of nature. The net-work of suggestions varies greatly in different persons according to the extent of their experience and the liveliness of their imagination. Nay, life-associations enter so much into the complex feeling of the Beautiful that objects, not beautiful in themselves, will be loosely called beautiful, merely because they recall that which is in truth beautiful.

Such, I think, is the natural history of the sense of the Beautiful in a rational subject. God in His manifestation presents the concrete idea in the vesture of Beauty—the ideal of sense *as such* : Man is of the Whole, within the Whole, and the Beauty of God passes into him as a being in continuity with the world-system. The measure of his recipience is determined by the extent to which his body and mind are attuned to the Whole. A fine attunement is what we call genius, to which no man can by toil attain. It is the gift of God. Thought and life-experience, however, deepen and widen the emotion which the sense-ideal stirs in us, and help us to overtake genius.

We would say then, that the Feeling of the Beautiful is *primarily* the sensuousness of reason. It certainly emerges only in beings in whom reason has already proclaimed itself. In this primary feeling we are not

aware of the activity of reason: there is merely the reason-*feeling* of the co-ordination of sense-impressions. Now, this is not to be distinguished from the ideal of the objective sensible manifestation of immanent God. Hence it demands no striving to reach it, as do the ideals of the Good and the True. It is graciously given, and is thus an easy mode of access to the Divine and Eternal. And further we conclude that, while the mere display to sense of the phenomenal ideal—the bloom on the surface of things, calls forth that specific feeling which we call the Feeling of the Beautiful, its depth and intensity depend on the spectator's capacity of thought and experience of life. Meanwhile, it is the primary pure feeling itself as freely given that this thought and these life-associations gather round; and that feeling is one of joy and completion in presence of the given *ideal of sense*. The ideal of sense is achieved not *by* us, but *for* us; and it requires no learning, no culture to *feel* this and be exalted by it. The unlettered man is "contented if he might enjoy". To some extent, doubtless, he has his network of associations; for his experience of life is full of memories and, it may be, fertile in suggestions that are inchoate thoughts; but these cannot have the width and depth that belong to the cultured man of reflection.

The Educative effect of the Beautiful.

To feel the Beautiful, then, even as a sense-presentation only, is to stand on the highest step of the sensuous, and one step more will carry a man into the presence of Spirit. The Temple of the Beautiful is the porch of the Temple of Religion. In the education of a people we do wisely to cultivate that capacity in them which raises them to the spiritual meaning and enjoyment of the

sensuous. For, in the sense-sphere, in which the humblest as well as the most cultured live, the ideal impulse in man—at the heart of the subjective dialectic—finds an easy road to a deep and disinterested satisfaction that brings him into touch with the highest; easy, because, as I have said, it demands no accompanying *effort* of Will. The Beautiful is a free gift, almost forced on man through his senses; and, when frankly received, it liberates the mind from the gross and material, and stirs it to a free and pleasing expatiation in the infinite of the ideal, thereby raising even the untutored mind into universal relations.

Thus it is also that the cultivation of the sentiment of the Beautiful in nature and art, while powerless to moralise a man or raise him into the higher sphere of religion or philosophy, yet unquestionably contributes to this; and where the moral and religious emotions already exist, it fortifies and irradiates them.

And just as the Beautiful—the divine glow on the face of things is the consummation of God as creative in the sphere of pure sense; so may we say that the Beautiful in life and in art is the consummation of the nature and activity of man. The life of each of us is self-directing, is self-creative, and its aim which is The Good and The True is finally consummated in us as Beauty of living. The creations of the poet and artist contribute powerfully to this. They are the highest concrete philosophy. The book of philosophy will indeed be closed when it shall have presented God and the world to us as an *Épic*.

Thus I would correlate the Feeling of the Beautiful with the general interpretation of God and of the mind

and purpose of man which runs through these Meditations ; and, in accordance with that, I hold that it is not enough to say that Nature, by presenting certain scenes that evoke the feeling of the Beautiful, is “in harmony” with the man-nature. This suggests an unphilosophic dualism. The external thing is beautiful for itself and finds its fulfilment in terms of consciousness, because man is himself in and of nature, which is ever reaching up to him and consummating itself in his Feeling and Thought.¹ What we have in experience is always subject-object.

To sum up: the feeling of the Beautiful is primarily mediated in us by the presentation of the sense-ideal ; this is deepened by the feeling of Being and its ever-present mystery ; and, finally, by the perception of the objective dialectic (*i.e.* the fulfilment of the idea in the sense-concrete) as a harmony of parts, in which perception lies the true and “expressive”. Meanwhile the second and third element in the complex feeling are only sub-selfconsciously present in the unthinking, who, notwithstanding, *feel* the beauty of nature according to their grade of culture. In apprehending Beauty, we are, more or less consciously, apprehending the ideal harmony of all experience, rational and moral—casting all in an æsthetic mould.

¹ If so, why, one may say, does not the primæval man see the beauty that is there ? We may, with equal relevance, ask, Why does not nature, as in harmony with him, forcibly evoke the feeling ? And so you may ask many other questions of a like kind. Man with the kindly help of Nature has progressed ; he has learned to appreciate many things and among them Beauty : and if 10,000 years hence he has reached the fulness of his æsthetic possibilities, Nature will still be ahead of him, for he will not have exhausted *her* possibilities.

One word on the large and complex subject of Art. If my analysis of Beauty be correct, the *sense-ideal* is an indispensable characteristic of all Art that seeks to express the Beautiful. It is this *Beauty* in the object which the true artist seeks and finds and reproduces, whether the object be in nature or in his own imagination.

Note on the Sublime.—When Nature exhibits itself in all its power and savagery, it presents to us the sense-ideal of abstract Will—the first moment of the Dialectic, and Man has then a feeling which seems to differ from the sense of the Beautiful so markedly as scarcely to belong to the same category: we call it the sense of the Sublime. In presence of the tornado, the flood, or the earthquake, the weakness of man gives rise to a fear and terror which is purely animal; but when the irresistible might of natural forces is suggested by the spectacle of the vast, the abrupt and the unusual, and is at the same time beheld as *locked up* in these forms, animal fear disappears and the spirit of man rises to the awed enjoyment of abstract Power. Life is not threatened, and the latent energy of man's spirit as Will is thus free to rise to meet the majesty of God in nature and contemplate the mighty Force which can sweep all before it, but which is now quiescent in the arrested masses and bridled forces of cloud, mountain, or torrent. The manifestation of immeasurable Power reflects the infiniteness that lies in man's own spirit and he rejoices in the new experience of his greatness.

Accordingly, it appears to me that the feeling which we differentiate as that of "The Sublime" is mediated not by the sense-ideal in which lies concealed the fulfilled dialectic of purpose achieved, thus stimulating in us the feeling of rationality, order and repose, but by the sensuous expression of the first "moment" of the Dialectic alone, *viz.*, Will in its abstract power—its irresistible might and its magnificence. There is a disorder restrained from anarchy, or, it may be, the amorphous on its way to harmonious form. The feeling of *beauty* of line or colour or tone in the *sublimity* of a thunder-cloud, an ocean storm, or the tumbled mountain masses of an "earlier world," seems to me to be subsidiary to the main impression, while intensifying it.

The close parallel between the Sublime in nature so interpreted and

the Sublime in literature (*e.g.*, *passim* in the Old Testament) is obvious. In Religion the sublime shows itself in the feeling of awe in presence of arbitrary power. The Hebrew literature is a theology in which Absolute Power and arbitrary Law dominate.

Mystery, and the arbitrary in power and size, govern also the art of Egypt and the Orient which is symbolic of these characteristics of mind-experience. Is it possible to symbolise the Sublime save by large masses of inorganic material which seem rather to be striving to reach the repose of The Beautiful than to have attained it?

Again we have the sense of the Sublime in vast expanses—the sky, the desert, the ocean, the moor. It is the infiniteness suggested by these that stir the emotion.

[The above explanation recalls vaguely to my memory that of some writer—I think Schiller.]

MEDITATION X.

GOD AS SELF-CONSCIOUS SUBJECT.

Various Conceptions of God as "The Absolute". The doctrine of these Meditations. God as Dialectic is Personality—Pantheism—The Relation of God and the Finite.

Various Conceptions of God.

MIND, we are sometimes told, *is* self-consciousness : God is Absolute Mind, therefore God is Absolute Self-Consciousness or Spirit. This appears to me to be a short and easy way of settling a difficult question. It is more scientific to try to know God step by step and experientially as He reveals Himself in the correlated growth of object-subject. God we have found is Infinite Being and Dialectic and the Feeling as well as the Thought of the World. Is He *a* Being, that is to say, infinite conscious Subject ? and further, Is He a self-conscious Being, in other words, infinite Ego ? Let us consider this question—a grave one for us : for if God be in no sense Personality, He is then, at best and highest, a sentient Process, if indeed we can predicate even sentience of Him.

The ground-moment in the Notion, God, *viz.*, Absolute Unconditioned Being, presents itself as Potentiality only ; not in any way as personality. If I indulged the

pictorial imagination, I might, however, speak of Potential-Being as a kind of seething active dim sentience in which there slowly generates itself the Will-nisus of the creative activity. It is wiser, I think, to keep to the pure thought-conception which gives us Potentiality as first moment of Actuality.

As we have seen, the ground-moment is not the whole of God. He is Absolute Being immanent in conditioned things and, as Will-Dialectic, creative and formative of things. And the question in terms of my argument is this : Is Absolute Being, as creative, self-conscious ? In considering this question we continue to bear in mind our method : it is *in*, not *by*, finite mind as sentience, and *in* mind as reason and not *by* reason, that the concept of God can alone arise in us. In past pages I have not been attempting to analyse the concept, God ; but rather to ascertain how it is that the mind of man reaches the supreme Notion which he names God, and to exhibit the various elements in that notion as revealed by the method of investigation pursued.

The Christian theologian represents God as a self-conscious Spirit infinite and eternal to whom, as to a God of love as well as of moral judgment, all things are necessarily present—even the cares and griefs and trivial activities of the humblest worshipper. Such a conception admits of a Pantheistic interpretation ; but only by some straining of the argument. The popular conception is perhaps nearer the truth than that of the professed theologian. This represents God as an infinite and eternal Being *outside* the world which He has created, and as consciously related to every part of it because *He so wills* ; and His willing is essentially and ultimately

beneficent. It also assigns to Him all the characteristics of the human spirit, but on an infinite scale—*eminenter* to use the scholastic expression. "His ways are not as man's ways, His thoughts are not as man's thoughts," is merely an expression for the mystery that envelops His Being and His purposes generally.

The philosopher, on the other hand, has, for the most part, leant to a monistic pantheism; and this it is difficult to distinguish from an infinite Process in which will and purpose have no meaning, and in which man is no more an object of the Divine concern than the inorganic world. The infinite Process, however it may be described—whether in mystic terms, material terms, or as attributes and modes or as a Dialectic—is God; and there is no other. In brief, all is Emanation. The most recent form of what seems to me to be Pantheism is that by God is meant the "Absolute Experience" (which is an inadequate, if not misleading, way of naming an "infinite sentient Subject") to whom every part of the totality of things is present, and, by *being present*, is sustained as an existent reality. In this infinite conscious Subject all the differences and contradictions and inadequacies of the universe are conciliated in a Whole that is presumed to be consistent with itself. Nothing is said about creative activity; and knowledge in this strange Being, as man understands knowledge, is ignored, if not denied; the eternal Subject being rather an infinite Sensorium in whom conciliations of the different are not effected by an act of Will, but merely dynamically effect themselves somehow. Differences in this Absolute exist apparently for the mere purpose of being reconciled, and whether "The Absolute" is conscious or not conscious of the whole operation seems to me to

matter nothing. The teleological conception can find here no place. God is merely a big sentient Being helplessly and eternally generating things which He has a difficulty in dealing with in the interest of His own equilibrium.

Self-consciousness, and "knowledge" implied in this, cannot be thus lightly set aside however, and we have had offered to us the conception of an Absolute which in its necessary and eternal activity pours itself out in formal categories in derivation from each other—which categories constitute the Form (and also, according to my understanding of the position, the Reality) of the existent world and are ever returning into their source. This conception allows for difference; but the necessariness of the total evolution seems to me to abolish personality and freedom in man, and to lose all reality in Logic. It approaches very closely to the Spinozistic conception; "Subject" taking the place of "Substance". There is, I might venture to say, more regard for God than for man in this system of thought—man to explain whom and for whom all speculative thought is undertaken. It is possible, however, that this theory of the Absolute might be put in such a way as to satisfy, more than any other can, the vague, but ever-present, rational and spiritual needs of thinking men. One difficulty, however, appears to me to be insuperable, if I rightly understand Hegel: God does not realise Himself as Spirit or Absolute Ego save through the sublation of the "Other" which has emanated from Him. The self-consciousness of God (Spirit) is thus made logically dependent on the "Other," and there is nothing to justify us in saying that prior to the "Other" there is Absolute Ego. Now, there is a sense in which

my more hesitating attempt at interpretation is in accord with this view; for I say that it is only as creative, *i.e.*, as Will-Dialectic, that God can be said to be self-conscious Personality. There is, however, no Will or Purpose visible or possible in the necessary unfolding of a dialectic of categories.

Again: The Absolute, as distinguishable from the differentiations that constitute it, has been inaptly called a spiritual "unity". This gives an infinite pluralism with a centre of activity which suggests, to my mind, only an electric-power central station. It is the "Absolute Experience" over again. We naturally ask, Is this mechanical "unity" also *unifying*, and whence does it come, and what is its nature? Is it Will? To call it by the name "spirit" reveals, it seems to me, some intellectual confusion. Spirit, as all the world understands it, is not only mind but self-affirming mind, and affirmer and master, moreover, of all experience as subsumed into itself as Ego. A uniting bond of individua, if it be uniting and no more, may as well be an ingenious machine as anything else, so far as man cares. To call it a *mind-machine*, while leaving out mind, would be to purloin the word "mind". In short, if the Absolute Totality be simply Being and its differentiations held together sufficiently to secure their permanence, there is no "God". Nay more, there is no "Unity" even, in any sense save this, that the differentiations are by their primal nature, or by fortuity, in a reciprocity which secures a kind of balance or equilibrium. Things simply are statically and dynamically as we find them. Beings of reason are then merely the highest products of a sweltering, blind mass of conflicting atoms or *res*. The word "Absolute," even,

is on this theory not used in the sense of "Absolute Being" ground and sustainer of the Whole ; but merely as a synonym of "Totality"—a totality in the main coherent in its parts, but, the higher we rise in the scale of nature, more and more evil and chaotic as all experience tells us. If this be all we have found, we have not found anything which we can call, or care to call, God. True, there may exist, for aught we know, some natural products of the seething blind aggregate of things which are superior to man, and these, as more powerful and more in harmony with the system, may be called, relatively to the weakness of man, "gods". That is possible. But that is all. We are evidently back to the whirl of atoms casually colliding to effect a world, but now *in* some central unity of quasi-sentience ; including in that world the minds which put questions that can be met only with silence. If the word "Absolute" can give us no more than this, it ought to be summarily removed as a pretender. If, again, we substitute "blind Will" for the "fortuitous," we must be careful not to abstract this and give it a kind of entity ; for it exists only in individual things : and, moreover, it is not Will as we know it in ourselves, but merely persistent undirected Force. Like the misleading word "Absolute," it may delude men, but only for a second, into thinking that they have in this anything which can be called God.

Further, if the Absolute Total is a coherent system, as all admit, it is impossible to conceive a unity which shall maintain the coherence of the parts and the whole unless it be more than mere Being—a static fact at best. The uniting agency must be a something that is in touch with every part in a re-active fashion and em-

braces the whole. In other words, it must be Being *that is conscious*—feeling or intuiting all, and with an activity to be likened to a *mind*-mechanism, maintaining, correlating and adjusting all, through a reflexive movement, as an infinite synthesis. This stupendous universe would seem to need this at least to bear the weight of it. We have in this conception, presented to us as God, an eternal Consciousness—feeling the Whole : a One of reflexive Feeling infinitely diffused.¹ So far good : for we now have at least Mind-universal on which to repose, and we can even draw a certain life and strength for ourselves out of that which is the mysterious indweller and bearer and conciliator of all. With such a God, however, all knowledge, all life for man, is summed up in the one word “empirical”. For the inadequacy of the conception lies here that it gives us an infinite Subject which has reached the stage of sentient consciousness alone, and also a world that is an unpurposed emanation which the Eternal Consciousness almost *passively* contemplates as Object, inasmuch as the activity of emanation is necessary and undesigned. The relation of the emanation of differentiations as Object to Subject is here manifestly a relation of reflexive activity alone. The eternal Subject contemplates the fruit of its womb ever-issuing, ever-returning, while holding a quasi-mechanical relation to all the parts, which relation maintains them in their efflux and reflux. I do not deny that in contemplation of this great thought—an Eternal Consciousness—the mind of finite man may lose itself and experience that union with the

¹ I am not criticising Green, with whom I have a deep intellectual and ethical sympathy. Moreover, Green reaches an eternal *self*-conscious subject.

Universal which is of the essence of religious emotion. But he cannot look and be *raised* : he can only look around him and below him, for he himself occupies a higher stage of mind-evolution than belongs to the source of his own being ; for, such a conception if not, like Being, wholly static, is dynamic (as I have indicated) in the sense of reflex activity only. It is, at best, Mind on the attitudinal plane. It cannot order or dispose the emanation ; it cannot regulate that which, in some unexplained and necessary way, has emerged out of it and is held in it. It cannot propose ends to itself ; and ideas and ideals consequently vanish from the life of God, and exist for us as only man-created illusions. The universal Subject is doubtless aware of all, and, in a dim way, is alive to man and his ideals as it is alive to all else ;—but it is wholly indifferent to all alike. In short, at best and highest, this doctrine gives only a Soul of the Universe. The notion of God which we have been endeavouring to set forth in past meditations *contains* this Feeling and Consciousness (the Object being “ Other ” of Subject) ; but by itself this cannot satisfy either the heart or reason of Man. He demands more than such a God can give him : nay, he may fitly shed a pitying tear over the Eternal Consciousness, bewailing its restricted life and its helpless contemplation of its own inevitable and purposeless emanations. Man may wonder in presence of this as the final thought of reason on things ; but he cannot worship. Nay, this eternal consciousness must look to man for the completion of its own half-born being. An “ Eternal Conscious Subject ” can be the God we seek only if we surround it with a halo of our own creating, and insinuate into the conception attributes which a

strict logic must repudiate. It is *not*, however, the God we seek; nor is it the God which our analysis of Knowing and of experience has thus far revealed. If The Absolute be Conscious Being, even if we call it Eternal Consciousness, it is, I repeat, Mind only in the second stage—the attitudinal plane: there is nothing but emanation of differences and of the total manifestation, along with unceasing reflex-activity and inner reciprocity whereby the Whole is kept in a kind of working relation and preserved from dissolution.

Nor, to continue, can we content ourselves with that attempt to define God which identifies Him merely with Moral Tendency in the system of things. A “Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness” says too little, unless it fairly faces the implications of the phrase and converts the Power from being an indefinite “some-what” into a living actuality. The words carry with them the notion of an almighty (not necessarily infinite) Being working towards an End which is The Good, and they present to us a world which is not merely an ethical process as a dynamic blind fact, but a *purposed* ethical process. If this be so, then assuredly the eternal Being “Wills”; and the conception which the words sum up is brought (so far, at least) into line with that to which our epistemological analysis has led us.

The Doctrine of these Meditations.

These theories of God are all speculative; by which I mean that they do not rest on an epistemological foundation nor follow a method of investigation. Nay, I would go further, and say that with many of the greatest thinkers personality is not yielded by their systems but is merely thrown in to save the situation. It is an *obiter dictum* only.

What has our experiential method revealed? Objective Being unconditioned and transcendental, as unfathomable Potential and Source—the implicit of the explicated actual, and this Being as immanent in the conditioning of itself, *i.e.*, the universe of finites. But this is far from being all. For we found that Negation was that fact within the Absolute Whole without which a world could not exist. Then, as we rose to the Dialectic plane of mind, we found this confirmed, and saw each and all as *determined* Being, that is to say, as the issue of Universal-Will-Dialectic that gave us a teleologico-causal Absolute. The Negation is the “Not” within God and alone makes possible an Object or “Other” to Absolute Being; and The Dialectic, as Will containing End, affirms differentiations through that which is not God, and yet *is* God, *viz.*, the phenomenal Negation. The differentiations we saw to be *determinations* of Being—essences, and not helpless effluxes. The world, in short, is a “creation” and not merely an idle and casual “emanation” for the disturbed or complacent contemplation of an Absolute Sentience. It is determined in each, and *in the whole through each*, towards ends. Wherever the differentiations are, they carry with them Being-Absolute as now immanent; the differentiations are *within and of* Absolute Being. What we have before us in the universe, accordingly, is God *affirming* Himself as outer or Object to Himself, while the Object is yet always necessarily Himself—Himself, however, under the conditions of the inevitable moment of negation.

A big machine of process, even if we call it Mind, need not now content us: nor yet a system of self-evolving Logic with a dubious right even to the attri-

bute of Being. Objectivity is Subjectivity externalised : and the Universal Subject is Absolute Being, as immanent, *purposely* determining itself—a *Will-Dialectic*. If so, then “It” has not only the vague sense of subjectivity that is inherent in attuent consciousness, but it is evolved into the “I AM THAT I AM” of self-conscious Mind. It is, in short, Mind in its full significance as we finite minds can alone conceive it. We cannot now look down from our Ego heights on God as if we made Him, and then proceed to assign to Him His limits. He is not a subjective construction, still less a Postulate : we *find* Him in things as Spirit, and worship Him as veritable Object, as sole Actuality,—as the last word of our Reason-energy in its struggle with the mystery of things.

I say we *find* God : for the God I have endeavoured to reveal is nothing save the metaphysic latent in the universal presentation of things to the human self-conscious subject. The *Object builds God up in us* ; or rather the Object is God building Himself up in us—the necessary universals revealed on the evolving planes of finite mind which, as a concrete whole, constitute the mind of man.

God as Dialectic is Personality.

Of the first moment of the Notion God—Being-Absolute, we can say nothing save that, as womb of all, it contains all possible forms and essences and modes. We *feel* It. The God whom we “know” is Absolute Being as Becoming, and He (no longer It) is in the form of Ego. I say in the form of Ego ; for Being that generates Will-Dialectic is the very form of the finite ego ; and this Will-Dialectic we have found

to be objective fact. The God who, as Act, is known by us and in us is, in brief, to be called God the Logos, if we desire to bring ourselves into line with metaphysical theology. The Holy Spirit, again, is not God as Emotion, but as rationalised Emotion—the Ideal.¹

I think I am justified by the whole course of my argument in putting the matter thus: Being-Absolute, in revealing itself as a Dialectic in and through the Negation of itself, is Absolute Ego or Spirit. For what is the Dialectic? Will; Mediating Ground, Formal and Formative; and End or the Good—all resting in and emerging out of eternal Being. If we were asked to define self-conscious Spirit, we should do so in those very terms. God, therefore, as Act, is self-conscious Spirit. Our epistemological analysis yields this, while leaving God as Being-Absolute outside our ken. It is the creative aspect of God—God manifested and immanent that I “know”: Absolute Being *in relatione ad res creatas*; what else there is I only *feel*, and affirm, as fact.

The self-constituted object or “other” of the Divine creative consciousness, is the determination of His Being in and through the negating phenomenon, *viz.*, Quantity, Motion, Quality, Degree, etc. The self-determining Divine Spirit contemplates this as at once vehicle and resistant of His “absolute idea” (by which I mean the one comprehensive creative Thought) and *so* recovers it. Herein is the very form of self-consciousness. But this act is impossible in God, as in man, save as grounded in the logical prius “I am I,” in which self-

¹ And is accordingly the issue of Absolute Being and the Dialectic—the Father and the Son, as the metaphysical theologian would say.

distinguishing act the Subject is Object to itself. Man, then, is not required to adore a mere Process or find religion in a cosmic emotion or in a Universal Sentience or a System of Relations, or in an Unknowable.

When we say that God as creative Act is Spirit or Ego, or self-conscious Subject, it is in an infinite sense, or *eminenter*, that He is so. By this we do not mean that He is so in a sense we cannot comprehend; but only in a sense that we cannot adequately comprehend. Infinite Ego must have infinite relations and be infinite in His activities and relations. If a finite mind were to compass the Infinite it would *eo actu* cancel it. Again, Man is self-determining; but he is also determined as well as self-determining, and is, consequently, subject to conditions of spiritual life that bar his free activity. God, on the contrary, is self-determining and determines all else: He is in His self-determination infinite, because the only limit is the Other, which also is Him. There must, manifestly, be a vast difference between a conditioning and a conditioned Ego—much that is beyond the understanding of a conditioned finite being. These considerations justify my qualifying the affirmation of “God is Ego” by the words “in an infinite sense”. Our business, then, is not so much to know God as Absolute Infinite Ego as to apprehend the *fact* of Absolute Infinite Ego; not to regard Him as *a* personality, but as “Personality”; and there leave the question.

Contrast Ego finite and infinite: Keeping always to the results of our past argument, we would say, God is objective universal Being; Man is a determined unit of Being with countless fixed relations. Man determines for himself that which is “given” to him: God deter-

mines the universe including man and is self-conscious by being conscious of what He gives as content to Himself. Man is a subject awaiting its content, while God is Subject and Object. Man reduces things to self-consciousness by a series of finite judgments and inductively: God as creative, determining and infinite, recovers His determinations into Himself in one percipient flash—percipient, not sentient. Man is in a body which, at best, is a limited and weak organ of the spirit; the body of God is the Universe which He Himself initiates and animates. When, then, we say that God is Ego or Spirit as spirit is known to us, but this in an “infinite sense,” what I have said explains the qualification.

In short, our epistemological analysis compels us to subsume all actual and possible experience as Being and Dialectic; but Being and Dialectic is precisely the *Form* of self-conscious spirit as known to us in ourselves. The finite man-mind is the infinite Mind *as* finite and reveals to us that, whatever else God may be, He is, on this plane of the Divine Evolution, Personality. At the same time we do wisely not to give too definite a form to this in our thought: wherever the Infinite is present, Feeling must eke out knowing, and feeling is itself inchoate thought.

Meanwhile, let me again emphasise that it is only God as creative and immanent that we “know”—*i.e.*, as Absolute Synthesis of Experience: to affect more than this would be to affect a synthesis of the Absolute; and this is quite beyond man’s powers. That very Absolute Synthesis, however, contains the fact of Absolute Being Unconditioned. Of God as Absolute Being I can say nothing definite, after I have named the Attributes mediated through the finite; of God in His

creative movement, I can legitimately speak and say much. The "Becoming" of Absolute Being as the "other" of its own content is not a helpless movement, but the *nisus* of Will whose end is The Good, as the Dialectic insists on telling us.

But even into what I have ventured to say of God, there ever enters the consciousness of the Infinite which proclaims, with no uncertain voice, "Such knowledge as you have is bounded by your finitude, and such personality as you are justified in attributing to God as creative, is a personality that sublates your finite conception of personality into the highest level of Being. Consequently, God's personality is as like to yours as the Infinite is to the Finite ; as the Conditioning to the Conditioned. His thoughts, which are His purposes, you know only in so far as you know the externalisation of Himself in nature and man." And, accordingly, I dare not say that Personality or Ego is the highest term of Absolute Mind. But I find it on this plane ; and on this plane it is very God, because it is the Form of Absolute Being as creative.

Relation of God and the Finite.

We have been speaking of the Absolute Synthesis. This Absolute Synthesis, we have said, is God. Nothing can be outside God ; and, consequently, it might be said that the doctrine of the Absolute Synthesis is Pantheism. This would be a hasty criticism ; for an essential and inevitable moment within the Absolute is Negation, whereby the "other" and the individual are constituted and conserved within the Whole. The method of the universe is through an infinite series of finite individuations. And yet, nothing in all the ascending scale of the created

manifestation can liberate itself from God—the affirmation and idea in each; and, as things ascend in the scale, they have more and more of God in them till, in the self-conscious creature Man, standing at the top of the scale, we find a free return to God and a vision and proclamation of Him as All in All.

Although nothing can liberate itself from God, the moment of Negation, I say, saves us from Pantheism. Personally (I may interpose) I have no objection to Pantheism save that it is false. In an early meditation, we found that the phenomenon “is” and “is not”: this is the fundamental contradiction in our system. In Being and the Dialectic is the ultimate reality and continuity of things. In their abstractness as predicates “things” are *not*. They are, *as abstracts*, the bare moment of Negation in the absolute synthesis, without which there could be no universe. To identify God-immanent *in* all things with things is a doctrine of emanation and pantheism; whereas we find that Primal Being passes into its externalisation as dialectic act. It *Wills* the world; and that willing involves mediating Ground and End.

Primordial Actuals are, we said, the dialectic determination or affirmation in and of Absolute Being passing into a finite world. As containing the Negation of the One of Being and Dialectic, they are individuates. The “determination-so” is the mediating moment of the Dialectic: it is formative and is the “idea” of the resultant concrete actual or determinate. The “idea” determines the positive activities and ends of each actual; the negation gives individuation. Like the Absolute Totality itself, each individuate is thus a synthesis of Yes-No. By virtue of the negation and individuation each actual is set free to fulfil its own nature in and for the whole through conflict. Consequently, its

actings are not fatefully determined but are a question for the individual itself in relation to its finite environment, and are contingent. God virtually says, "Fulfil the idea for yourself; sublimate it into your individuality: you must do so in a system of finites through effort and strife; but notwithstanding, the 'idea' in you which is ME will maintain a definite line of positive and affirmative activity of relations which will, through the fulfilment of each actual, effect a Whole as a system; and I am always immanent as that 'idea'. You are in Time, and the Whole can effect itself only as an evolution of ME in a Time-series. Meanwhile, I am in each as 'idea,' and thus make possible for each the fulfilment of itself through the Whole, spite of those deflections, retardations and retroversions arising out of the assertion of individuality and without which the Whole would be a blank system of mechanical necessity." In the lowest grades of actuals the individuation is so weak and blind, that the system is virtually mechanical and necessary, but as higher grades of Being evolve there is ever more spontaneity.

When we come to Man, this relation of God to His creatures as each acting from its own individual centre is accentuated. For the free Will-dialectic is the "idea" in and of man, and there is thus imposed on him the fulfilment of himself *by* himself as an individual ego, as a member of a Community, and as a searcher after truth and the guidance which it alone can afford. Hence error and evil through which, as part of the inevitable method of an externalisation of Absolute Being, man has to fulfil himself. This is a hard lot for man. But the hardest part of his lot is that God would almost seem to have left him. And yet, it is in a special sense that God is ever present. On every plane of finite mind

as organised into man He reveals Himself. He is ever inviting the individual to become universal: to force Himself on man would be to cancel man's finitude and personality, thereby contradicting the whole method of creation. He is always in us; but He must be *taken*. Man must achieve for himself his privileges. Consciously to realise God is to claim Him for ourselves. This is meditative prayer and God *must* answer; for in prayer we are striving to identify our wills with His eternal Will. Such is the spiritual order, known of all men who seek God. We cannot, by asking, deflect for our special behoof the purposes of God as embodied in the system of things. The answer to particular prayer must always be a universal answer; but just because it is a universal answer, it is an answer to each individual who asks. And the answer is just God Himself — God the Helper, the Pardoner, the Consoler, the Deliverer. He will not relieve a man of his particular burden, but He will transform it and enable him to realise its true significance for the moulding of his spirit. God's Peace will always be given. It cannot be otherwise.

It follows, then, from our whole argument that man's normal relation to God in this suffering and struggling world is a virile relation and far from servile. He is a co-operator with God Himself in the effecting of His idea. God needs man. For individuation, which may be called cosmic sin, man is not responsible: for his avoidable defections from the ethical ideal, however, he prostrates himself and prays that the link between the finite and infinite thereby broken may be forged anew. In thus praying to God, he claims his birthright, and he will get what he ought to ask.

The relation of God to the finite which is of deepest significance is that he is immanent not only as "idea" but as the ideal. Were it not for the content we have found in the Dialectic, we should not be entitled to say so. The Dialectic in its initial Will-movement propounds completed End which is the Good; and attains it so far as the Negation in the system permits. And the Good is the harmony of parts as governed by the "idea"—in other words it is The Ideal. Consequently we say that God immanent as the idea of finite things is immanent as a striving towards the ideal. This means much for us. Even in inanimate things we see the ideal immanent; and when we contemplate the evolution of Infinite Mind as finite mind, we see the inner movement towards the realisation of the projected ideal. The Universal Dialectic reflected into man as "idea" of Man is subjective dialectic which is the possibility and source of ideals. The dialectic as a free movement in us propounds ideals and ever moves towards ideals; and ideals are the harmonised Truth of experience, cognitive, ethical and æsthetic.

If in each existence the ideal is always immanent, so in the Absolute Totality is it immanent. The Absolute Idea is (in terms of the Dialectic) immanent as the Absolute Ideal towards which the whole creation moves—must move. And finite beings which can project ideals which they cannot achieve here are God's failures, if this earthly life sum them up. The Negation in the individual (popularly called the Devil) has been too potent for man; and for God also, it would seem, on this plane of His Evolution of Himself.¹

¹ See Appendix, Note 6.

MEDITATION XI.

THE NOTION GOD IN ITS CONCRETE FULNESS.

The Notion God in its concrete fulness—Religion as the life of finite reason in this Notion—Consummation of the finite thought of God as Absolute. The Feeling-Experience of Absolute Being as Potentiality : The Intuition or Mystic contemplation of Being Absolute as fulfilment and One-All : Intuition not abolition of self : Intuition yields no new truth to man : Personality is not obliterated in Intuition.

THE question we have been considering is : What do we mean when we use the word God ?—a question ever urgent, and ever recurring in each successive generation of men. God, we found, must be the Absolute Synthesis and we proceeded to inquire into the Content of this Notion.

Absolute Being, if it contains Mind-infinite, must, in externalising itself, externalise itself as finite mind, beginning with the simple and evolving itself into more complex forms until the whole meaning of Mind is unfolded, in so far as that is possible within the Finite. The function of a finite mind is as subject to feel and know, according to its degree, that which is not itself ; including in the highest stage itself as object. Finite mind is one moment in the concrete Totality—subject-object ; and there is no question of “relation” between them in the banal sense of that term. In the epistemological meditations I tried to expound Natural Realism

as I understand it. And I was the more concerned about this, because only on a theory of knowledge, it appeared to me, could a doctrine of God and Man be legitimately founded ; and by a theory of knowledge, in relation to this question, I mean the steps and process by which the Object or Whole builds itself as necessary universals into the finite subject, from Pure Feeling upwards. The Universe reveals itself in Man and shines in and through him : there is no breach of continuity ; and each stage of evolving mind yields a moment in the supreme Notion which is at once the ultimate of Knowledge and the Knowing of God. Man at the top is within Natura in the large sense of that word, and receives the whole of God in so far as a finite being can receive it. In the natural history of subject-object lies the whole revelation of God to Man.

This is on the speculative side ; but, after all, the vital question is the ethical reference of the speculative Notion. Assuredly, the realisation of God must be the most potent of all forces in the consciousness of the man who realises Him. God is the Dynamic of the Universe ; the consciousness a man has of God is the dynamic of his finite spirit.

Let us now gather together the moments in the Notion God—the Absolute Synthesis as these have been delivered to us by our method of procedure.

1. At the root is Absolute Unconditioned Being, object of Pure Feeling, of which we only say that it is given as the Potential of the actual and possible ;—the implicit of the explicated world. *In se* and *a se*, it is beyond our ken save as fact, till it Becomes ; that is to say reveals itself in the “ Other ” of itself. It is the One

out of which the Many proceeds ; and *in which* and *within which* the many exists. It is not to be called a Unity ; but the eternal " One " identical with itself in all difference, and in the One of which all relations are held.

2. On the sentient plane of evolving mind (up to its completed form as attuition), Absolute Being having passed into the existent, continues Itself as fact in the object and as reflexed feeling of fact in the subject, and is felt as immanent in the diverse phenomenal and as constituting its ultimate reality.

3. On the dialectic plane of mind the initial functioning is Percipience, and the sensing of Being-immanent in things is now raised to the perception of it. But the chief fact is that on this stage of mind, the whole presentation is found to be an Objective Dialectic, just as it has already revealed itself as Being unconditioned and as conditioned in the existent and diverse. Our analysis of the moments of the dialectic tells us that this means that in Absolute Being is generated a *nisus* which is Will with form of End implicit. Absolute Being is, as Becoming, a dialectic, *i.e.*, Will willing the world, and, as such, Kinetic or " Efficient " Cause : as mediating End, it is Cause formal and formative : as projecting End, it is Cause-teleological : and these ends in their organic sum constitute The Good (in the Hellenic sense). God as Being, God as Will-dialectic, is in the most minute as in the greatest ; and He is *all* there in each according to its kind and grade of being.

4. As Dialectic He is not only Formative Energy, but the Sum of Ideals ; for the dialectic movement *must* seek the perfect fulfilment of itself as End.

5. Further, God is, as Creative-Will, Personality.¹

¹ The expression *a* Personality is, I have said, to be avoided, because of its finite and anthropomorphic suggestions.

6. As immanent in creation He is pathic Feeling, Emotion and Beauty, out of which the subjective dialectic moulds ethical ideals within mind, and poietic ideals outside. This carries with it the conclusion that, as immanent in ethical and æsthetic ideals, Absolute Being as creative is a God of Love and of Beauty ; and not merely of Dialectic and of the Good in the Hellenic sense.

Thus have we found that planes of finite mind are Infinite Mind evolving itself as finite mind and the object at each ascending stage is a revelation of a "moment" in the total notion—God. The revelation in its sum is a concrete of the necessary universals of finite mind receiving that which is not itself and yet embraces itself. We do not base our notion of God on human analogies ; it is *given* as Object to finite subject. The Absolute, doubtless, is more than all this ; but I cannot tell what. The content of the Absolute Synthesis is exhausted for me.

God, then, is not Being in the sense of Substance, of which substance the further revelation of Him are "properties" ; still less is He *a* Being. He is Universal Being in which each moment, from Absolute Being upwards, goes to constitute the whole as All-One. No moment in the Notion is to be thought apart. He evolves Himself for us in subject-object. We must take the concrete Whole as God. God is all in the whole and all in every moment of His total notion. The End is immanent in the Beginning ; the last in the first. The moments of the Absolute Synthesis revealed to us, and which we call God, are a One in Him, as they are a One in His externalisation ; and they are to be so contemplated by the philosophic, as well as by the devout, spirit.

And when we say that God is Personality we merely affirm that the form of His activity as Dialectic is the form of personality, and is the highest term in God as knowable by man. At best and highest, it is the man-God that we know—God as revealed to a finite mind on this our plane of measureless Being; and whatever we may say carries with it of necessity the fact of Infinity—of possibilities that transcend, *while containing*, what we men can apprehend. Finite spirits seek the Highest and the all-comprehending, all-explaining synthesis; but neither in this transitory life nor elsewhere shall we ever reach it. To reach it would be to become God. We are on our way, but the way stretches out to infinity.

Such is the content of the Notion, GOD, such is the real Object which we adore and serve, thereby raising our limited humanity into the universal and infinite, and finding there at once our source of being and the final resting-place of finite spirit. In realising for ourselves the great conception we pass from the imperfect into the Perfect, from the particular to the Universal, and we abide in these. This is the religious attitude of mind; and here the pious peasant soul meets the philosopher as an equal. But in both alike, the bare intellectual emotion, although religious, is not religion. For religion further demands that we realise God *for ourselves* as immanent in ethical ideals by fulfilling Him in the finite ends of human life. Our finite ethical ideals are subsumed by us as God's ideals mediated in and by Man, and it is in the name of God that we pursue them, thereby identifying our Will with His.

The Absolute Synthesis, we further found, contains

negation and finitude whereby the individual, as organised entity or monad, sustains itself in the presence of the Universal; nay, opposes it by virtue of its own negating individuality. When we consider self-conscious beings we call this negation by the name *Sin*, because we find as constitutive of them the Will-dialectic which can negate the negation of their bare individuality and allow free passage for the "idea" which is the affirmation of God in them; but this it does *not* do: hence *Sin*. To cling to bare individuality is to ignore, nay even to flout, the God living in us as idea. The great majority of the evils of this world are due to the aggressive individuality of men and of nations.

The God whom we have been trying to unveil does not "transcend" experience, as Kant would say: He is the presupposition and possibility of all experience, and also its End and Sum. He is given in the evolving stages of the man-subject from Pure Feeling upwards. At each stage, the finger of God writes His own Nature on the self-conscious subject. To realise the full God is not only to see all things through the eyes of God, so to speak, but to live in Him, and to co-operate with Him. This is the Life Eternal.

*Consummation in man of the thought of God as the
Absolute.*

The Feeling-Experience of Absolute Being.—There is, however, more to be said, if we are fully to exhibit the life of the finite spirit in God. And to exhibit this, I must return to the Ground-moment in the Notion of God from which we started in our synthesis, *viz.*, Ab-

solute Unconditioned Being which is on the plane of Feeling alone, but, through negation of the finite, is negatively determined as a "percept" by reason. This Object, which is ever present to the true mystic, cannot be expelled from the most prosaic experience, if only man will pause and think. It is the great Reality before the worlds were. As *in se* and *a se* it is mysterious Ground and Source, and always One in all difference.

The Feeling of Unconditioned Being, first moment in the "Notion" God, is, in truth, the common element implicit in all religions. It so penetrates and overawes the man who is filled with it that he prostrates himself in adoration, and will offer up his very self in submissive dependence. However men may go astray in their conceptions of the nature and symbols of Absolute Being, and so be led to religious practices which a more advanced civilisation abhors, there still remains, at the root of the religious consciousness, the dim *feeling*, and, as man transcends primæval barbarism, the growing *thought*, of unsoundable Being in presence of which his transient life is as nothing—a God who transcends all individuals while comprehending them, Whom each *must* adore, and with Whom each must conciliate himself. If any man says that he has not this feeling and this thought, all I can answer is that he does not wait patiently on his own consciousness. The very beasts have the feeling, each with its own limitations ; and it lies at the basis of our whole sentient life prior to, and independently of, the passive-activity of attuition and the active-activity of reason. A man must set aside the petty incidents and trivial conceits of daily pre-occupations and allow the urgent and solicitant God within him to make known His presence through the agitations of Feeling, if he is

to maintain his place in the Universal. We "know" God in His creative aspects alone; but we also, and chiefly, "feel" Him as infinite Being close to our inner selves—always, then, at the command of every man. In this we have a vision of the One-All. We look into an unfathomed and unfathomable depth of mystery. It is the "That" of Plotinus which is before all existence and thought.

Of God as Absolute Unconditioned Being—ineffable source and potential fountain of the actual and possible, "Abysm of all abysms," we can only say that HE IS. Nor shall any created being ever fathom the mystery. He is in identity with Himself. As in identity with Himself we are wise if we use the words of Malebranche, "His true name is *He that is*; or, in other words, Being without restriction, All Being, Being infinite and universal and well-spring of the actual and possible". But,

All in vain
Would mind address itself to render plain
The nature of the essence.¹

"He dwelleth in the Light which no man can approach unto."

The Intuition or Mystic Contemplation of Being Absolute and One-All.—The mystic absorption of finite mind in the contemplation of Absolute Being is a fact of finite experience. In a previous meditation, I spoke of that "feeling" of Being-universal that enters into the Notion of God and receives expression in the utterances of poets. This is Absolute Being as *immanent* in all. But the mystic absorption in Absolute Being is

¹ Browning's *Parleyings*.

more than this, and yet it reveals to us no new element in the Notion God. We already have, as first moment in the concrete Notion, Being-Absolute and Unconditioned ; and it is this and this alone that the mystic contemplates. Strange as it may seem, it is this also that the thinking Agnostic contemplates when he speaks of the Ultimate Real as the "primal mystery".

And yet, while all have the "feeling" of Being as an infinite universal, the elevation of mind, which suppresses self and lives in a kind of conscious identity with Absolute Being, is, though possible for all, experienced only by the few. It is a mental attitude to the "Absolute-One" which has in it an element of reason as well as of feeling. This experience of finite mind would seem to transcend reason, and yet to carry reason with it ; it is not, therefore, adequately denoted by the single word Feeling. The word "Intuition" has been appropriated to this peculiar activity of mind because it denotes "beholding"—the direct beholding or envisaging of the ultimate fact and sum of all experience. It is an attitude of mind which is not non-rational ; and yet, as it is certainly not characterised by the definiteness of the dialectic activity, it would seem to transcend "knowledge" while yet being a possession of the conscious mind as a reason-act. It is not absorption in mere Feeling. Let us look a little longer at this experience.

Being Absolute and Unconditioned could not be given to us as (in the etymological sense of the word "absolute") out of relation to the Totality of which we form part : it is given as ultimate ground in pure Feeling, and again it forces itself on us as Being immanent in the conditioned. It is not a negation of all subjective thought, and, there-

fore, a non-entity. It is given *as Being positive*, and further, as *potential* fountain of all ; or, rather, it is The All before anything exists, and again as reality of all that exists.¹ It does not evade our subjective thinking as positive *fact*, but only when we seek to determine its characters relatively to itself. We then find that the Brahman is right in calling it the "No No". Its characters are inscrutable : the knowable predicates are in the finite manifestation alone ; in so far forth as they are therein manifested. None the less do we lie close to this Being Absolute—not only feeling, but perceiving and affirming It as Ground, Source and Sustainer ; although, as a matter of fact, its presence in us is for the most part sub-selfconscious.

Now, as foundation of our subjective mind-history this Being Unconditioned is a Potential only, the one of all *Possibility* ; but when it has revealed itself as a finite world of differences and has reflected into us, as we grow in feeling and thought, all its richness of reality and form, we then carry back into its teeming bosom all that has been revealed, and now behold It as the One of all *Actuality*, and not as mere unconditioned Potentiality. It is thus that we, as beings of reason, finally contemplate Being Absolute ; and this activity of mind is, I say, to be called Intuition as distinguished from mere Feeling. Hitherto we have seen God as ground of All, and "God in All" ; now we see "All in God," including our own personalities.

The awe and mystery which invest the feeling of Absolute Being as source of All and as the indwelling

¹ That reality and actuality are held in potentiality is a difficult conception only when we think under the finite categories of time and motion.

One are the most potent of all forces in lifting man out of his individuality and bringing him into universal relations : and when now we return to the infinite source and consciously contemplate Absolute Being, we bring with us all that has been revealed as to its nature as creative and in our own life-experience, and give it an actual, though vague, content. It is now beheld as End as well as Beginning, Omega as well as Alpha. The depths of Being are deeper, the mystery more mysterious than ever. There is an infinite emotion in this the supreme act of finite subject. It has been called the Beatific Vision. The mystic is rapt out of his personality and loses himself in the One-All, the All-One. There are those who speak of this elevation of the spirit of man as if it were an illusion. As a matter of fact, it would seem to be the supreme reality of finite experience. It is true that in this virtual identity of finite and infinite there is no definite thought and no definite feeling other than Being One-All in which all finitude, both Ego and its content, is absorbed and seems to be sublated. In this consummation of finite mind we have feeling at its highest power : the mere feeling which we previously had of unconditioned Being has now passed into an emotion *in* reason and *of* reason. The Being which we contemplate is still infinite and inexhaustible Possibility ; but it is no longer empty. All the moments that constitute the notion God are now there : and there too we behold all of the Divine that the travail of our souls has made actual for us in the course of our striving lives. In the thought of God as *immanent* in all as idea and ideals, we live and work along with Him ; in the thought of God as the Absolute All-One and One-All we find repose, and rest, and tranquillity

and blessedness. The barriers of the finite are broken down, contradictions disappear and the Absolute is taken by force. This is the Love for God, of which the Mystic speaks.

Thus it is that the primal mind-experience of Absolute Unconditioned Being ever remains silently with us, deep in our consciousness at all stages of our inner life. We can never extricate ourselves from it : and we consummate this experience by passing again into the same Being-Absolute—our final apotheosis. Our lowest state and our highest, as minds, are, accordingly, analogous ; but with this important difference, that whereas the former is, as object, only the implicitude of a world, the latter is full and all-containing, for the whole revelation of Absolute Being as immanent is now there in the object of our ecstatic contemplation in so far as each of us has received the revelation of the Eternal Life. In both states the Object is the same, but how different ! We now, in the supreme act of finite reason, see how full Absolute Being is. Plotinus would call this vision Thought thinking itself, and Hegel ought to say the same ; but if so, then Feeling and the sensuous generally would be banished ; whereas it is the beholding of “All-Being” as source and terminal of the universals of Feeling as well as of Thought.

We distinguish by calling the root-experience sub-rational Feeling, and the consummating experience supra-rational Intuition ; for it rests on and emerges *out of* reason, is immanent in reason, just as reason itself rests on and emerges out of the non-rational intuition of sense. It is the final expression on earth of infinite Mind as finite mind, and is reserved for man. This is what is meant by God returning to Himself

through His highest finite creature. He beholds Himself through the eyes of man, and the circle is complete.

Intuition is not abolition of self.—Ego in the exaltation of Intuition does not however lose *itself* in the infinite object : it is in communion with the Absolute : it is one with it, but not in an identity. To be in identity would be the annihilation of itself ; it is merely raised to its highest potency in a vision of the One Absolute and Eternal. The Sabbath rest of souls in God, of which the Mystic speaks, could not be rest if the soul were not conscious of it, however dimly : it would be the sleep of death. It is the consummation and fruition of the finite spirit in its ceaseless striving after the Infinite. As finite spirit, it has always been in search of The One that is All : it has now found it. But even in this highest experience man cannot abnegate reason : as Will-Dialectic, he *wills* his own vision of the Absolute. He *takes* The Absolute to himself, beholding in it the sum of the immanent particularisation now placed back in Absolute Being and lost in its infinite recesses, where also is placed the Ego of man, now dedicated *by itself* as free act. “I comprehend Thee not,” says Fichte ; “yet in Thee I comprehend myself and the world.”

Intuition yields no new truth to man.—If I have correctly exhibited the true nature of Intuition, it follows that it can yield no new truth to us. We can see nothing there save what we carry into it as the issue of our finite feeling and thought. All knowledge, strictly so-called, is in reason and out of reason, and we refuse to receive any message from the rapt seer which reason

does not guarantee. Reason resists all pretensions : even an angelic utterance has to be tried in its crucible.

While I say this, I am not blind to the fact of the sub-selfconscious action of reason in the domain of feeling. The conclusions which we reach and which determine our acts are frequently the result of feeling and reason operating *in* us, and not *by* us. We may feel, for example, the rightness of an act, though we may not be able always to make explicit the grounds of it. The fervent nature, also, will sometimes act on an impulse which it feels to be its own guarantee, and will not be baulked : it is justified and supported by the *whole* man and disdains restraint. The impulse seems to be God-given — an inspiration. Thus far I concur with Cardinal Newman's admirable chapter on the Illative sense. But such fervid emotions are subjective only, and may be right for you or for me ; but if I proclaim them as objective, I am bound to give a reason for the unreasoned faith that is in me, such as will satisfy the common reason, if not the common sense, of mankind ; and I do so by analytically bringing to light the reasoning that worked *in* me, though not self-consciously *by* me.

The worldly mind, meanwhile, may be assured that the intuitional attitude of finite spirit is no illusion, although there may be no defined thought at the point where the determined returns into the undetermined, the finite vanishes in the infinite, and knowing identifies itself with ecstatic feeling. And although it yields no new truth (save itself), it assuredly permeates and elevates the whole nature, illumines all knowledge, and transfuses into man a vitality that fits him to discern more and more clearly the verities and high significance of the spiritual life. He is now all in God : he is alone with

God : he has attained the highest : there is nothing else left for him to rise to in this sphere of Being. He is already living the life eternal. His own finite consciousness may be even said to be now mediated through his consciousness of the Absolute. But it is only the area of *his own* experience that is thus exalted : it is his *own reason* that thus transcends itself : it is only the apotheosis of *himself* in the Absolute that a man can attain to. In that exaltation the finite and all diversity seem to fall away : I say *seem*, because it is all there sub-consciously. Thus the vision is the consummated fulness of experience—not a gazing into emptiness, but into a One of Being that is all-comprehensive. A man now sees clearly that contradictions (so-called) are mere logical puzzles : possibility and actuality are not antagonistic but only different moments of one Reality : so with Good and Evil, crooked and straight, black and white, mind and matter—all are seen as the transitions and becomings of one Reality. This is the Absolute.

It is by its effect in elevating the whole man while diffusing a mystic joy through his inmost being that this spiritual transcendence justifies itself as a force and fact in our nature. It is the supreme act of finite reason, in which it divests itself of its finiteness, but still retains it ; I say, still retains it, for the divesting is *its own* act. Reason with its definiteness is superseded by the infinite of Feeling into which it overflows.

Personality is not obliterated in Intuition. — Mystics have spoken of being caught up by this emotion of Being-absolute and their personality obliterated. But while it is natural that they should think so, it is not the fact, as I

have said. I would point out that they could not afterwards give an account of their rapt state if self-consciousness, however absorbed in emotion, had not accompanied them into it. Reason is essentially Will directed towards an object or end after a certain form which we call (summarily) the teleologico-causal. The object, in the experience of the mystic, and he does not deny a subject *and* object, seems to take possession of the Will which usually takes possession of the object, and so to absorb the Will ; but this is truly the act of the finite Will itself. Were subject in identity with object, the mystic, I say, could give no subsequent account of his experience ; not even to the extent of saying that he had had an experience. By losing itself in Absoluto-infinite Being will-reason finds itself one with its source, and all finite things become hazy and fall away as phenomenal futilities ; but the Will and personality are therein intensified, and it is this very exaltation of personality as being *also* universality, this finite as infinite, that gives the thrill of the mystic emotion. Even a man who whole-heartedly loving another human finite spirit loses himself in the object, he thereby attains to fuller personality.

Remember that we are always in close touch with the universal of Being : we live in it, and it is only when we consciously live in it that we can be truly said to live ; and when it presents itself to us in a final blaze of effulgence there is no breach in our spiritual lives : there has doubtless been a long, secret and silent preparation for it, more or less conscious. Plotinus, in speaking of the vision of God, says that what the seer "sees is not our reason, but something prior and superior to our reason" . . . but then he adds that "absorbed in God, he makes but one

with Him like the centre of a circle coinciding with another centre". Manifestly, then, Ego and self-consciousness are not absorbed and lost. "The spirit dies," says Suso, "and yet is all alive in the marvels of the Godhead." Again, the Indian Yogi knows that the production of this mental state is a work of labour and of intense concentration of will on pure Being to the exclusion of all finite things—the active suppression of the many that the One may be all in all.

That the finite always remains whether the illuminate will or not, is evident also, from the utterances of mystics themselves. I think that every instance quoted by James (p. 379, *et seq.*), shows this, especially the words of Amiel, Walt Whitman and Malwida von Meysenburg.¹

When, then, we call this state of consciousness suprarational, it is necessary to guard ourselves by saying that it is reason itself that sees what lifts it above the ordinary finite limitations and operations of itself. Intuition is reason at its highest power concentrating itself on the One, till it loses itself in emotion and thus effects its own apotheosis.

In these high moments of contemplation, the bounded self seems to pass into the Universal and Eternal, and be wholly lost ; but it is not truly so : it passes

into the Nameless, as a cloud
Melts into Heaven,

but it gains through "loss of Self"

such large life as matched with ours
Were Sun to spark.

¹ One writer (Dr. Bucke), trying to explain the mystic state, speaks of cosmic consciousness and places it on a higher level than ordinary self-consciousness as if a new species. But I think that he merely reveals the fact that a dominant element in the mystic state is cosmic consciousness.

So far from personality being abolished in such divine communion it is the ecstasy of very Ego as now, at last, a fulfilled concrete.

Not only then does the mystic in his rapture carry his personality with him, but he carries also all his experience of the finite and diverse. What do we see to be the characteristics of this exaltation? A perception of the meanness and triviality of finite things is certainly one characteristic. How can there be this unless things still remain in consciousness (though not for clear *self*-consciousness) so that they may be assigned their true insignificance in the presence of the One and Eternal. In fact, all the cosmic universals—the sum of the phenomenal world—are now seen or felt in the One of Absolute Being; and but for this foil of the finite there would be no One. Let us note, further, that, in so far as the mystic can give a general description of his ecstasy, it is found to partake of the character and colour of his ordinary life. It “is only the finite speaks”.

An approximation to this exalted vision in which we see nothing definite, know nothing, and yet feel all, is to be found in the familiar sense of The Beautiful in nature, which neither pen nor pencil can ever adequately portray. That which gives us the thrill of joy as we contemplate the beauty of the external world is precisely that which is “deeply interfused”; but this we should annihilate if we brought it, by explanation, into the “light of common day”. A certain type of thinker would insist on defining all feeling, and would count as illusion that which he cannot define. He is definition-proud: “His scales are his pride, shut up together as with

a close seal" (Job xli. 15). Feeling is larger than thought.

Further, let me say : in dealing with feelings and emotions, philosophers have not always recognised the emotion in and of reason itself of which I have more than once spoken—a joy of a unique kind in the successful activity of pure thought. Now, in the transcendent experience of the vision of the Absolute One—the “high hour of visitation from the living God”,—it is this emotion of reason (not an exalted crude sensation) which then reaches its highest intensity, and trembles (so to speak) on the verge of its own finitude as it prolongs its gaze into the Infinite All-One.

It has been often remarked that the mystic intuition has a certain sensuousness about it. This is because though a supreme energising of Reason, it is yet at the same time (and, I think, *because* it is supreme energy of Reason) the highest intensity of feeling; and feeling we found to be the root of all consciousness, and involved in every evolution of finite mind. Feeling and Reason ¹

¹ Perhaps we may say that these things can be better understood when we reflect on so familiar a fact as our consciousness of a general concept. The concept “*animal*” is a generalisation by means of analysis and synthesis of the permanent in the midst of the ever-varying characters of individuals—the “form” or “idea” of a class of existences. In thinking the concept, we do not actually think the multiplicity of animal individuals or any one of them; but these are assuredly matter of subconscious reference lying implicit in the general concept, which is now a mere symbol. Thus we actually think, and contemplate, and use for intelligible conversation what is truly an *ens rationis*—an *ens* which is a One comprehending a many that virtually drops out of sight. In like manner with the vision of the Absolute: there is much *in* our minds which is not *for* our minds, and which may be felt although not perceived.

here mingle their streams and we have the sensuousness of Reason.

I have been endeavouring in past Meditations to realise for myself God as a concrete whole : but if we are to think God and name Him, not in His full content as containing Nature and Man (absolute synthesis) but as merely the immanent noumenal of our experience—a something which is *not* the finite and phenomenal, though in them and constituent of them, we cannot much better our old Scottish form of sound words, familiar to us all, which gave to our ancestors their earnestness and their spiritual outlook into the Beyond : *viz.*, “ God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his Being, Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Justice, Goodness and Truth ”. And as to Nature or the finite display, we cannot improve on Hegel’s words : “ In religion, Nature is only a moment of the Divine and therefore must, as it exists for the religious consciousness, have also the characteristic note of the spiritual mode of existence in it. It thus does not remain in its pure natural element, but receives the characteristic quality of the Divine that dwells in it.”

We may say that to think of all things as in God is to think of things *sub specie eternitatis* ; to think of God immanent in all things is to think of God *sub specie finitudinis*. The former is the attitude of mystic contemplation, the latter is the practice of living as God would have us live.

The knowledge of God, to which I believe I have now attained in as far as is possible for me, one of many finite

creatures, is not for the cultured man alone. The untutored peasant may be closer to God than the philosopher. True, he cannot disentangle the complex elements in his religious conviction and in the strange, but familiar emotion of the Divine; but he *feels* the universal as Being-infinite, he *knows* it as universal reason and sustainer of all things, he realises his own dependence and he trusts and adores: thus is he one with the Universal. Man cannot but be religious: it is of his very essence. The notions of the primitive man may be crude and crass and his ritual barbaric; but he is always on his way upward. The immanent God will one day more fully reveal Himself in man for man. This, meanwhile, is true: the Notion "God" is from age to age the high watermark of finite mind and is the great educator of the human race.

We must, not, however, by way of making things easy, present God, even to the humblest, as an object of feeling alone. He is also reason; a God of the head as well as of the heart; of Law as well as of Love. Reason, we may be assured, is not a blunder in the cosmic scheme. If we hold that beings differentiated from all else as beings of reason have to put out the eye of reason in order to see God and the truth of God and to find acceptance with Him, we are pessimists indeed, and are doing our best to run the labouring ship of humanity on the rocks. If we jettison reason, we jettison that which is both helm and helmsman. Mere religious feeling tends to pass into sentimentalism and to think it condones for ethical indolence by multiplying superstitious rites. God is Love! He does not wait to be conciliated with man, but for man to

conciliate himself with Him by a strenuous spiritual life.

Let us now consider Man and his duty in the system within which he finds himself.

Note.—See *Appendix, Notes 7 and 8.*

MEDITATION XII.

ON MAN.

INTRODUCTION: The genetic evolution of Ego—The position and function of Man in the Absolute Whole—Free Will—The Supreme Good is the realising of Ego as Spirit—The Supreme Good is a concrete of Formal and Real: The Formal Supreme Good or Virtue—The Real Supreme Good or Harmony—Harmony is not subjective feeling alone—The Truth and Law constitute the Harmony—The finding of the Law of Harmony (a) In the Appetitive Sphere: (b) In the Emotional Sphere: Validity of moral distinctions—Ethical fulfilment—Ethical History.

Introduction.

IN order to maintain logical continuity, I must here recall and further elucidate past conclusions.

Man is a monad like any other actual, and this means that, as an individual, he is a synthesis of the idea or affirmation and the negation—which synthesis is in the case of the creature man a *self-affirming* individual, that is to say, Ego. Let us dwell a little on this the most remarkable and startling fact in all experience.

Man, in so far as he is on the attuent grade, is an individual subject, the individuality being a synthesis of the idea and the negation (as in all else). This sentient subject would now seem to identify with itself, as centre of mind-life, the Dialectic which is already in it and for it as it is in all things. The objective Will-

Dialectic is at this point itself individuated and the sentient subject is now a dialectic subject. Subject, so endowed, wills the perception of itself, and subject conscious of subject yields the new fact *Ego* in the Absolute system. Ego, or "I am," is more than an individual: it is a *person*. God, as finite mind has now reached His highest evolution. When a creature thus proclaims itself Ego, it *eo actu* affirms in its intensest form the negation of the Universal. The Negation is *itself* now affirmed in the affirmation "I".¹

Thus the Will-dialectic as constituting Ego—lifting conscious subject up into self-consciousness—is the idea or essence of the new evolution.

Negativity in the cosmic system can now go no further; and were it not that it is the very idea—the will-dialectic—that affirms and institutes it, Ego would be a lamentable issue of the Divine process. It is saved just by the fact that the idea or essence (not of man as a concrete merely, but) of the negating individuality of man as Ego, is the will-dialectic itself. Ego *has, for its possibility and content, the "form" of Will-dialectic*; and, accordingly, if it is to move out of a barren and meaningless unitary isolation at all, it *must* move as a free will-dialectic *supra naturam*, and in that "form," which is its essence, subsume all experience for cognition and conduct.

Accordingly, if Ego is to persist in its own *esse*, in other words, to fulfil itself in the universe, it can do so (like all other monads) only through the Other or Uni-

¹The genesis of Ego is anew treated in the meditation on Immortality. In using the term "evolved" the reader will understand that I do not even remotely commit myself to the banality of evolution out of Nature; it is the evolution of God as finite that I always speak of.

versal—its positive relations, and not as a bare and hard negation. Now, it is precisely the will-dialectic (or idea) that determines the quantity and quality of those relations and the sweep and significance of them, thereby introducing Ego to ideas, ideals and God, as we have seen. Accordingly Ego, although pure negativity, in seeking its fulfilment, must take to itself the vast Whole of the Divine externalisation, and can find its true life only in the transcending (but not cancelling) of itself in the Absolute. This is to be concrete Ego in its fulness. Ego thus realises itself as Spirit. It allies itself to God who a free Will-dialectic has reflected Himself into the finite particular, and, like Him, it is supreme over all conditions, in so far as finite being can be so.

We may see now why it is inevitable that we should constantly speak of “Ego” as if it were itself Will and Reason-form. Will with its Reason-form, entering the attuent subject, lifts the subject-individual up and constitutes it an Ego in the cosmic system : it is its idea or essence as a determined being.

How then, it may be asked, does pure Ego come into touch with experience? If we consider the evolution of God as finite mind there is no insuperable difficulty in answering this question. From first to last finite mind, we have seen, is subject-object. The Ego is much more than sublimated subject with the Dialectic as its nerve or determining idea. The higher evolution of finite mind contains the lower : it cannot detach itself from the soil out of which it sprang : it holds the lower grades of evolution in it. Consider the genesis of Ego : it is attuent subject in which is generated Will-dialectic whereby it prehends, affirms and contemplates *itself*. Ego,

accordingly, *eo actu*, sublates as a "given" all the concrete, actual and possible, of the attuent subject and all it contains as connate in its organism—(feeling, desire, impulse, etc.). Ego is "subject" at a higher power—subject in which has become explicit and finitely self-conscious the dialectic of the universe. It is now "subject," as dialectic activity, subsuming itself and its content—in other words, Ego; but it does not cease to be the reflexive recipient of the Real. In its very birth, I say, subject now in the movement that institutes Ego sublates itself (is *self*-conscious) and all experience. It is in and through the attuent subject that the functioning of Will-dialectic and the consequent Ego are evolved. Ego is not in the air and cut off from the gradually unfolding One of things. Continuity in difference holds here as everywhere.

Let me recall: In the Determination of Being which we call as a fulfilled "determinate" an individual, the affirmation (idea, essence) contains the positive potencies that relate it to all else and make a cosmic system possible; and accordingly, through the "Other" only can the "individual" fulfil itself as in a system; or to put it otherwise, only by subsuming the idea as the content of its activity. In the lower planes of Being, whether the individual be non-sentient or sentient, this seems to be the fact. The universal Reason *in* things guarantees all this. In the man-individual or Ego, the *method* of the divine externalisation is not dislocated. The objective dialectic, reflected into the attitudinal subject whereby it is raised to Ego, does not cancel the subject, but carries it into the higher evolution. "Subject," with all its characteristics as a sentient concrete, becomes Ego or, we may say, is sublated into Ego. But the subject as now Ego has

to do *for* itself and *by* itself what is accomplished for lower beings *in* them.

Subject as Ego, accordingly, has now to discriminate and reduce to itself the elements in the attitudinal subject and determine the ends of its own activity. Immanent in the Will-dialectic, as "idea" of Man, is the ordering of the positive relations of all lower modes of Being to ends of knowledge and conduct. These lower modes are the "matter" of his moulding activity, the knowing of the dialectic itself being also matter of his activity. Thus Ego fulfils itself in the cosmic Whole.

The Position and Function of Man in the Absolute Whole.

The function of Ego is as free Will-dialectic and in the form of the dialectic, to subsume for cognition and action the real or matter *given* in the attitudinal subject out of which it has emerged. The "idea" of man — the will-dialectic, is at once the energy and form whereby the positive relations of the individual Ego are ascertained and determined, and it is thus that the abstract "I am I" becomes a concrete Ego or Personality. It must realise itself in things, thoughts and acts.

In short, the cosmic position and duty of Man are determined by the plane of Being on which he has to play his part—his place in the One-Whole of which he is, here and now, the head and sum, and which finds its full meaning only in and through him. He is a determination of Absolute Being as creative that not only feels and attuites, but also knows; and, like all else, he is further a determinate; but this *not* as Ego (which is a

pure affirmation) but through the sublation of attuent subject : that is to say, Ego, *as holding attuent subject and its content*, is individuated in "body," which is at once the vehicle and, as negation, the resistant, of the idea.

Man has a vast and intricate complex to reduce to himself. As a formal Ego, he is barren of *real* content ; but, as he takes possession of experience in all its forms, he becomes an ever fuller personality. Through his positive relations to the world and to his fellowmen, he can alone grow. This is the Real which he subsumes for the completion of himself as a "Person," *i.e.*, a Personality.

The dialectic is a *Will*-dialectic. In knowing, man wills ; but Will projects itself and, by its necessary nature, must project itself into externalisation. Ego, in establishing its relations to the environment of things and men, is, *ipso facto*, an ethical Will. In so far as man merely knows in all that concerns conduct, Will is only half-born ; and again, in so far as he wills an act save as a "knowing," energy, his will is falsely so called : it is merely the impulse or conation of unregulated desire—life on a lower plane of evolving mind than he rightfully occupies. His true willing is a free subsumption of idea-forces carried out into their relations, particular and universal.

Man's environment (content of *attuent* subject) is the environment of nature, of organic impulse and desire, and of social and civic relations in the widest sense. And were he not a Dialectic with all which that contains and prescribes, he would be arrested within these limits ; but it is not so. He is compelled to grasp the Whole, and to find the nature and meaning of the Universal within

which he is, and which he calls God, thus revealing the significance for life and conduct of the Notion of notions. Until he raises himself to the comprehension of God as immanent in all and source of all, he can find no rest.

Free Will.

Man as subjective dialectic must subsume the Real or Given in his own dialectic form, in so far as he is man at all. The merely reflexive and assimilative recipience of the attuent subject is now re-enforced by self-initiated energy. Free Will is just this subject-evolved dialectic. By virtue of this free movement it is that the animal becomes Man, affirms himself, affirms the not-self, and affirms God—Man the

main miracle, that thou are thou
With power on thine own act and on the world.¹

His function, accordingly, is to synthesise all experience in terms of the dialectic as a system of ends explained in their mediating ground. This is Scientia; and it includes man himself in all his relations as a self-conscious organism. He has to discover and “will” the mediating ideas that constitute the End or Good for Man as a universal.

The attuent (animal) mind is immediate. In reaction to inner or outer stimulus it proceeds from the particular to the particular in the satisfaction of impulse or desire. This movement towards identification of subject with object is Orection or Conation, I have previously said, not Will. On the higher plane, Mind as Will-dialectic projects ends and the mediating ground and possibility of ends. And it must be so wherever there

¹ Tennyson's *De Profundis*.

is man, however rudimentary his experience either as savage or child. If his willing is not mediated, it is not willing, but merely the movement of desire as in the attuent or animal subject.

Thus a man in so far as he is a Will-dialectic always mediates and *must* mediate his acts. Knowledge, or presumed knowledge, is always the ground of Willing. "Willing" or Volition (*velleitas*) is merely the affirmation of the truth continuing itself into externalisation.

The Supreme Good is the realising of Ego as Spirit.

As in the case of all actuals, the sole Good for man is his concrete completion—the full realising of his specific nature—his "idea" in the matter or real of his experience. The difference between man and other actuals is that, just because he is a self-initiating dialectic, the fulfilment of the idea, which is accomplished "in and for" all other existents, is thrown on himself. *He* has to organise *himself* as a completed concrete. It is a hard task. It is non-consciously pursued from age to age under the teaching of events. Thus arise custom-convictions, habits and laws, till he reaches the reflective stage and begins to contemplate *himself* as object of knowledge. The complex subject—the "Notion" of man, as such—thereupon comes within the sweep of the dialectic like all else, and has to be analysed in terms of the dialectic with a view to a true concrete synthesis.

The supreme Good or concrete completion for man is the realising himself as Spirit, that is to say, as Ego freely subsuming and controlling its conditions with a view to knowledge and conduct. "Spirit" is more than personality or concrete Ego, for it is Ego having *fulfilled*

itself in the concrete of experience—an achievement impossible on this plane of Being. It is immanent in the dialectic movement.

Man's way of mediating himself as spirit contains (like all else) a formal and a real element.

THE SUPREME GOOD IS A CONCRETE OF FORMAL
AND REAL.

(a) *The Formal Good, or Virtue.*

The various and complex content of the attuent subject being subsumed, Will-reason seeks in the "subject-object" precisely what it seeks in the external world, *viz.*, End as mediated through processes or subordinate ends.

The End of any actual, I have said, is its perfectly concentered idea, its fulness of being; in other words, the ideal, which is a "one in many"—a harmony. This is the supreme Good for the lowest as for the highest existent. Spirit—the ideal of man—is a concrete in which the Formal determines the harmony of the Real.

The subordinate ends which go to the harmonious complex in man are the "ideas" of the conflicting connate desires and emotions. The place to be assigned to these as motive-forces must evidently be determined by the End or Ideal of Man; and it always is so determined whether a man knows it or not. In this Ideal as affirmed by the dialectic resides the Law in the sense of the categorical imperative, "Thou shalt".

There is nothing, accordingly, exceptional in the procedure whereby man as an "actual" seeks to know himself with a view to determining his true life, except this, that he has *by himself* to find the End or Ideal or Harmony *for himself*. So long as Will-dialectic is

supreme and affirms and effects ends in subordination to the Supreme End—the ideal, which is harmony, man is formally virtuous; even though he be mistaken as to the true content of the End. The fact of the dominance of the Will-dialectic over the impulses in the attuent subject guarantees this formal virtue. The “I” as containing Will-dialectic (its constitutive idea) is supreme and that is enough. This is Formal Virtue, the formal “supreme Good” for man.

Essence or idea of a complex (which we find given in and with things) is, we have seen, that whereby it is what it is, and, as such determines the positive relations of the complex to its own fulfilment and to all else—through which “else” it fulfils *itself*, and *eo actu* does its part in effecting the coherent unity of the cosmic Whole. Now these words apply to man as to every other complex existent. And so far as Formal Virtue is concerned there is nothing more to be said. The plane of Being which man occupies settles this question; and his formal function, accordingly, is to mould himself into a complete mastery over all the materials of his experience, inner and outer. This is the supreme Good for him; and when he has attained this he is Spirit. The difficulty lies in ascertaining the true content of the formal—the “Real Good”.

Let me emphasise by repetition the above doctrine, for it is of great significance when we come to speak of Evil.

The Will-dialectic has raised the subject-individual to Ego, and the Ego as containing the Will-dialectic, whereby it is instituted as an individual, has actively and freely to subsume the matter of the attitudinal subject as a reasoned system for knowledge and conduct: it has to

lose itself in the Other that it may find itself ; and finally it has to contemplate itself in all experience. The "positive relations" of the Ego may be briefly summed up in three expressions : Self-control, Love of God, and Love of Man. Thus the Ego, from being an abstract individuum, builds itself up as a concrete personality ; from being a barren negation, it, by negating itself, becomes a rich and fruitful actuality. It is on the way to be Spirit.

The End of Man—the Supreme Good, is thus the realising for himself the "I am I" of spirit as dominating all natural conditions. Manifestly it is only through pain, strife and struggle, through error and failures, that "spirit" can be constituted. It is alone through contact and contest with the manifold concrete that spirit can mould itself and make itself an actuality within the Absolute, and thereby fulfil its divinely appointed destiny.

The divine purpose on the man-plane of Being would seem to be the creation of "spirits," and there seems to be no way of doing it save the way we see ; for "spirit" is not a bare Ego, but an Ego which has made good its right to the designation "spirit," by the free subsuming and subduing of nature in all its forms—the whole realm of the Given.

God meanwhile is immanent in each man as the ideal of Man ;¹ and the ideal of Man is that he shall be "spirit".

(b) *The Real Supreme Good or Harmony.*

Man has to build up himself and propound his own good ; and he does so "formally" when he maintains the supremacy of the higher plane of mind over the lower. But, in all experience, the formal and the real

¹ See relation of Finite and Infinite.

are a one concrete. The real is here pathic Feeling,¹ and the problem is to find a real of content which shall, like the formal Good, be objective and universal, and serve as the ethical criterion.

Now, just as the Good for each "actual" is the idea in its concrete completion—the harmony of the many of parts in the dominancy of the one of idea; so with Man. This is the ideal; and the ideal is in the perfected Harmony. The method of the universe is One.

The concentered harmony or ideal of a thing is not to be attained by an aggregation of its elements, each having the same value assigned to it. The Dialectic forbids this: all elements are to be subordinated to the End and also one to another in a hierarchy, if the End or Good which is Harmony is to be attained. Moral elements are to be valued not merely counted.

Here is presented to man the practical ethical problem. He has to analyse himself—to find the elements and to appraise them, assigning to each its due place in the concrete whole of his own completed personality. He has to regulate and determine the nature and relative place of each class of desires and emotions that conflict in him and seek each its own satisfaction; and to do this in subordination to the End, which is Harmony. We do not search for any one dominating feeling or idea which shall determine all morality; but for Harmony which shall, as harmony, be Objective Law in the Real.

Man is here in the sphere of Feeling; and there is no way of appraising the relative worth of Feeling-motives or ideas save by Feeling. These insist on finding their fulfilment in willing. We are sometimes told that the

¹ As I am dealing with Ethics, I omit the real of outer sense which man has also to subdue.

quality of a motive is to be judged by its consequences as affecting the agent himself, or other men. This seems to me to be a tautology ; for if the motive-feeling of Goodwill, for example, produced its opposite in its effects, it would return to the agent as ill-will. A motive idea holds its consequences in its notion. Neither thought, nor feeling as idea prompting to willing, is more than half-born till it is uttered in word or deed. It is by action that the moral idea which is a motive-force mediates, for the self-conscious subject, its own actuality as a concrete : if it finds itself mediated it is satisfied ; if not, there has been obstacle or error somewhere : that is all. It is only, in fact, when motive-ideas are fully born as activities that we have the "notions" of each in their totality before us, and can assign to them their character and place in a complex whole of conflicting elements.

The difficulties that surround moral questions for persons and states are accordingly great, because of the infinite complexity of the relations of men. And it becomes all the more necessary to press home the formal element in the Good, which is always the same—the Will-dialectic as Ego. Subjective feeling, simply as feeling, does not determine morality. It is the Dialectic that does so ; and the Moral Law is objective. The formal dialectic as Ego, I have said, is not in the air and separated from reality. In physical investigation we seek for the Law in the Real : that is to say, the processes whereby the thing before us is effected and sustained in its synthetic completeness as an existent ; in other words mediates its own fulfilment or ideal. Nothing that physical science can say would be worth anything were it not already *there* in the real. All natural law as ascertained by man,

and even all philosophical explanation of social and political history, is of value only in so far as it is *declaratory*. That which finite reason proclaims is *there* already implicit or immanent. So, the moment finite mind has evolved the potency of contemplating itself as object, it comes within the sweep of dialectic interpretation like any other object, and there is no change of method. It seeks the Law in the "real" of the feeling subject.

Apart from the formal process, the Real in mind is a complex of feelings which we call Appetite, Desire, Emotion, etc. The dialectic discriminates the nature and end of each element of activity in its fulfilment, and the processes or conditions whereby the supreme End or The Good is mediated. Our remarks on the "functioning" of the moments of the Dialectic show that the synthetic knowledge of an object *must* rest on or arise out of the analysis of its parts. The completed synthesis of an existent is the concrete completion of the "idea" (that is at once essence and end); but the idea mediates its own completion or ideal in and through the many as its "matter". And, accordingly, just as Formal Good is in the supremacy of the free Will-dialectic, so the Real Good is to be found in the ideal of the complex whole; which is Harmony.

Whether we speak of a plant, an animal, or a man, the Good and the Ideal are terms which are almost identical. And if we choose to assume that the full possession of itself by anything is joyous, the term "fruition" may also be used. (It is desirable to avoid the word Happiness which has too many subjective and particular connotations, unless we take care to use it in the sense of "fruition".) The word Harmony may be

applied either to the achieved state of a thing or to the mediating process.

(c) *Harmony not Subjective Feeling alone.*

Feeling has mass or quantity, quality, degree, relation. Unpurposed fortuitous coherences of feelings may yield pleasure, but not the consciousness that there is an attained harmony or ideal. A passing pleasure is not harmony ; nor yet a series of passing pleasures ; and yet these, if sub-consciously felt not to conflict with harmony or the ideal, are justified by the ethical standard.

The Will-dialectic must hold all the parts together (and the parts are motive-ideas) in their specific characters and their relations to all other parts, if there is to be the possibility of a feeling of Harmony—of End attained in and through parts. Each part, that is to say, each feeling-idea has its own character, quantity, quality or tone (pathic), etc., and each, as it succeeds others, is of equal subjective value as motive to action, if wholly isolated. It is the Will-dialectic that discriminates each and assigns to each its place in view of the End—the Ideal or Harmony—the “Real” Good. It is Reason that prescribes the Rule or Law, by prescribing wherein the harmony consists.

It is the Dialectic alone that can generate ideals. The fact, that the matter of the dialectic activity is the sphere of Feeling, obscures this truth, and leads sometimes to the reduction of Ethics to Feeling. This is to give a merely subjective and fluctuating value to the ethical ; as we see it have in children.

Now the objectivity of Ethics is in the Law, and this is the categorical imperative of Reason in and for Feeling. The resultant feeling of Harmony is not a feeling of an

aggregate of feelings, but a feeling of the ascertained harmony of feeling as governed by the end: this is a *prescribed* Harmony. The Good or Ideal is achieved Harmony. In other words, it is a feeling of the *truth of relations* as ascertained and prescribed by Reason in the realm of Feeling. The "law" of a thing is in the ascertained "truth" of a thing and its relations, whether the thing be the planetary system, a plant, or the mind of man. The feeling of Harmony, then, is a feeling of the *joy of reason* in truth and law; but inasmuch as it is truth and law in the content of *feeling*, there is a mutual penetration of the feeling of Reason-Law and the feeling of Feeling: this constitutes a concrete of Form and Matter—the Formal and the Real. The Formal and the Real moments are one in Ethics as in the synthesis of the universe of things; but they are not to be confounded any more than they are to be separated.

Thus by taking self-conscious "subject" as object of investigation—the attuent or empirical subject being sublated into the Ego—we find the objective truth and law for man as a system of relations governed by End, which is Harmony. As Will-reason he is not, when prescribing for the realm of Feeling, in pursuit of Happiness any more than when he seeks to understand a plant. He is in *pursuit of law* as guaranteed by reason-ascertained Harmony. The truth of a plant is the fulfilled harmony of it as mediated by certain conditions and processes determined by its idea or essence—these mediating processes being the law of its fulfilment. In the truth is the Law. So when the object to man is Man himself, he finds his way gradually to the mediating conditions of the fulfilled harmony of a highly complex mind-organism. Very gradually; for he has his relations not

only to his own organism but to his fellowmen and to the State. The ethical ideal has a long history. A being occupying a plane of mind higher than that of man might *see* these mediating processes which fulfilled themselves in the perfected synthesis of the plant or the man all at work, and "science" of the physical or ethical would be completed for such a being at one glance; but man's position relatively to the complex universe and to himself is very different indeed.

Self-activity in the projecting and pursuit of ends in service of the Supreme Good, formal and real, being of the essence of man as Will-reason, there *must* exist, as a condition of self-fulfilment, Negation in the form of contraries and opposites, *viz.*, *vis inertiae*, obstruction, antagonism, error. Without these, Man could not be moulded as a Will or Ego *supra naturam*; and if they did not exist, it would be necessary to invent them. Without evil, how could there be good in the real sphere; without difficulties and antagonisms, how could there be moulded a virile all-controlling Will-personality? These obstructions and negations are enslaving and chaotic relatively to the true life and purpose of a human being—in brief, they are evil (so-called) to be transmuted into good by man, just as they are transmuted into good in all existences. Man is not an exception to the Method of the Universe. He is hedged round by oppositions and limitations, and his business is to overpass his limitations and to reduce the oppositions to himself—his ideal; so that he, as Will-reason, may be supreme, and that the "Real" Good may be thus achieved. In truth we may say, that it is only in so far as he self-consciously *strives* that man, apart from his natural

body and sensational life, is distinctively man. In the rational sphere he has difficulties of interpretation ; in the physical he has to encounter pain ; in the emotional, sorrow ; and in the ethical, the continual drag of temptation and the consciousness of the unattainability of ideals ; but in all these spheres, obstacles are his opportunity. It is absurd to quarrel with our cosmic position ; we have to understand it and set about our business as beings that find ourselves entrusted with our own fulfilment. Even at three-score and ten the chaos into which man has been thrown is only partially reduced by him. He is just beginning to know, and, above all, to know how to live, when he disappears unconsulted, as at first he, unconsulted, emerged on the scene. Such is Man.

The irresistible impulse in the Will-dialectic of man is, accordingly, a search for the ideal in his complex organism—a reason-ideal which is simply the truth of fact and relations, and, as such, the Law in and of these relations. And, inasmuch as he has to do with the parts of a complex, his guide is the harmony of the parts. The Dialectic prescribing End or the Ideal for a complex prescribes it as mediated through the harmony of parts, just as the Objective Dialectic effects it in the grass of the field ; and harmony is at once the Ideal, the Law and the criterion of Law. Until a man finds this harmony or law for himself, he carries about with him moral contradictions which cause a continual unrest. These contradictions press so heavily that, in political society, we see that what are called “ reforms ” are constantly being projected, and revolutions sometimes enacted.

External experience, including the “ consequences ” of volitions, merely reveals whether the subjective motive

is realised. It is the subjective joy in the benevolent motive that determines the benevolent act (that intensification of Being which Spinoza calls *Lætitia*), and it is the failure of the act to realise good in others that gives rise to the pain of frustrated motive (*Tristitia*). The good effects further confirm the subjective motive by associations various and complex, which I may pass by.

Has Man yet found the Real-ideal—the Harmony which he has been in search of these thousands of years? For myself, I think that so far as the large motive-forces of our finite relations and the supreme end of union with God are concerned, Jesus Christ has proclaimed the Ideal, and Paul and John have enforced it; and, in doing so, they have confirmed the best in Zoroaster and Moses and the Hebrew prophets—not to mention Plato and many others. But neither as guide to daily conduct nor in its application to social well-being is it comprehended by any man: “The darkness comprehended it not”. We are still groping our way to the realisation of that ideal as a system of ethical thought; and, when we have attained to that, we shall yet be very far from translating it into our personal relations and our national and international obligations.

THE FINDING OF THE LAW OF HARMONY.

(a) *In the Appetitive Sphere.*

The ultimate aim of man's activity is himself as a harmonious or ideal organism, as we have seen, and he has to do the work for himself. He can project ends or ideas which are to motivate all his acts or willings. If he had a clear and distinct concrete ideal supernaturally given to him to start with, he would have no difficulty in appreciating all the various motive-ideas that he

might form, and in assigning to each its specific worth. But even such an ideal would remain remote and the object of a weak and vacillating faith, until it had been reconstructed by Man himself on scientific foundations which compelled its acceptance as demonstrated truth. Step by step he has to work towards the ethical conception through particular ideas (which we call moral ideas, sentiments, virtues), and his moral history is long and painful. Only one fixed guide he has, *viz.*, that all he is and does shall be in terms of Will-reason—the idea or essence of his complex organic whole; and therefore, regulative and supreme.

But how in the realm of Feeling can he affirm that this is better and that is worse? Only by feeling. The valuation of motives in the sphere of feeling must be *in pari materia*. For example, in so far as man is merely an organism, the quantitative in pleasures and pains is determined by reason, and yields the *rational* idea, Temperance. This, then, is the reason-prescribed Law of his empirical self; and there is a specific and sovereign *feeling* here, for the quantitative as determined by reason shares in the higher qualitative emotion inherent in reason itself. No feeling, no desire, is extinguished by the law, but all are co-ordinated and subordinated to the rule of reason. It is thus only that they can live permanently in peace with each other and yield a harmonious activity. This may be called justice in and for the physical organism with its clamant and contesting elements. The question is not as to what any man individually feels or thinks, but as to what man as man is. This is the Objective basis. He finds in the prescription of reason, as it pronounces on feelings, a Law which is imperative

and absolute. Law is in the reason-ideal; and nowhere else.

We are here keeping within the restricted range of the morality of the man-organism in order to illustrate our position by taking the simplest case. The rational, and therefore moral and controlling, idea which we designate by the word "Temperance," is merely a single expression for reason as dominating and regulating; its objective result is subjective harmony within the appetitive sphere; and harmony is the fruition of the raw material of self-asserting desires as now a reason-constituted organism. This is the Real side of the reason-idea Temperance, *viz.*, organic harmony; and organic harmony is, in relation to the elements it harmonises, justice. Justice, accordingly, determining the conflicting elements of feeling, is alone fruition. This harmony or justice is the *Law* in our members—the categorical imperative—God-given in and through reason.

Temperance, Harmony, Justice, are in no one feeling, nor in all of them together; they are not immediate presentations. We call them "ideas," because they are universals of reason. They are reason-constituted entities: they express the Truth of elements in their relations.

There would appear, now, to be a circle: Law alone yields happiness (or fruition), but happiness would seem to be the cue to law—the content of the Dialectic in the crisis of its perception and affirmation of law. But I began my search—for what? *Not for happiness or fruition, but for the Ideal and its contained Law*: I could not help myself, for I am a subjective dialectic; and the guarantee of my having found the Law is a feeling of harmony or justice generated by and in Reason. The formal and the real are now in an identity, as they are

in all nature and all knowledge. Law in sensibility, sensibility in law. Manifestly it is not a merely subjective *feeling* of harmony that dominates but the *Law* of harmony as reason-ascertained and reason-given, and yielding the *joy of reason* in the realisation of its own free activity. Fruition is thus found to be only in and through Law—the imperative of reason which is obligatory and supreme. The search for law is ended : I, as a will-reason necessarily seeking truth and law in all experience, have now found Law—which is the truth and the ultimate for which I began to search. In Law as a universal, my passions and self-seekings have now found their master ; and whatever particular pleasures I may contemplate, these I yield to or inhibit according to regulative law—inhibit them though the immediate result is pain ; nay, must always be pain—the pain of balked desire, if nothing else. In short, not only appetite and desire, but even the higher emotions, are immediate and therefore evil, save in so far as their activity as motive is mediated through Law.

There is nothing peculiar in the above method of ascertaining the truth of man as an organism of motive-energies. An idea of reason regulative of a complex is (as we have frequently seen) the idea or the truth of relations, and Law resides in the idea or truth of relations, not only when the subject-matter of our search for idea and law is Man ; but in all things inorganic and organic. It is Law, as in the idea of each and all, that man as an active dialectic is always in search of. The growth of a plant is seen to have its categorical imperative as well as men and angels : its fruition is mediated after a certain way and no other. We have to investigate man as we investigate any other organism.

The idea or essence that determines the positive relations of the non-conscious individuum as a concrete has, wherever there is organism, a non-conscious activity of election and rejection. But in man, this election and rejection are consciously made with a view to a *self*-constituted ideal or harmony of existence, after the worth of that to be elected or rejected has been consciously weighed and appraised.

Temperance is the word which designates the Harmony of the appetitive ; and if more than Temperance, *e.g.*, repression or asceticism or self-sacrifice in any form, is demanded of us, it must be for reasons outside the economy of the individual as a merely appetitive organism.

The Law of Temperance or Justice, then, is the Law of Reason imposed on Desire, and the law extends to all the instinctive impulses and feelings that are within the circle of a man's sentient nature, such as fear and courage, hope and despair, joy and sorrow, where we usually substitute the word Self-control for Temperance.

It would appear, then, that all vice, as involving the abrogation of reason, is a falling into the lower attitudinal grade of being where man is a slave to the particular and the immediate pleasure of the moment, and unmans himself in the act of denying the universality of Law.

(b) *Law in the Emotional.*

And if we regard the emotions, rational and non-rational, that distinguish themselves from organic desires and prompt to action, the mode of ascertaining the truth of relations must, it appears to me, be the same. The non-rational, such as the altruistic emotions (which may be

generalised as the Love of others and the Love of the love of others), resting on instinctive sympathy of man with man and making Society and political organisations possible, extend the individuality of man so as to embrace the life of his fellow-men as necessary to his own fulfilment.

So potent and all-pervading are the altruistic emotions that they have again and again been taken as containing the sum of all morality. The criterion of the moral, it has been maintained, is the Happiness of mankind. The moral criterion has thus been rashly transferred from the agent to the judgment which all *other* men form of what will promote their own happiness.

Now first of all, it is manifest that the happiness of others can have no interest to any being, and can exercise no motive force in any being, except in so far as that being finds happiness, *i.e.*, fulness of being for himself in the happiness of others. It is the self-sprung altruistic *emotions* that seek satisfaction; and they, as a matter of fact, can mediate their satisfaction only through the good of others. The moral criterion thus at once returns to the individual agent and is found in the activity and satisfaction of his altruistic emotions—that is to say, his own happiness as mediated through the happiness of others. But, secondly, it is law we seek and the felicity of the agent cannot give the law: it merely tells us where we are to look for the appraising of motive-forces with a view to the ascertainment of law. Thirdly, it is scarcely necessary to point out that the “Happiness of others” can be no criterion; for the altruistic act may be welcomed by an applauding populace (*Panem et Circenses*) as promotive of a happiness which is truly hurtful to them as men. It would be,

accordingly, immoral to act so as to secure the happiness of mankind as men might measure their own happiness. My duty is to promote what *ought to be* the happiness of all men, in other words, The Good, *viz.*, the dominancy of moral law in them and the fulfilment of the ethical ideal of Man in each man. In the pursuit of this exalted aim, I may often have to make many men unhappy, and myself among them. The happiness of the occupants of the prisons of Europe would be to be set free to prey on society. Manifestly then, there is an ideal and "ought" in a civil community which involves the misery of many, just as there is an "ought" in my organism which almost always involves the pain of effort and suppression. Where am I to find this ideal and "ought" save in the nature and end of man as man? Even the golden rule is untrue. It ought to run, "Do unto others as they *ought* to do unto you". It is not the feeling or desire of the recipient, then, any more than the feeling of the agent that must determine the altruistic act. The act, if it be moral, must be determined by the fact that it promotes the true life—what *ought to be* the happiness—of my fellow-men—the Supreme Good. And this ideal, I can ascertain only by studying the creature Man, and ascertaining his true nature and purpose as a rational and ethical being cast into a difficult natural and social environment.

Thus, even when we hastily adopt a specious altruism as a criterion of personal conduct or of State action, we are driven back to the study of man-universal, in order that we may find out the rational and ethical meaning of each of our fellow-men—in other words, the "ought" of Man, if we are to act so as to promote this; and we are bound so to act, even although it involve pain both

to ourselves and others. The "ought" is the ideal as law, which, however it may fluctuate at different periods of human history, is always the moral standard of judgment.

In fact, we seek for a standard or criterion of our altruistic emotions themselves. This alone can provide *real* content for the formal self-directing reason and yield objective law. But while neither the happiness of agent nor of recipient can yield objective law, we are not wrong in saying that the happiness or fruition (in the sense of fulfilment) of "Man" is the criterion, if I write Man with a capital initial. For, when I write man with a capital initial, it is evident that I have passed from the subjectivity of the individual to the Objective Law of the being Man. In other words, I have passed from the particular to the universal, from the domain of subjective feeling to the domain of law. I begin, whether I will or not, to speak of the moral *conditions* of fruition for "Man," and, *therefore*, for each man. The mediation of fruition or happiness for Man is through Law and the identification of his Will with the Ought. And how can I find the Ought save by the reflective analysis of myself and the observation of other men now and in the past? This "ought," I have said, resides in the ideal or truth of each thing as a harmonious existence, be it a blade of grass or a man. The whole system of things is teleological. And man as a Will-reason is always in search of law—the law *in* things and the law which he is left to institute in himself, for himself, by himself. The end of the activity of Reason is always Law; and Law is in the Ideal. Or, to put it otherwise; the ideal (perfected concrete idea) is the Truth of man, and the Law is inherent in the Truth;

just as the law of a plant is inherent in the truth of the process whereby it lives : which process, again, as completed in the concrete whole is its ideal and its fruition and felicity.

By what test, then, can I identify the ideal in the sphere of emotion ? By the same test which yielded me the morality of appetitive desire, *viz.*, the reason-perception of the harmony of a complex which issues in the subjective *feeling* of harmony. And this harmony is not a mere equilibrium of "feeling-ideas," but the prescription of reason. Reason and Feeling—the formal and real, play into each other and help me to my conclusion.

Man's Feeling-characteristics we may generalise under four categories—the appetitive desires (the regulative law of which we have already found); the altruistic emotions; the æsthetic, and the rational. I say the rational, for, as I have more than once insisted in the past, there is an emotion of reason arising out of its own activity, and conspicuous above all in the results of that activity, *viz.*, knowledge or truth.

Now, it is feelings as motive-forces we are dealing with; and the question at once meets us, Are these feelings of equal worth? Assuredly not. They differ qualitatively and quantitatively and also under the categories of degree and relation; and the inner harmony or ideal we are in search of is, accordingly, not an arithmetical, but a geometrical, justice. Accordingly, while always preserving the supremacy of the Formal (will-dialectic) in search of the law of my being and as regulative of all action and source of the imperative, I must ascertain *through Feeling* the relative worth of emotions, if I am to determine those which are

rightfully dominant. The highest "quality" belongs to the emotion in that which is already formally supreme—the emotion of Reason; the æsthetic and altruistic may be said to stand *qualitatively* on an equality, and appetitive desire is the lowest of all, though, for the moment, more intense and more massive. And we further find that the altruistic as resting on sympathy with my kind has, as a matter of fact, more body than the æsthetic, and is quantitatively enormously greater under the categories of degree and relation; it is, in fact, the Human Universal.

While, then, it is reason that discriminates and compares elements with a view to ends and so finds the harmony of the complex (which is the law), it can only do so by taking its cue from the matter with which it is dealing—particular feelings under the categories of Quantity, Quality, Relation and Degree. Reason thus seeks and finds the law in the "given" of feeling, just as it seeks and finds the law for man's body in the "given" of flesh and blood and nerve. And the moment it has found the harmony, the *emotion* of pure Reason in the perception of truth rushes in to support and confirm the emotion which is generated in the reason-*feeling* of harmony. I say *reason-feeling*, because the feeling as *harmony* is generated by and in reason. Reason and Feeling, the formal and real, are now in identity.

Thus the Law for Man is the law that is inherent in the harmony of the whole nature, which also is the Ideal for man—his perfection as a mind and body organism; and he can attain to this only in the course of the ages. That is manifest; and it is also manifest that relative values must change with a changing civilisation.

It will be now seen why I guarded myself by saying that "Temperance" was supreme law within the circle of the appetitive desires alone. For these are not alone: they are only an element in the total "Notion" of man, and must be assigned their proper place and no more. Asceticism, for example, would be justified, could it be shown that mere temperance was inconsistent with the free activity of the higher emotions; still more, if inconsistent with an ascertained ideal. The higher plane of mind must always govern the lower, not cancelling, but subsuming it. Again, if I am a member of a civil society, mere personal Temperance will not exhaust my obligations. The human universal governs.

It may be said that we imperil both the moral and the spiritual which, by the consent of all the wise, can alone complete and glorify man's existence, by resting them on the uncertain result of man's feeling-experience and thought. It is God, however, that has, as a matter of fact, done so. Ethics and religion have a history, just as astronomy and hygiene have. It is a mighty task which has been deputed to men. Are we to shrink from it, and, sacrificing free reason, pray that we and all our thoughts and desires and volitions and acts shall be necessary modes of God's necessary nature? Were it so, then the "Real" with all its confusions and contradictions and failures and pains would be the ethical; and The Absolute would be a bad Absolute.

We end, then, as we began. The function of man as a Will-dialectic is to search for Law. This is a search for the processes that mediate the ideal fulfilment of all things, and which is consequently the law in them. So, in the case of man, it is a search for the reason-

ideal in his complex organism—a reason-ideal which is the Truth of fact and relations; and, as such, the law in and of these relations—the mediating conditions of the ideal. In all his striving and activity, accordingly, man does not, as a matter of psychological fact, seek happiness. To say so, is to mistake his essential nature. Our analysis of reason shows that what man as man is ever seeking is the law of his being as a complex whole, which law is its fruition. We further see him *necessarily*, as a dialectic, striving after the ideal in which the law resides, and this ideal is The Good. He finds the Law, the Ideal, the Good, when he finds the harmony of his total nature. In this fruition the Formal Law and the Real Good coalesce. Mere “happiness,” moreover, is as a matter of fact for ever unattainable by man; and it would be well if he gave up the expectation at once. No thinking man ever spent one wholly happy hour.

The Ethics of Man, then, consists in the actualisation of the Idea (subjective will-dialectic) in the complex total of his being which I have called the “Notion” of man; and this actualisation is the Ideal, Harmony—The Good (formal and real). The actualised idea is the end of each created thing, and there is a kind of quasi-ethics, as I have indicated, even for the atom and the plant. The method of the universe is One. The end, the actualised idea, the ideal, are all, in fact, names for “The Good”. In so far as any creature is diverted from The Good, or falls short of The Good, it is immoral or evil. In the case of man, the ultimate aim is the raising of the Ego to pure concrete “spirit”—a purpose immanent in the divine externalisation from the beginning. It is thus only by a teleological criterion that we can pronounce on the

goodness or evil of any thing or any act. In man, who can discern ends and project them and construct the thought of "The Good," the evil in him consists in permitting any desire or emotion to effect itself which is not guaranteed or permitted by the law imposed by Will-reason in him ; but neither the Ideal nor the Law can be independent of historical conditions. By the approval of "Conscience" in any particular case is meant the consciousness that the Willing is in accord with both the formal and real in the ethical act : *i.e.*, the formal of self-determination (virtue, strictly speaking), and the real of the Good or Ideal, which is Law.

The Good is a positive ; Evil is negation of The Good : it is a privation, an ignorance, or a falling away. And yet there would be no Good were it not for Evil. This subserves that. Thus it is that God-creative mediates His Ends on this our plane of Being ; and that in all things.

And yet the distinction between Good and Evil is as real and absolute as is the fact of a teleological world, or of man himself. Good and Evil are the realities of the Absolute in His externalisation. The Absolute, we have seen, comprehends within itself its own finitude, lives as immanent in its finitude ; and moral and physical law are alike valid and veritable distinctions and oppositions within that divine finitude. I know no "Absolute," except the "Absolute" of the Man-plane. God is immanent in the idea ; and that idea as individuated finds predicates of its own truth or falsehood of being, which are, in so far as clear and distinct, God's predicates. Distinctions, physical and moral, are not "relative" as within this system of ours, but absolute ; it is the system itself that is relative to (as being an

evolutionary stage of) the infinite process and totality of Absolute Being. What The Absolute may be in its totality of beginning and end I cannot "know". That the absolute synthesis contains "Being-absolute" as the implicit of the Whole I know; and that is all. But of the God of this world—God as immanent in the finite series—I know, or can know, much; for His laws are His way of working in the moral, as in the natural, sphere of the divine immanence and operation. The externalisation, as we found, is not a helpless emanation out of Absolute Being unconscious and ignorant of itself: our Epistemology *compels us*, on the contrary, to interpret it as a willed or created system, which also, and *therefore*, contains God Absolute as Being-dialectic; and, therefore, as a God of Purpose.

Let the heavens, then, try to evade the distinctions and determinations which we call the physical order, and chaos will come again: so, let man try to evade the spiritual order, and the chaos of each individual spirit will be a brief prelude to the wreck of humanity. These things, I repeat, are the truth of the Absolute as manifested—its revelation of its essential nature as finite. That the contemplation of them by finite mind brings contradictions, that is to say, yields relations within this our circle of The Absolute which we, as finite, cannot reduce to a conciliation, is simply to say that we are finite. The world we have is, when understood, just as true and veritably valid in The Absolute as self-conscious mind itself is, and the stars above. Any other view is a crude Dualism. The ideals and "ought" of man are as much immanent God as the mathematics of nature. A definition of what those ideals and the supreme ideal, Harmony, are must rest on the nature of Man and the instructions of a

long experience, as together revealing the position he occupies in the cosmic scheme.

Note.—See Appendix, Note 9.

ETHICAL FULFILMENT.

As a knower, man grasps particulars in and through the universal, detects the universal in the particular, and, finally, seeing all things in God and God in all things, he unites himself with God and has rest. "God alone," says St. Thomas, "can fill the heart of man." The highest function of the mind of man is to know God; with all his getting, he must get God. Without this, he stands outside the majestic movement of the universe; he is an alien in the system to which he belongs. He is a creature of Time, not of Eternity. The externalisation is spread out before him; and when he beholds therein Absolute Being as Reason, sum of Ideals, Law and Love in Law, he finds repose. It is man's prerogative, indeed, to proclaim this vision and to utter forth its praise. George Herbert puts this excellently:—

Of all the creatures both in sea and land
Only to man Thou has made known Thy ways,
And put the pen alone into his hand
And made him Secretary of Thy praise.

Beasts fain would sing; birds dittie to their notes;
Trees would be tuning on their native lute
To Thy renown: but all their hands and throats
Are brought to man, while they are lame and mute.

Man is the world's high priest: he doth present
The sacrifice for all; while they below
Unto the service mutter an assent,
Such as springs use that fall and winds that blow.

He that to praise and laud Thee doth refrain,
Doth not refrain unto himself alone
But robs a thousand who would praise Thee fain :
And doth commit a world of sin in one.

But this adoring contemplation of the Infinite Spirit by the finite—the last enterprise of reason, is itself for use. The terminus of life, while we live, is not contemplation and worship ; nor the quiescence of mystic feeling ; nor knowledge ; but life itself : and life is harmonious activity. So true is this that repose, except after fatigue, soon leads to ennui and misery, and even the mystic contemplation of The Absolute becomes empty and barren. The attempt to live in such circumstances is like the effort to sustain bodily existence in a vacuum. The Will wills ceaseless activity. Man lives not merely in the activity of thought and affirmation, but by externalising affirmations in his relation to all other things and persons. This is "*willing*" as distinguished from Will. Like God, the finite Ego must become immanent in the particular. It must take its cue from God its prototype. The subjective-dialectic is, as Will, instinct with the form of End, ever seeking to carry itself beyond the affirmation of the idea or truth into the external expression of that idea in life and conduct. The inner must outer itself, if it is truly to live ; just as God does. And it is precisely because an ethical idea is always charged with motive-force that the emotion itself is only half-born till it passes into action : "The expression or action *is* the feeling at a higher power," says Nettleship (i., 82). It is the fulfilled content of the Feeling-idea.

Thus it is that the Will-dialectic ever seeks for and

prescribes the supreme End, and also the particular ends, of activity: it seeks to effect itself in relation to things and persons; but it is not left to fight the unequal battle as pure cold Will: the *emotion* of and in reason and the ideals of reason impels to activity in words and deeds. Feeling permeates all; and in each and every ethical idea there is a non-rational element of feeling and emotion that impels and sustains. In feeling we have the driving force, the ethical dynamic. Thus the ethical act is always highly complex in its mediating ground; and in it the whole man is expressed.

It would appear, then, that ethical self-fulfilment is, as I previously said, a virile process, and that the ultimate for Man on this plane is not identity with "The Absolute" or with Absolute Being, but identity of finite spirit with infinite Spirit—that is to say, with Absolute Being as creative, concrete and immanent. And yet I do not need to recall that just because the Infinite is *in* the Dialectic as knowing and as generator of ideals, a being on the man-plane of Being cannot fulfil himself on that plane. The ultimate of possibility for man, here and now, is not the realisation of himself as "spirit" in a harmony of the formal and real, but striving after that realisation. In striving consists the supreme virtue of a man. The blessedness of exalted community with the One-All has to be bought with a price.

ETHICAL HISTORY.

Man has a long history before he attains to a consciousness of his place in the divine system, and of the full obligations of true manhood. As little more than an attitudinal animal to begin with, his function is to conserve and propagate his life by adapting himself

as best he can to his environment. It is a protracted struggle through the ages painful to contemplate. Man's sensitive organism and unprotected nakedness would leave him a prey to other animals and to the cruel pressure of nature, did not reason furnish him with tools for warfare and production, and gradually suggest devices for ameliorating his miserable lot. Thus, in his earlier stages of historical evolution, reason is inevitably utilised for material purposes alone.

The ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat and wine and oil
Till they perish.

As a self-conscious being, however,—as a Will-dialectic, man's function in the system of things is very different, as we have seen. He is *supra naturam*, although still part of the natural order in so far as he is attitudinal subject. As Will-dialectic, he is impelled not only to constitute ends and ideals, but finally to grasp all experience as a divine movement, and to see the particular in the One universal. This is his return to God, from Whom his negating Egoism for a time separates him; and this is the ultimate goal of finite spirit.

Man gropes along among outer sense-presentations to find the manner of the "display" of the universal Idea in its completed notion; this is science of Nature: he contemplates the phenomena of inner sense—desire, impulse, emotion, and their relation to the Whole, in order to elaborate, in and through these, the full notion of himself as a harmonious concrete in the divine process: this is science of Ethics. While other existences are constituted for themselves and in themselves, man, by virtue of the Will-dialectic, which is the supreme and

dominating idea (the note of manhood) is constituted *by* himself *for* himself. We must never grow tired of repeating this ; for herein lies the ultimate metaphysic of Ethics, and the explanation of the slow and painful birth of ethical ideas and the man-ideal. The Will-dialectic which marks him off from other beings is at once man's distinction and his misfortune, his privilege and his peril. "Man," says Cardinal Newman, "begins with nothing realised, and he has to make capital for himself by the exercise of those faculties which are his natural inheritance. Thus he gradually advances to the fulness of the divine purpose in him. Nor is this progress mechanical, nor is it of necessity ; it is committed to the personal efforts of each individual of the species ; each of us has the prerogative of completing his inchoate and rudimental nature, and of developing his own perfection out of the living elements with which his mind began to be. It is his gift to be the creator of his own sufficiency ; and to be emphatically self-made. This is the law of his being."¹ "The advance of historical study," says Professor Pringle Pattison, "has long lifted us above the notion of an abstract conscience promulgating to all men the same perfect moral law." Time and experience are needed for ethical growth ; because, for this, man has to know himself, and to comprehend the whole of himself, in his relations, personal and political. The philosopher's task, as an ethical historian, is to bring into explicit relief that which is immanent from the first in the man-mind organism, and to explain, if he can, apparent deviations from the straight line of logical development, as well as retardations and retrogressions. Knowledge is slow and "wisdom lingers". There is a

¹ *Grammar of Assent*, p. 342.

process. But all moves towards Truth—the truth of man as well as the truth of all things in and through man ; and the End and Ideal and Law are in the Truth and nowhere else. It no more follows from the fact of growth that there is no absolute morality, than it does that there is no absolute physics.

And when I speak of the absolute truth in ethics, I mean the ascertainment of that whereby the creature called Man can alone attain to his full fruition ; I do not raise the question as to the precise meaning of Good and Evil in Absolute Being as if He or It were a “ thing ” made up of properties. We have to seek the truth of all things—the meaning of all experience in and for a *created* Whole, and the truth in that is the truth of God on this plane of His immeasurable Being. The rest I leave in hands that are not mine, and all other men must do the same. I am hurried along and have scarcely time to take note of the questions that arise, before I vanish from my place in “ The Absolute ”.

But even if the highest is never realised in me, either here or elsewhere, I see the ever-advancing tide of God, and have faith in Man and his destiny. Something is going on, something is being worked out. Let us pause in the midst of our self-indulgent sceptical moods and answer the question : “ Is the tendency making for good or evil ? ” If for good, then there is absolute morality as an ideal mediated through man on this plane of the divine life ; and through that alone can a man reach a higher than this, a greater than he knows ; although his progress here can be, because of the infinite in all ideals, an asymptotic curve at best. Were the ideal realised in man he would no longer be man, and the words Good

and Perfect would have no meaning. Man on this plane of Being is on his way, and the way is rough. The present subserves and predicts the future. The True, The Good and The Beautiful in their absoluteness *are* The Absolute. When I have attained to the vision of this, I have exhausted the resources of my finitude.

Let us then come to the simple conclusion : On the attitudinal plane Man is an aggregate of particular desires and impulses and emotions. On that plane he seeks satisfaction for one particular after another according to the circumstances of the moment. But Man being a dialectic has to transmute the disorderly particulars into a rational synthesis. This rational synthesis must have a regulative principle over and above the mere fact of the formal dominance of the dialectic itself. This regulative principle must be the ideal or Truth of Man—more or less vaguely understood as the experience of the ages grows. The note of the complex ideal is Harmony : this is the rational synthesis in the domain of feeling and values. This word denotes the successful energising of the dialectic in the search for truth and law among conflicting motives to action. Now, at this moment and always, Harmony (or at least action that will not conflict with harmony) is the law of Man as an ethical being whether he is aware of it or not. To-day and through the ages the dialectic impulse compels the silent, but insistent, questions (crude and rudimentary as the answer of the prehistoric barbarian may be), “What is the supreme Good ?” and “How am I, a man, to mediate the supreme Good by identifying it with my Self as purposed ‘end’ of my activity here and now ?”

Note.—See *Appendix*, Note 10.

MEDITATION XIII.

MAN IN COMMUNITY : THE STATE.¹

INTRODUCTION: *A.* General Propositions as to the foundation of a Community—Man carries *himself* into Society as: (*a*) a Being of Sympathetic Feeling which is source of Altruism as the basis of a Common Life; (*b*) as a Free Will; (*c*) as a searcher for Law—*B.* The prescription of Law with Penalty converts a Community into a State; Source of Law—*C.* Postulates of a Community Life—*D.* Justice is Negative and Positive: State Limitations—*E.* The Person and the Social Organism.

Introduction.

A. GENERAL PROPOSITIONS AS TO THE FOUNDATIONS OF A COMMUNITY.

IT is obvious that the State is prior to the individual (logically). For a man cannot be an individual in any rational sense, that is to say as a personality, save in and through a community of men. Thus the individual exists as a "person" through the Whole; but none the less the "Whole" of a polity has no meaning except in so far as it realises itself in the individual parts.

It is the "positive relations" in the nature of man that alone explain the congregating of men together; and

¹ My object in the following remarks is merely to bring into view the bearing of our past argument on the theory of the State. The subject is much too large and complex for adequate treatment here.

these involve sympathy with his kind—a fellow feeling, much stronger than prevails among a herd of cattle or a flock of seagulls. Out of this emerges, and must emerge, Altruism ; as it does, in a weaker form, even in animals. Altruism is not a sacrifice of one to another, but a “give and take” among individual egos in so far as is consistent with the inherent claim of each ego. It rests on instinctive Sympathy, and is a feeling of Goodwill to others (however rudimentary this may be) and a love of the Goodwill of others. Were it not for this sympathetic altruism men would not congregate for a common life. It is the foundation of life in community, and renders it possible. Sympathy and Altruism are the “positive relations” which counteract the negating individualism of men.

Men do not enter into community of set purpose and with a self-consciousness of individual rights : to begin with, they, doubtless, find themselves herding with their kind almost unawares, like buffaloes or sheep. Sympathy and Altruism (as I have defined it) keep them together. And yet, it is as a free self-functioning Ego that a man enters a community, and his “rights” as an individual are inalienable. Through the “other” of his positive relations can the bare Ego alone fulfil itself and attain to the concrete fulness which we call personality ; but, after all, it is an individual Ego (as containing the will-dialectic) that has to be filled and fulfilled. A community, accordingly, fails as an organised Whole which has not immanent in it, as its purpose or end, the fulfilment of each free individual Ego composing it. The free activity of each personality in and through the Whole is the ideal of a State. On the soundness of the parts depends the health of the Whole.

At all periods of its history, a Society (like all existents) contains two antagonistic forces which may be called individualism and universalism—the negative and the positive; and it is only by the individual Ego subsuming the human universal into himself that the Society can fulfil itself as a harmonious organisation. So long as the individual puts himself into antagonism to the universal—the Law, he is an anarchic force.

I have used the expression “inherent right”; and by this I mean that inasmuch as a man is a free self-conscious Ego, his “natural right” as a member of a Community is a right to the free development of his activities, industrial and moral. I know of no other “right”. But as each has this right, each must exercise it so as to respect the freedom of his fellows, or all must return to savagery—*bellum omnium contra omnes*.

Individualism with its appetites and passions and egoistic self-seeking is always in evidence, especially in the earlier stages of society; but reason is working, underground so to speak, and ultimately asserting itself, in individuals and communities alike, as regulator and controller of conduct. Man, we saw, by dint of the dialectic in him and taught by his environment, gradually finds the law of himself as a person, and that law, as the formulation of will-reason, is the *free* affirmation of the *truth of himself*, at the point which he may have reached in his historical development. So in his Community relations: he is ever seeking the *law* of life in Community; and he cannot help doing so, because he is a Will-Dialectic. The final law of society is immanent from the first.

Let me then venture to lay down certain general propositions:—

(a) *Feeling is the basis of Society.*—Feeling as Sympathy is at the basis of Society, and Sympathy generates Altruism which, again, is Goodwill towards others and a love of the Goodwill of others. Without this sympathy, prehistoric man would not form even rude and temporary external combinations for defence or acquisition. It is the sympathy of man with man, a consciousness of a human universal, which makes possible a community of life and purpose. Feeling, then, is at the basis of aggregations of human beings.

(b) *Man enters Society as a Free Will.*—The function of Man is, as a free Will-dialectic, to fulfil himself; and this fulfilment is the subsumption of what he has ascertained to be the supreme good, and of the process or conditions whereby that supreme good is to be mediated. Man cannot part with this, his distinction from all else, without sinking to a lower plane of Being. And he carries *himself* into the community which he forms. He is not the product of Society; it is the other way about. Through Society he seeks the fulfilment of himself, materially and morally. He is so constituted (we have said) that he cannot fulfil himself except through his positive relations. He subsumes the “other” into his individuality as the condition of its true life. But, unless he does so “freely,” he forgoes his manhood.

Man’s true fulfilment as a member of society is, consequently, impossible, except in so far as his personal freedom as self-regulating is conserved.

(c) *Man enters Society as a Law-seeking being.*—Man as a reason, taking his lessons from experience, finds that the supreme Good—the ideal of Harmony, that is to say, Justice—is attainable only through Law, which involves the suppression of recalcitrant elements in his

nature. He is always as a Will-dialectic in search of the law of his being—the universal which is to control the particular. This also he carries with him into community, just as he carries Freedom.

As one of many men held together in a common life, each sees that his freedom of action is possible only when it is protected from the encroachments of other men; just as he is aware that the true freedom of his own personal impulses and desires is possible only under an inner law that restrains and limits. He, accordingly, recognises the necessity of Law which shall restrain each within such limitations of free activity as shall protect the free activity of every other. This may be called the Harmony of individuals in community; in other words, Justice. At first, it may be mere custom-law, to which men *feel* their way, that operates; but the self-seeking or weakness of individuals necessitates the formulation of Rule. No individual has “rights” which are not *common* rights. This is inherent in the mere fact of a community. But any individual may have privileges and rights assigned to him for the common good.

B. THE PRESCRIPTION OF LAW WITH PENALTY CONVERTS
A COMMUNITY INTO A STATE.

The formulation of Rule among men is Civil Law and the formula is “Thou shalt *not*”; and the right to utter this (it is presumed to be a common utterance), carries with it the right of enforcement and penalty. A community can be called an organisation or “State” only when law and the power of enforcing law enters into its life.

Law is a Rule with sanctions.—Law, then, is a formulated Rule with sanctions, whereby the freedom of each is protected; and this means that the purpose of Law is Justice, as guarantee of individual freedom.

Freedom, then, that there may be self-fulfilment, and Justice that there may be freedom, lie (theoretically and immanently, I am not speaking of historical origins) at the foundation of an organised community of men.

The promulgation of a Law presumes a lawgiver or "sovereign".

Source of Law.—The focussing of concurrent wills in a law has, I say, for its end the freedom of each citizen in and through law. The origin of the law is in the Sovereign; but he is not the source of the law. That is to be found in the general consensus as interpreted and formulated by the Sovereign. The methods by which this general consensus is to be ascertained is a separate question. By the wisdom of a single recognised Ruler, or by the deliberation of an oligarchic Council, or by a representative body set apart to collect the wills of individuals and deliberate on their true import and so counteract the element of personal idiosyncrasies and private ends—in any of these ways the general will may be ascertained. Such arrangements do not affect the theory of the State, *i.e.*, the causes of its formation and the purpose of its existence.

Freedom, the essential note of the man-being, can be conserved in communities only by law. As custom-law and positive law grow up, and legislative, judicial and executive authority are, for convenience, concentrated in a few—it may be in one—with power of enforcement, the members of the community (now only to be first called "citizens") do not, by acquiescence in the law and in the action of judicial and executive authority, part with their freedom except in this sense, that they are no longer free to do "what each likes". But that is the abstract bare will of the negating individual,

not the will of a being of reason who can be free only through law which is a universal. Men, even in primitive times, are not fools, and they are well aware that the freedom of each individual, as subject to common law, is thereby, as a matter of fact, guaranteed and extended. And just as in the personal moral sphere will is free only in so far as it is identified with recognised inner law, so in the infant State the freedom of each citizen is identified with the operation of outer and coercive law. *A* is no longer "free" to injure *B*; and a community of buffaloes might almost recognise in this an extension and guarantee of the free play of the powers of each member of the herd—freedom through objective law—a universal which each particular must make his own, or suffer penalty.

The Sovereign does not confer "rights" save in a formal sense: he recognises them; and his problem must always be how to conciliate the supremacy of Law with subjective freedom. The so-called conferring of a right to vote, for example, is merely the formal recognition of a right already existing, and can be withheld only by the common Will for the common Weal.

C. POSTULATES OF A COMMUNITY LIFE.

The act of entering, or the fact of belonging to, a community-life contains implicit an oath of loyalty to its dictates. Just as through inner "law" alone an individual man is a free person, as distinguished from an animal, so individuals living in community can be free relatively to each other, only in so far as they live under a universal or law. If a minority reject the law and prefer to indulge their own arbitrary caprice, they are rightfully coerced by the Sovereign, and, if necessary, they may be expelled. They are crushed out by

a Power which they never *formally* acquiesced in, it is true; but they have to be taught that the postulate of a possible community is that all shall pull together, and that the common law is a law for each. There is a tacit pact to this effect from the beginning, and the non-social man has broken it. He himself is contradicting himself; for on entering into a community, or by remaining in it, he virtually said, "I hereby will to respect the wills of others, and to accept the interpreted sum of those wills as expressed in law". Strictly speaking, a minority has no "rights" save freedom to alter the law on the ground that it is not just. If there be no machinery for altering what is held to be an unjust Law, then rebellion is justified in the name of Society itself.

But there is another postulate of Society-life, *viz.*, a tacit pact that the act of the Sovereign, *i.e.*, all laws, shall aim at the good of the whole, not of a part of the community alone; least of all at the good of the Sovereign. A few, by getting possession of material resources, may legislate in their own interests as individuals or as a class. A democratic majority may also do so. In either case, we have social disorder which may end in disruption. These postulates constitute, it seems to me, a "Social Contract"—implicit, of course, not formulated.

Accordingly, there would seem to be nothing mysterious, nothing even new, in the foundations and aims of a State. Fulfilment of the individual personality is now merely writ large; the aim of a State is the ethical fulfilment of a community of free personalities in traffic with each other. And Justice is that which makes this freedom and fulfilment possible.

Thus we find that a community of men resting on Sympathy or the Human Universal is, like the individual man and the universe in which he finds himself, a teleological organisation. It has from the first an implicit ideal, and that ideal, like the ideal for the individual man, is Harmony or Justice—an ethical ideal. The State is an ethical organisation. Its purpose is to enable men to fulfil their function as *men* in the sight of God.

Man, accordingly, does not cancel himself in entering a community life. He seeks a fuller self. It is the positive relations of man with man that mediate his fulfilment as a person. The man who looks to the interests of his own negating individuality only and evades the positive altruistic relations as determined by custom or law is anti-social, and must be suppressed, if a civilised Society is to continue. Man enters into community, aware that only so can his self-fulfilment in material matters be promoted, and dimly conscious also that his ethical self-fulfilment—the growth of a narrow and barren individuality into a full concrete personality—is only so possible. Like every other monad, he can fulfil himself only through the “other”—his positive relations. It is the positive relations of the monad that connect it with the universe, and return to it and make its fulfilment possible. So with individuals in an organised Society.

D. JUSTICE—NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE. STATE
LIMITATIONS.

As Reason seeks Harmony or Justice for the individual within the personal sphere of feeling-motives, so the Sovereign seeks Justice in the objective sphere of persons in their mutual relations. It is customary to speak of social justice as “negative” and “positive,” the former

being the prohibitive laws which protect the freedom of each individual from the encroachments of other individuals, the latter being laws which are promotive of the general interest as a whole with a view to a more civilised and rational life. It is, however, impossible to draw a hard and fast line between negative and positive Justice, if we take into consideration the indirect, as well as direct, effect of laws on the freedom of the citizen. In these days, for example, sanitation may be held to include all that promotes the physical vigour of a people and, if so, we are under obligation to bring it within the field of legislation and penalty. Then a State is bound to remedy obvious injustice as between citizens or classes of citizens wherever it finds it. The laws which aim at this may even rightly be included under Negative Justice (*e.g.*, Factory Acts, etc.).

If the further purpose of the State be to make it possible for the individual to fulfil adequately his specific function as a man—that is to say, as a spiritual being, it is bound to remove obstructions in the way of progress, and generally to facilitate the higher life of the citizen by its laws. This becomes an object for the consideration of the State in proportion as an ideal of man is diffused which regards the necessary and useful activities that serve the bodily organism to be merely the starting point of man's true life. The one word that symbolises these loftier purposes is Education. Religion, Knowledge, Art and even Recreation in all their forms are thus among the legitimate aims of a State. These things fall under the head of Positive Justice.

The above consideration at once forces on us the vexed question as to the limits of State Action—a highly complex question. If the State, that is to say, the

“Sovereign,” truly embodies the will of the citizens, there would seem to be no limits to State action save those which negative justice, always supreme as conserving the personal freedom of each, imposes ; and, further, those which a theory of the nature and function of man suggests. If our past interpretation of the meaning and cosmic function of Man be the truth, the State, while providing opportunities and guidance, will do nothing for its citizens which they can do for themselves. In his relation to both material things and spiritual things man is essentially a free self-regulating energy, and whatever represses or supersedes this must weaken his moral fibre, and, in the long run, enfeeble the whole State. The statesman should study the mind of man, says Aristotle. When, next, a State is not satisfied with passing laws and seeing that they are executed, but itself proceed to administer them, we have centralised bureaucracy and the insidious legislation of a bureau. This it is the party interest of political communists to promote, since it is a long step to the despotic social organisation which is their ideal. A bureaucracy will destroy the very nerve of the ethical life of a nation, if it does not decentralise.

However these complicated questions may be from time to time settled, this I think is clear, that even in its crudest form the State is always ethical, always educational. It promotes not only freedom, but fulness of life for each ; moralising each by teaching submission to law as containing freedom, if by nothing else. In the mere recognition of law man finds a rational need satisfied and (it may be only sub-selfconsciously) feels that the Sovereign is not merely a policeman, but an ethical centre and force.

Just as the end of Man, as a personal Will, is that *self-achieved* fulfilment which alone is the truth of his nature, so the aim of the State (or general Will) is the promoting of the fulfilment of each citizen, which fulfilment must yet be *self-achieved* through the organised Society.

E. THE PERSON AND THE SOCIAL ORGANISM.

It is a truism that it is impossible for man to realise the fulness of his personhood save in and through a society of men, just as it is only through society and co-operation that he can achieve his highest material well-being. Without communities, the capacities and ideals of each man's rich potentiality of nature must lie dormant, and he can be little more than the most cunning of animals. Fulness of being is otherwise unattainable. We are here in presence of a universal truth, as previous meditations have shown. No one thing in the universe is isolated; no one thing in the universe can fulfil itself, save by going out of itself, so that "the other" in all its variety and wealth becomes the thing itself, and constitutes the real, as opposed to the formal potency, of its essential nature. It is by subsuming his positive relations that each individual can alone fulfil himself as a concrete person. The individual citizen holds this attitude to the social community. To find himself, he must lose himself in the whole. He lives for the whole that he may truly live for himself. Even God finds Himself in His "Other," or externalisation, and fills his Being with that which is Himself and yet not Himself. The Method of the Absolute is One. It is false, accordingly, to say that a State is a mere

aggregation of individuals combined for the sole purpose of keeping the path clear for the accomplishment of the individualistic ends of each. This is the baldest "negative justice". It is the individualism of the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation run to seed. Individual freedom as negative justice must, it is true, be first of all secured ; but the State is much more than the police-machinery of individualism. It is an aggregation of men seeking, by the mutual help which organisation and consequent law give, the fulfilment of each "person" ; but this through the whole and for the whole. This ethical function of the State is the sole justification of Positive justice, and its gradual realisation can alone give stability and permanence to a polity.

On the other hand, we must remember that the whole is made up of persons ; and to speak of the State as an "organism," in which social custom and law and tradition are everything and the person of little account, is to speak of an abstraction. A conception, such as this, leads logically to a despotism, open or veiled, secular or religious, which would crush that free and full personality of each for the very sake of which the State exists. In the social evolution the "person" is always in evidence : it is the consentient acquiescence of each "person," taking his cue from some prophet, priest or king that, through a subtle and sympathetic responsiveness, makes custom and law to begin with. It is the ethical aims of the aristocracy of mind that are ever being organised into a progressive State as its motive force—organised into the universal of the State that they may be a support and a guide to the weakness of the individual citizen. An idea which, originating with the few, is finally acquiesced in by the whole community and becomes law, is reflected

back as law into the persons constituting the political society, and finds its justification in the elevation of each to the standard of the best. In the beginning and in the end the State issues from the "person," and its formulation of life must return to the "person". There ought, accordingly, to be a free flow of the reason of each, and above all of the best, into the mind of the Sovereign ; so that the general Will (by which I merely mean the will of the Sovereign in the form of a law) may find a ready response, and be a true moral force in the mind of each citizen. This is the only guarantee of assured progress. The ultimate aim is the ethical growth of each citizen through his universal relations : but, as in the cosmic method, the particular in its soleness is naught, and the universal in its universalness is naught. The universal has no existence save in the particular, and the particular has no fulfilment save in and through the universal.

It is only when the sympathetic response to the ideas of great personalities is such as to permeate the mass and alter their way of looking at life, that these ideas become permanent factors in the gradual evolution of an ethical polity. The action of personalities is effective and rapid as an evolutionary force in proportion to the diffusion of their ideas among the mass. The progress is illusory which is not from within, and slow. The Universe is a continuous One, and, neither in vegetal life nor conscious life is there any breach, but only an infinite gradation. The upward movement is always from within, not from without. "Function" precedes organic structure, it is said: in any case, a variant function carries structure along with it. The State, accordingly, must evolve from within, and it

gradually grows out of the growing needs and ever-enlarging conceptions of the individual citizen. All must look to their prophets for guidance and for the creation of spiritual needs, and to the Sovereign to satisfy them. "Everything great and good," says Fichte, "on which our present existence rests, and from which it has proceeded, exists only because noble and powerful men have resigned all the enjoyments of life for the sake of ideas." "The animal in man," says Amiel, "becomes human only late in the day and then only in the beautiful souls, the souls alive to justice, goodness, enthusiasm and devotion."

Some talk of the State, which is an organisation of free persons, as if it were a mysterious organic entity to be called "Humanity" or the "social organism" in which individuals are moved by an unseen hand. This is, in fact, a confused form of political pantheism; or rather, I should say, it is atheistic pantheism. The god to be worshipped is "moral tissue"! This abstract conception is, I say, political pantheism and dangerous to liberty. It involves a mediæval absolutism, with God and the Church left out. The State is not an abstraction, organic or other, but a concrete living community of "persons," of which the organising principle is ethical purpose and law: and, when all is said, the end of the organisation as a whole is its return to the person so that each may through the whole realise himself. The State, doubtless, is greater than any individual citizen, but it is for the individual citizen that it exists. And is not this what Plato means when he maintains that "The Good" for the State is possible only by the virtues of the individual, while, on the other hand, the good State makes the complete virtue of the *individual* possible? And does not Aristotle

follow the same line of thought when he deals in his *Ethics* with the subjective characteristics of virtue whereby a man is best fitted for life; and, in the *Politics*, when he is considering those forms of government and administration which best admit of the activity of *personal* virtue by themselves embodying an ethical conception? So with the religion of Christ: the Prophet of mankind cares nothing for States or Churches or for corporations of any kind; but only for individual souls. Spiritual associations are agencies for keeping alive among men the truth of the relation of God and Man. It is inevitable, unfortunately, that their tendency *must be* to despotism, because their very organisation rests on the assumption that they have exclusive access to the mind of God. Thus we have a Monism which is untrue to the nature of God Himself in relation to His creatures.

I would sum up these notes (dictated entirely by the philosophy of Man which I have endeavoured to expound) in these words: In the origination and final organisation of States the freedom of each person in his industrial and spiritual relations is always the implicit End and the mediating idea is Justice: a whole consists of parts, and there can be no "good" for the whole save through the parts.

We have, of course, been talking of an ideal State and assuming a free constitution; and it is a truism to say that the conditions of men have been, and still, in most places, are, such that the few must not only furnish ideas (as has always been the case even in inchoate barbarous communities), but also govern; just as it has been through the few, or rather a great per-

sonality here and there, that man has been raised from savagedom. We must not, on this account, forget that the immanent idea and aim in all government is always Justice, negative and positive, as mediating personal freedom and ethical fulfilment. That State-constitution is best which best promotes this. And there have been, and are, social conditions which make Justice unattainable save through an autocrat. None the less the ideal conception of society is the true conception, to which we may approximate, but to which doubtless we shall never attain.

MEDITATION XIV.¹

NEGATION AND THE APPARENT LIMITATION OF GOD.

Negation and the activity under limitation of God-immanent : Conflict—The Casual and Contingent—Position of Man—Monism and Freedom.

It is necessary to return to Negation before entering on the subject of Evil.

Nothing can be left outside the notion God, we have seen, without affirming the independent existence of something which is not God and is alien to His Being and activity. Negation, then, is only a moment in the externalising of Absolute Being—a moment in the creative energy—the “that without which not,” to use a Hellenic expression. Creation, as the othering or outering of God, is affirmation that involves negation. As an abstract, negation and the phenomenal in which it inheres is not God : it is non-being ; but, as beënt and concrete, the negating phenomenal *is* God as “other” ; for nothing can exist save God as a one eternal fact and process in the form of the “Many in the identity of the One”.

And yet, Negation or “the other” implies existence over against God, though emanating from God. This is

¹ It is scarcely necessary to say that this Meditation connects itself closely with the Meditations on Essence and Primordial Actuals in the First Book. See also Meditation V. in this Book, and *App.*, Note 11.

the cosmic method—the way of the world. This negation is to be conceived, of course, like all else in the notion God, *metaphysically*: all we can say of it is that it *is*; and it must be within God as the Absolute Synthesis. God is, notwithstanding, infinite, because His limitations are within Himself.

The fact of negation, plants, in the cosmic whole, individua from the primordial actual to man. God's way of procedure in creation would seem to be the creation of an infinite number of individua each containing its relation to all else; these positive relations of each to each and to the Whole, *being effected by the inherent nature of each individuum* as “idea,” and not super-imposed; not instituted as if by an afterthought.

Through the negation it is (no less than through the fact of transcendental Absolute Being) that we are delivered from monistic Pantheism, which is atheism under another and sweeter name: in and through this negation the individual, as such, is saved: in and through this negation man is a free personality: in and through this negation he is a veritable subject, a “for-self,” in presence of a veritable object, which also is a “for-self”: in and through this negation alone, the casual and contingent are possible, nay inevitable. Phenomenon *qua* phenomenon is, accordingly, not God: it exists by virtue of its not being God, and yet as being, in fact and reason-form, God. It is the sense-mode, the modality of the divine idea; and, as such, the object of all “science” of nature. God does not lurk behind the phenomenon: He is in it. Nature is Absolute Being in the final moment of its creative mood.

It is the very fact of finitude and pluralism (which, in primary sentience, and always, besets us) that drives human reason, simply because it is reason and *must* take up experience dialectically or as a system, to search for a One. Without difference there could be no world: without a "One" everything would fly apart from every other. And when the reflective mind beholds the vision of the Infinite One in the Many, it is dazzled by the great light: the finite and many disappear from vision in the splendour: that which we sought to explain is even, for the moment, explained away, and the individual now seems to be naught; whereas the fact is that each individual, as planted in the One Whole, has its own unique character, idea or essence, and has to fulfil its own life and to discharge its own cosmic duty, whether it be a star or a star-fish, a molecule or a man.

We have seen, further, that it is out of the contemplation of each individual thing as a known that we make large affirmations regarding the Whole of things. Were our conclusions not based on epistemology, they would be speculative in the popular and disparaging use of that word. But we have found each concrete "thing" truly to be Being, Dialectic and Phenomenon: the determining moment we have found to be Essence or Idea, and the "Determinate" to be the concrete "thing" before us. The individuation of the idea takes place at the crisis of materialisation or phenomenalisation. At this point, or in this moment of the process, the idea commits itself to the Negation and is individuated: the Negation contains the *principium individuationis*: it is the *principium individuationis*: Being and not-being are there, and the concrete deter-

minate as an individuum is a synthesis of affirmation (essence, idea) and negation through the modality. And now, but only now, can we speak of the presentation before us as a distinct entity "for itself". What is true of the "thing" is true of the universe. Each particular is a "case" of the Universal. Bigness counts for naught in metaphysics.

It follows that each individual, then, as an individual, has its rights and duties and privileges, and has to fulfil itself in conflict with all other finite individuals: it has, in Spinoza's phrase, "to persist in its own *esse*". The negation in each and every finite is, relatively to infinite Being, the basis of its individuality; while the essential nature of each concrete thing is the determining "idea". The elements in which the idea concretely fulfils itself are a phenomenal or modal manifestation of itself; and at the same time, relatively to the "one" of idea, negation. All the elements, I say, in a complex "thing" are, relatively to the idea, the negation of the idea, resistant of the idea, and yet controlled so as to be the vehicle and true manifestation of the idea. This is what we mean by organism. In like manner, each "thing" in the vast system is, as conflicting with every other particular thing, *relatively to it*, negation and chaos, which it has to control to its own ends by selection and adaptation, if it would live. Thus at the roots of thought we always find that the existent is a teleological synthesis of opposites.

The "idea" of Man, we have seen, is the objective Will-dialectic itself become subjective and raising the conscious individuality to self-conscious Ego.¹

¹ See Appendix 11. *Note on Individuation.*

The Casual and Contingent.

The conflict of the rights of each individuum in a world of infinite plurals thus *tends* to generate casualty and a certain anarchy, which God, as Dialectic Affirmer, as essence or idea in each and all, reduces to ends—the ordered world we see. Does, then, God succeed in effecting a harmony in and through the negation? Assuredly only partially on this man-plane of The Absolute. It is with difficulty that the “idea” can fulfil itself, because of the resistant negation within the concrete thing itself and the strife of individuals; and, as is patent to all, it does not always succeed either in the natural or the moral world. As a matter of fact, it would seem that this negation, which alone can make creation possible, always remains. What may be possible in the way of reduction to the harmony of the idea in the long time-evolution to which God in His finite activity has committed Himself, no man can say; but as yet and in the past, the anarchy is there unreduced. Hope and Faith may fill up the ghastly chasm between the world as man finds it and what may be called the “Absolute idea”; but no honest thinker can slur over the fact of apparent failure heretofore, if our criterion is to be absolute Truth, Goodness and Beauty, or the Ideal in any form. Evolution, properly understood, is indeed itself the proclamation of the fact that the world is a living, teleological world; and Evolution itself proceeds by strife, retrogression and failure.¹

¹ That the idea and the concrete phenomenal run on parallel lines, seems to me to be a baseless speculation. I prefer to take things as I find them. Let us grant that the determining idea is evidently striving to make the modal an adequate display of a spiritual fact, but let us also admit that it is resisted by the very conditions of its

Needless to say that the noumenal moments in the externalisation are not themselves in Time : they do not follow each other. God is always a One in His externalisation—One with Purpose—the Absolute Idea. This is what we mean by the Timeless or Eternal. But the phenomenal externalisation is a real Time-Order, and God here works, and has to work, under time-conditions. True, since He was in the beginning as initiating Will, He is conscious of the end : the Dialectic teaches us so much ; but the end is unattainable except through striving—the striving of God Himself through the striving of His creatures. God's method is the method of liberty, and liberty may pass into licence. Were it not so the world, including man, would be a fated and fateful machine. An element of chaos is in the universe, and this has to be reduced to the Absolute Idea ; but this only through the fulfilment of the idea in each individuum—the positive relations whereby each enters into the Whole ; for only by entering into the whole can it fulfil itself. If it were an isolated unit it would be little more than a bare mathematical point.

“How” it is possible that Absolute Being can contain in its initial Will the realised idea, and yet move into Time and the finite where the process of realisation is slow and laboured, we cannot tell ; nor can we tell the “Why”. But the action of the subjective dialectic

concreteness, *in* which is the Negation of itself. And, even if the idea succeeded in so reducing the negation as that the concrete whole should be adequate to the idea (as in Nature it often seems to do, and in our ideal imaginings always), it would be a conquest—a subjugation. The horses and the carriage would not be running alongside each other, but quite otherwise, if things are to get along at all ; unless we introduce a new element as a controlling *deus ex machina*.

furnishes an analogy. To attempt to answer such questions is an attempt at the Synthesis of The Absolute—a task beyond a finite being. It is the given world, and the record of present experience that we have to interpret—Man's plane of Being.

The phenomenal, again, is the realm of science and within the mechanical (physico-chemical) conception; and beyond what the fact of Being and the Dialectic yield, I can know nothing of the inner process of Universal Mind in the evolution of nature, save what the phenomenal itself yields me. I am in the hands of the physicist. The process of Absolute Being as creative seems to be like that of man in the growth of knowledge, *viz.*, A with a difference which gives $A^1 A^2$ and so forth. But we can say nothing regarding this till science has proceeded further in the completion of its task. Meanwhile it must keep within its own limits and not affect a philosophy at all. Whether he will or not, the man of science must take from metaphysics such fundamental explanation as there is. It gives him Being and Dialectic—a living and moving teleology and he will struggle in vain to throw these off.

I speak of God as immanent in *this* world of His externalisation. There are other worlds I do not doubt; that is to say other grades of Being. You, reader, and I are not the last word of God; and God be thanked for that. It is the *modus existendi et operandi* of the God of Man that I speak of. And if it be said that I demand of the reader that he shall modify his traditional view of God, I would reply, What does the evolution of this world, organic and inorganic, intellectual and moral, reveal to us save a progress through strife and failure and oppositions?

What does the melancholy history of the human race reveal to us? And secondly, I would ask, Is the notion of God as presented by me truly different, save in its philosophic basis and technical expression, from the conceptions that have animated the great religions—not least the Christian Religion; and also those philosophies that attempt a synthetic view of the whole of experience? It is not my business to write an *apologia pro Deo*. The process in and of God is the process as we find it in Man and Nature. This is the way He mediates His ends. You and I and all things are contending with chaos along with God, in striving to fulfil the idea of our essential being. The impulses, feelings and emotions which in the animals are brought, so far, under the constraint of the reason *in* them are in man set loose; that is to say they are anarchic, and have to be reduced to the idea *by* man himself, with the help of God. This is the sphere of practical Ethics and of the spiritual life.

Let us conclude, then, that each determination or idea is striving to sustain itself and effect itself in the matter of its negation, that each mind-matter monad is negated by all others similarly striving, and we shall find in this conception the element of the casual and alogical in the cosmic system. The striving is the striving of God; but only *as the idea* of each, in and through His finite creatures—a striving towards the fulfilment of the “idea” in each whereby alone the harmony of the Whole can be ultimately reached. Each contains the possibility of the Whole.

All, then, is conflict and struggle: this is the plan of the externalisation: a conflict from the primal mind-

matter monads up to man, as he knows to his cost. This struggle is intensified with every ascending category of existence. It is easier to find a perfect piece of metal than a perfect plant, and so on. To what End all this distressful agonising effort and constant failure? Reason can point to a solution only by first showing that the Objective Dialectic contains End or The Good, and thereafter, concluding as to the "character" of ends and their mediation by the honest interpretation of empirical facts. Of this again. The important point to emphasise here is that each individuum, while held bound to the throne of God (so to speak) by the immanent idea in it—the divine affirmation, is set free in so far as it is a concrete individuate to work its own brute will within the limits of its nature, whatever that may be. What we call free will in man might on lower stages of creation also be called (in a sense) free will. This is the character of the Negation—freedom to realise itself; this is to be an individuum.

What is the inevitable result? An element of the non-rational in things and a tendency to chaos, I have said; and this although constantly being controlled to order by the idea in each and in the whole, can never, under present conditions, be wholly obliterated. In Man as a personality we find this painfully illustrated. There is not only a struggle between individual persons, each seeking its own, but a struggle *within* each person between the idea and the negating elements whereby it is a concrete.

The concrete individuum, accordingly, in so far as it is a negation of the idea, acts arbitrarily and blindly for itself, and in opposition to the idea and the Whole; and its acts are not the operation of the idea, but (so to speak) outside it. They are not causal in the dialectic

sense of the purposed. Accordingly, neither in a primordial actual nor in the highest actual we know, *viz.* Man, are they the acts of God: they oppose the divine affirmation in so far as the individual does not subsume the divine affirmation and effect a harmony. As opposed to the idea, the acts of the individuum are wilful and casual, and counter to the Will of God—the idea. Hence God is not the Author of Evil; but He is certainly the Source of it. Only in the idea and implicit ideal is God immanent in His fulness. He is the Source of Evil only in this sense, that His creative externalisation could not take effect, except under conditions of negation, finitude, chaos, evil. And God's work in His Universe, and man's work, is precisely the reduction of the negation to the affirmation, thereby overcoming it. God's life in the universe is, accordingly, an active and strenuous life; and He has thrown on self-conscious beings the responsibility and distinction of doing their share of the world-task.

Further, Time, or an immeasurable "one-after-the-other," is within the externalisation. As externalisation, God exists *as* Motion, Time and Space. God is temporal and finite, as well as eternal and infinite; and the work He has to do has to be done in Time. It is a progressive and evolutionary work; and in so far as God is finite, He is not actualised fulfilled idea, but an actualising *process*. If there be a far-off End, an ultimate result of all this incessant conflict, it can only be either the re-absorption of the finite externalisation into Being-Absolute and, *ipso facto*, its annihilation, or such a reduction into union with the Absolute Idea as will leave the finite still finite, but now the perfected vehicle of the Divine.

If the absolute idea in the heart of Absolute Being is *always* a realised idea, then Absolute Being may go to

sleep, so to speak, and live in a kind of mystic, idle and complacent contemplation of its own mysterious inner activity. This is not the conclusion to which analysis leads me, in my desire to be true to experience. I have to speak of the man-sphere of Being, and it seems obvious that Absolute Being, in finitising its inner nature as a world, involves itself in a constant struggle to maintain and effect its ideas. The Negation imposes this struggle; and I think we must admit that the aspect of Absolute Being presented to us as an actuality is a continuous immanent living process of intention and contention. If it be not so, Absolute Being in externalising itself neither thinks nor wills. The Whole is static—an unmeaning and helpless emanation, and we are driven into philosophic pessimism, and must preach the suicide of Humanity. On the contrary, we are in a living, moving world. God is working in Nature and Man. Man also is working in and through God for the realisation of ends in himself; and that for God and with God.

The bearing of our argument on what is called Evil is obvious enough. It brings Evil within the Divine Method. And Absolute Being as Creative Will, must have been conscious of all this as the necessary mode of its externalised life—the path which the Absolute Idea had to tread in order to fulfil itself in Time and Space, and reach the full manifestation of Itself, which must be a manifestation in and through individuals in whose idea the ideal is immanent.

Position of Man.

Is there no escape for man, then, out of all this? If for the highest functioning of God on this plane of His

Being, *viz.*, finite self-conscious mind, there be an escape, we can look on mere Nature, animate and inanimate, as nothing more than our field of activity and self-fulfilment. The answer is, as we have frequently seen, that in His highest creative effort, God has thrown the actualisation of the idea on the creature, and that physical pains, the difficulties, crosses and despairs of life are for man the chaos of oppositions which he, himself a finite god, has to use for the growth and fulfilment of himself as spirit. Without these oppositions, man could not find the conditions of a self-perfecting ethical process. In so far as he labours to actualise the idea of himself in himself and for himself, he works for God and God is with him, and the self-perfecting spirit will, after the dissolution of its present bonds by death (which kills the phenomenal negation), assuredly find a life with the God in whose likeness it has made itself.

However this may be, let us recognise the fact that God is operative in the idea only, and that the idea is ever striving to reduce the negation in the individual concrete to itself ; but that so far as self-conscious minds are concerned, God leaves them to fight their own battle, and to effect their own conciliation with Him. Man has to *take* God and make Him his own. God assuredly is not unwilling that man should do so ; the gates of His Temple are ever wide open to receive. In truth we are already in Him and of Him ; we have only to open our eyes to see and our ears to hear. God, meanwhile, does not need to be fawned upon ; He stands in need of no ritualistic expedients or ceremonial devices to conciliate a love which is ever there, and which He is ever pressing upon us by being ever present in us. In Scriptural and popular language, He runs to meet the

penitent—the man who has for a time fallen below the idea ; and falls on his neck. He rejoices that one more is saved from a world which is full of difficulties and sorrows—which, alas, could not be helped, if there was to be a world at all. It cannot but be that man, being doomed to so heavy a burden, should call forth the compassion of God, however we are to interpret that word in an Infinite Being. Man has, indeed, a right to claim it. Strange it would be if God were not a God of Love, and if Man who has to bear God's burden had to devise priesthoods and penances to appease His wrath ! Man must not allow himself to be cowed by false notions of God, and in the name of religion to blaspheme His majesty and goodness. The only thing he has to fear is his own defection from ideals—the only sin he has to dread as unforgivable is the sin against the Holy Spirit, that is to say, the call of God within him which he may always hear if he will only listen. If he thinks he can do without God, he is mistaken.

It may be objected that my attempt to interpret experience, while honest enough, leaves difficulties and apparent contradictions unsolved. But my position is that man's "actual" necessarily contains contradictions : this is precisely the state of man or, as I would prefer to say, the state of God on this stage of His evolution—this plane of infinite Mind as finite mind. But it is in my right, if not also in my duty, to form some reasoned conception of the Absolute Whole in which I may find rest and which may adumbrate, if it does not actually yield, an explanation that may be rationally held as faith, if not demonstrable as knowledge. I think that my conception of the

Absolute Synthesis is already given in my epistemology. Whether it be so or not, we are, as thinking beings, driven, in view of the contradictions in our experience, of the failures in nature, of misery, evil, death, and the seeming futility—nay, grotesque absurdity, of human life, to form some conception of the Absolute Whole which will contain the possibility, at least, of such a conciliation of things as shall enable us to remain loyal to the God whom we know in part, and give significance, nay, a solemn meaning, to Man—God's greatest, strangest, divinest and most deplorable work.

No doubt I may conclude that all explanation, even approximate and probable, is hopeless ; but if so, then we add to the indictment against the God of this universe by protesting against this further aggravation of man's lot. Retiring into the scepticism of despair (which is far removed from the frivolous scepticism of the man of the world or the pitiful whining of the decadent minor poet), I must rend my garments and sit down in ashes. It is, doubtless, open to me to stand erect among the ruins of thought and to give myself, as stoutly as I can, to the work which I find lying to my hand. I am one of many beings forced into existence I know not how, and for what purpose I know not ; but I have wants to supply, cravings to satisfy : *il faut vivre*. Let me attend to these and do my best to cheer my fellow passengers in the ocean-ship which comes I know not whence and seeks no haven ; but which is doomed and foredoomed to storms and disasters, wreck and annihilation. This is for a virile sceptic a healthy attitude to life ; and for the practical man it may suffice, because he does not question origins and ends, but accepts the authoritative interpretation of those who say they have solved the

mystery. But to the theoretic mind, which is mind at its highest level of thought (and thought, let us remember, is the essential note of the man-being), such an attitude to life is nothing but a blind refuge from despair. If I cannot have knowledge, I *must* have a belief—a working theory which fits the facts on the whole and justifies the idealism and the Hope, Faith and Love and infinite aspirations with which I am, as a man, so unaccountably endowed. I desire to find some way of looking at human life which, while pointing to Faith and Hope as essential to its fulfilment, is yet *rationaly* grounded in the nature of things, and not a mere subjective phantasy.

I do not speak of God Absolute—

The Power that fashioned Man
Measured not out thy little span
For thee to take the meting rod
In turn, and so approve on God
Thy science of Theometry.¹

This Absolute (call it “The Absolute” or “Absolute Being”) is unknowable as the Fountain of all. I speak of that Absolute as revealed in nature and in the heart and mind of man—Man’s Absolute. I am herè within my rights.

Monism and Freedom.

All philosophical explanation tends to Monism. We have scarcely begun to think the ultimate thought of the world, before we find ourselves inevitably reducing all difference to a One. What I would emphasise is that the Monist who is strict and logical, and yet, somehow, satisfies himself as to the freedom or quasi-freedom of

¹ Dante Rossetti.

man, occupies a wholly untenable position. The One of origin and process and end appears in various forms ; but they are all ultimately the same, whether called physical or metaphysical, material or spiritual. Absolute Will ; Abstract Cause and the Causal chain ; abstract persistent Force ; a primordial generative egg unfolding itself according to necessary law ; Absolute Ego unfolding itself as Dialectic ; Infinite Being stretching out two correlated and inevitable arms—thought and extension, and evolving the world in necessary geometrical sequences and modes ; finally, generative atoms or electrons evolving a universe as a necessary dynamical product—these are all monistic conceptions. And, whether they lean on the material and mechanical or on the spiritual, they must yield a dead universe ; and to speak of the individual, whether molecule or man, in any sense in which the individual as such has a meaning, reveals, it seems to me, confused thinking. What, for example, of the self-conscious Ego ? On a strictly monistic basis man's willing and thinking are in every movement as much determined as the planetary system. The universe is an automaton, and each part of it is an automaton, and man is only the most complex and wonderful of automatons. There is nothing to choose between the terms, Mechanism, Necessarianism, and Determinism (when this last is used as the euphemistic expression for the others). A dire iron fatalism is offered to us instead of a system of individuals with freedom inherent in them according to the category of each in the ascending scale.

Whence, then, this irresistible tendency to the One and the cancelling of the individual ? I have endeavoured to explain it in a previous Meditation. It

lies in the necessity of the subjective dialectic. When I grasp the "imagined" Total (as I must also grasp each particular) as under the dialectic—the teleologico-causal notion in its prime moments of initiation (kinetic) mediating ground (formal and formative) and end—I inevitably grasp the beginning in the end and process, and the end in the beginning. It is a *one* movement, reducing all to the unity of apperception after a dialectic form.

And I find freedom in this very fact that the subjective dialectic—the "idea" of the man-being, is itself the very Form of Freedom grasping all experience; but not grasping itself. It is transcendental. It itself, by its very nature, is the standing protest against the One. But, it may be said, "When you reflect on yourself as subjective dialectic, are you not compelled to include it also in the One?" In a sense, Yes; because, as a matter of obvious fact, I am a part of the universal Whole—in it and of it. But within that Whole I occupy a unique position. As a matter of fact I am within the whole; but I do *not* grasp myself as involved in the one *process* of the whole. I cannot do so, if I try ever so hard, without contradicting my essential nature as given in reflective experience. This would be for the subjective dialectic to stultify itself, to affirm itself and negate itself by one and the same act. And when I imagine that I am bringing myself as pure dialectic (and consequently as Ego) within the series, I am, in fact, only bringing within the *whole* my own *concrete man-nature*, and, in the very act of doing so, affirming "that which affirms" as in its essence a free movement within and above that nature. My hand can grasp many things, but it cannot grasp itself. Given the

free *nisus* which I call Will, and whose form is the dialectic, I recognise this as the idea or essence or "form" of the man-being, of the "notion" of Man; dominant, supreme and regulative in thought and consequent conduct. I start from this in my interpretation. The last and highest term of the necessary finite escapes from the series and turns round on the finite to explain it.

The free activity of the system of individua, again, contains, as its own very condition of freedom, the casual and contingent; it reveals the inevitableness of the casual and contingent generally in the world of time and space experience. And, though in less degree than in man, I find this contingent wherever life is to be found, in ascending degrees. The more of life and mind, the more of the casual and contingent.

Is there, then, no necessity at all? Assuredly there is. But it is not in the "negation" that makes creation possible, but in and of the Objective Dialectic whose product is the "idea" of each individuum and of the whole. In the idea contending with anarchic negation lies the necessity of each and all: and this necessity is just the freedom of each and all, for perseverance *in suo esse*, in the face of the anarchic and chaotic, is alone freedom. Man's idea or form is the objective will-dialectic become self-referent, and his perseverance *in suo esse* is his perseverance in the freedom of the dialectic in the face of an experience to him anarchic and resistant, but which he has to reduce to himself. Meanwhile, the quality and kind of *esse* (the idea) is fixed for all existences, and, consequently, the *kind* of activity; but the *particular activities* that flow from it are fluent and unstable. Negation, whereby the indi-

viduum is constituted, is resistance to the idea: freedom is the victory of the idea; and man puts the laurel crown of victory on his own head.

But the negation, it may be said, even if it be only resistance, must be itself a cause in the Cosmic Scheme and in the life of man. Yes, it is a cause *qua* resistance, but not in the true sense of cause, which is teleological; which is, in short, the Dialectic. True cause lies in the idea which is always itself the dialectic.

The thought of man will always seek to rest in Monism of some kind, if he leaves out of the calculation himself, the thinker, and fails to find as the very essence of thinking, and therefore of himself, a free Will-energy transcending the presentation and flux of things and shaping all to ends which are at once scientia and ground of ethical activity. If thinking or reason or self-conscious mind (call it what you will) be not specifically this, it can only be mechanism—the mechanism of reflex action and dynamic interactions—a merely attitudinal existence at best subject to the necessity of co-action by that which is not itself.¹

The subjective dialectic solves the problem of the opposition of the necessary and the free in the fact that it is this very dialectic which, primarily, freely *moulds* the empirical content of feeling to a harmonious end,

¹ I do not slight, as some seem now to do, the traditionary argument for the freedom of man contained in the fact of moral responsibility. This means that if I act in presence of a moral idea, I *owe* it obedience as law, and that if I act in contradiction of it, I am conscious that it was open to me to have acted otherwise. The Ought thus involves freedom in the fact that it presumes responsibility and capability. This inferential argument for freedom has its place; but only as a support to the sole true demonstration of freedom, which is to be found in the analysis of

which is The Good ; just as the artist also solves the problem by freely moulding matter to a harmonious result, which is The Beautiful.

Again, if the reason of man be Will-energy, whose final moment is always End or Telos, Man is free. The liberty of indifference is a discarded doctrine ; even the willing because "we will," has for its end a motive—the satisfaction of the Ego as bare Ego. It is a free act but it is perverse : it is wilfulness, not will. It is the individual asserting its bare individuality. We find this in the first moment of the dialectic only. When consciousness is a theatre of conflicting emotions, man, in deliberating, is freely seeking End which is to dissipate the confusion. Willing in terms of the self-conscious end or idea is alone true freedom as opposed to wilfulness (which yet must be called a free act in a formal sense—an empty freedom). All other willing, even that which is good, is not free, but only the expression of the dominant impulse like the willing of an animal : and to this the term Volition or (better) Orection, or Conation, I have said, might well be confined. An impulse, though non-ethical, may yet, however, be free, if we deliberately sub-

that which constitutes man as differentiated from all other beings. Standing by itself, however, it is not adequate. To begin with, it sets up in man a distinction between the rational and the moral consciousness. Man-mind is a unity and the moral would have no existence were it not for the striving activity of will-reason in search of the *truth* of man's nature, just as it searches for the truth of things generally ; which truth is the idea, and, as the ideal, contains in it the objective imperative Law which resides in all truth, simply because it is Truth. When in my self-conscious motive and consequent act, I deviate from the truth, my self-blame is, in its essence, the consciousness that I have fallen to a lower plane of Being and given the lie to my essential nature—the utterance of reason and of God in reason.

sume it as *end* of action. Again, a volition determined by a dominant evil passion is a venial offence compared with the subsumption of the evil passion itself, as conscious end: this is the note of the wicked will; and is personal sin. The scientific metaphysical conception of God as necessarily operating in all individua, and the antagonism of this conception to the possibility of free-will, presents a difficulty only if our cosmic theory contains the denial of individua. The denial of individua is monism; and, with the denial, all possible freedom is denied.

Free Will, in short, is the whole subjective dialectic—not any one moment in it; and this dialectic is precisely the plane which Man occupies in the evolution of Absolute Being as finite mind. It is reserved for him self-consciously to accomplish the truth and meaning of himself in and through the Universal—a process accomplished in and for lower beings through their positive relations and by the reason *in* them. That only is truly free which can propound and will its own end. Hence we may say that freedom, as opposed to the formal negation by the individual, is alone to be found in the necessity immanent in the ideal movement which we have to make our own; and this necessity is the process of God-immanent in us, fulfilling us for ourselves and for Him.

MEDITATION XV.

NEGATION AND EVIL GENERALLY.

INTRODUCTION. (1) God seeks the Good: Definition of Evil: The apparent failure of God: Strife and Discord is the Method whereby The Good is mediated. In the world of things God constantly fails; in Man He always fails. (2) The success of the mediating process on the Whole: (a) Evil in Nature; (b) Evil in Sentient Creatures; (c) Evil and Man generally; (d) The Pain incident to the ordinary life of Man. (3) The Good is dominant in the life of Man.

Introduction.

THE question of the existence of Evil in its myriad forms arises, as a philosophical problem, only when Man has in the course of his time-history attained to the conception of God as One and Supreme. Prior to that, man accepts the inevitable, and directs all his strength and cunning to resist or elude the malignant and incalculable forces by which he is surrounded. It is the rise of the conception of a One creative Source, whose nature is presumed to be good as well as all-potent, that raises the question of the meaning of Evil. Inasmuch as subordinate spirit-agencies of Evil only place the mystery one step further back, we have to face the problem, "How is Evil possible if God be One, All-powerful, and Good?" This is the popular way (as good as any, I think) of asking how imperfection in the Divine externalisation can be reconciled with

the perfection of the Absolute Idea—the creative Thought which holds all within it as beginning and end. To man no perfection is visible; *by* man no perfection is attainable.

The question of Evil cannot be evaded, and no theistic cosmic conception (or, as I prefer to put it, no synthesis of the Actual or Absolute Synthesis) is adequate which does not find some way of so looking at what is called “Evil” as to reconcile it with the thought of God as a God worthy of our love, and not merely of a fear-engendered idolatry. The true service of God must, if our past analysis be correct, be a strenuous life in ethical ideals—a life in Him as sum of ideals—a co-operation with Him in effecting The Good. But in vain shall we counsel men to pursue Good as an *end in itself*, if they are not persuaded that they are thereby fulfilling the purposes of an all-comprehensive Being in Whose hands are the issues of life and death, and Who is essentially benignant. If it be not so, then the more thoughtful a man is, the more must he be a pessimist; nay, even assume the attitude of distrust and defiance of a Power which is either worse or weaker than himself.

If we survey the history of the past and the facts of to-day, we stand amazed at the impotence, the devious errancy and the constant defeat of man. Let us take the words of Cardinal Newman (p. 387 of *Apologia*): “Consider the world in its length and breadth, its various history, the many races of man, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts: and then their ways, habits, governments, forms of worship: their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements and acquirements . . . the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his

short duration; the curtain hung over his futurity, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race so fearfully yet exactly described in the Apostle's words, 'having no hope and without God in the world'. All this is a vision to dizzy and appal; and inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery which is absolutely beyond human solution."

If what we have, in past meditations, said on Negation be correct, evil, however we may define it, is cosmic, and man is only the chief of the unpaid creditors in an insolvent universe. The pain is a world-pain: "all creation groaneth". "The evil of sadness," says Schelling, "is spread over all nature—the deep indestructible melancholy of human life." The evil in lower forms of existence re-appears in the higher forms with aggravations proper to themselves, while man, at the top, gathers them all into his self-conscious personality and his infinite capacity for suffering. In him they are focussed, and he has to bear not only his own individual sorrows but the sorrows and sins of a world. The width of his sympathy is the measure of his pain.

What has just been said does not exaggerate the common opinion of reflective men of all ages. Let us, however, try to look at the facts as sanely as we can. The vulgar mind is too ready to call every pain and difficulty and miscarriage of daily life "evil," and disparage the goodness of God for what is due to their own impatience, petulance or cowardice. There can be no existence,

least of all living existence, without its conditions ; and, as we have seen, the conditions of the actualisation of the idea in each is by way of a process through contraries and opposites. This is the cosmic divine method : and we cannot imagine any other that would give us a living world.

- (1) GOD SEEKS THE GOOD ; DEFINITION OF EVIL ; THE APPARENT FAILURE OF GOD. RECURRENCE TO THE METAPHYSICAL POSITION. THROUGH DISCORD AND STRIFE GOD MEDIATES HIS ENDS. IN THE WORLD OF THINGS, HE CONSTANTLY FAILS ; IN MAN, HE ALWAYS FAILS.

I have not laboured to find for myself an interpretation of God and Man to part with the conclusions I have reached when I am face to face with world-old questions. In dealing with the problem of Evil, as with all other problems, I believe I am merely making explicit what is contained in the doctrine of Knowledge and of God.

Absolute Being as creative God, is the dialectic form, *viz.*, Will, Mediating Ground and End. Moreover, He is a God of Love ; for we were compelled by the Dialectic to affirm "the Good" to be the End of the creative movement in the sense of the ideal completion and fulfilment of the idea in the sphere of *Feeling* as well as of fact. Accordingly, Evil may be defined thus :—

- (1) Evil is the failure of God-creative to realise the ideal of the individual and of the whole *on the plane of Being which man occupies.*

Does God truly fail? Our answer must be, Assuredly : and the failure is more conspicuous, the higher

the grade of finite being. I think it is Epictetus who says that God does not "take aim *for the purpose* of missing the mark"; but, without doubt, here and now, the mark is constantly missed.

(2) It is also Evil if the mediating process by which God moves toward the End—the Good—involves more pain and misery to the sentient individual than is necessary to the attainment of the end.

I have just recalled our definition of God-creative (*i.e.*, as Objective Dialectic and as a God of Love) and rested my definition of Evil on that; and I must now also briefly recall our conclusions as to the "method" of God-creative as furnishing the only ground of the explanation of imperfection and discord. That method we found is the method of individuation. Each individual monad is a synthesis of the affirmation (or idea) and the negation of the idea. Each individual, also, is the negation of all others, and each seeks its own by the necessity of its nature. Hence the fulfilment of each monad is by conflict and strife: and all the more that the idea is, or contains, the positive relations of the individual to the "Other and the Whole," through the subsumption of which idea an individual can alone find its fulfilment. Thus our Time-system, in so far as it is a system or order, is, at every moment, the issue of contraries, oppositions, antagonisms. And, let us note that it could not have been otherwise, if the method of the Divine externalisation was to be through veritable individuals: and, were it not such a system of mutual resistances and interactions, we should have a monistic, monotonous and dead, instead of a living, world. There would be only a spaceless, timeless, motionless One.

When we come to Man in the ascending scale, the "idea" is the divine dialectic itself, whereby "subject" is evolved into free Ego, but still, through the sublated empirical subject, involved in finite negating conditions; and man has, as a dialectic or purposive will-reason, himself to fulfil himself. His self-fulfilment is, like that of every other actual, mediated through difficulties, strifes, oppositions within his nature, and in conflict with his environment. The function of the transcendental Ego is (like that of all other individuals) to subsume the idea, *viz.*, the dialectic as determining its true life and positive relations, into itself, and not to remain an arid individual. It is only through the "other" that it can constitute itself a concrete Ego—a "spirit" *supra naturam*. In so far as the human Ego fails to fulfil itself as spirit, it does so through error or weakness: either Will-reason mistakes the true end of conduct or, having affirmed the true end, the initiating energy is too weak to overcome obstacles and give effect to purpose. Thus man is himself the immediate "author" of all the moral evil by which he is afflicted. But God, as I have said, is the Source; for, if we restrict ourselves to this plane of Being and consequently to Time, God has unquestionably failed to fulfil His idea in man. Nature in us is too potent, or the will-dialectic is too weak. Man is not adequate to his task. In all grades below man, God has to fulfil Himself *in* things for things; on the man-grade, He has to be fulfilled in man *by man*, and man is not strong enough. Nor is this all; the dialectic prescribes ends or ideals, which, as infinite, contain the impossibility of fulfilment: and consequently, in his most earnest efforts to mediate in and for himself the ideal, which may be summed up as personal virtue, harmony of being and social justice, man is met by difficulties which

have been in the past, are now, and ever will be, insuperable. The "idea," accordingly, is not only not fulfilled in us ; but the "ideal" eludes us. Moreover, even the best, in the effort to approximate to the fulfilment of the idea, are exposed to strife and pains which are, in a large number of cases, excessive, and such as offend the human sense of justice and mercy.

Accordingly, one might be tempted to say, that while God-creative always seeks The Good—must do so ; yet on this grade of His evolution some other Being opposes and defeats Him. But this is a crude notion. Our philosophy teaches us that the negation is *within* the Absolute Synthesis which we call God ; His method is the method of individua, and involves negation as a necessary moment in a finite and living system. And if strife and frequent failure be the characteristics even of the inorganic, it is evident that these must increase in variety and intensity, as the mechanical categories are transcended, and as organism, life and consciousness are evolved. With every step in the ascent, the freedom which is in every monad becomes more explicit, and the relations of the individual are multiplied. Hence the more of conflict and the more of failure, until we come to man who is his own god by deputy, and concentrates in himself all the antagonisms of all other existences. And over and above these, he has his own peculiar obstacles to completion ; and, toil as he may through the ages, he fails to know and to will the "ought" ; and, moreover, must ever *affirm* the unattainable. Absolute Truth, Beauty and Goodness he projects and strains after, with the assured conviction, meanwhile, that the very affirmation of them as End contains their impossibility of fulfilment, because of the infinite in them. Part of the content of

his life of reason and in reason is thus the proclamation of the *necessary* incompleteness of his life, and the affirmation of a Beyond—that one step more in which the hopeless and necessary contradiction involved in the ideal issues of the subjective dialectic may be resolved. He can, by exceeding effort, mediate his own growth as living spirit so far ; but the utmost he can attain to can only bring him as a bankrupt soul to the verge of a higher plane of the divine evolution. Accordingly, a man of pessimistic mood, oppressed with the records of the past and the discords of human life to-day, might well, so far as he himself is concerned, sink into despair, and accept extinction gladly. But if he does so, he dies as he was born, the supreme contradiction in all experience, a contradiction which resolves itself in the Absolute only by self-annihilation !

God, then, may achieve many purposes *through* Man, but He fails to make possible for man, on this plane, the achievement of himself ; nay more, man's partial success is too often through superfluous pains. If we keep within this circle of Being, we are justified in saying that God in creating man has here and now missed the mark. The very nature and demands of the essence or idea of man make failure inevitable. Man would not be man were it otherwise. This is precisely what the man-plane of Being means and we have to accept it.

Were the world wholly evil, we should be compelled to find its source in powers of Evil, or it might be that we might see in it a blind stupid movement that was indifferent to ends and gave rise without purpose to the series of painful events that constitute the experience of mankind. And were Evil only dominant over Good (in the sense of fruition and the joy of life), we should be

driven to a conclusion not very different. In either case, we should be philosophical pessimists, and, adapting ourselves as best we could to our environment, live without hope in the world. Our philosophical interpretation of experience points to a quite different conclusion. For unquestionably the process within the Absolute is a teleological process. The End, or fulfilment of the idea, is the Good in the sense of spiritual fruition and joy, if not on the present plane of the Divine Evolution, then on another and a higher which is mediated by the present. Were it not so, the failure of the mediating process would be universal. Let us consider whether, as a matter of empirical fact, it is so.

(2) THE SUCCESS OF THE MEDIATING PROCESS ON THE WHOLE.

The success of the Mediating Process in achieving The Good in our experience is merely a question of fact. Let us try to look at this fairly and without exaggeration.

(a) *Evil in inanimate nature.*

Within the world of the inorganic the conflict of "primordial actuals" may be seen; the warring elements find their visible illustration in the volcano, the earthquake and the tornado. But so far as the inorganic is concerned, we have no reason to suppose that the creative end is not attained.

In the organic vegetal world, on the other hand, the aim, idea or law constantly fails. It can effect itself only if the conditions which make possible the law are present; and, as a matter of experience, we see clearly

enough that these conditions are constantly absent ; and yet the individual that perishes is allowed to make an attempt at life. This, indeed, would seem to be the sum : an aggregate of things and relations manifestly exists ; but without the aid of the objective dialectic with its implicit prophecy of continuity and purpose, mere experience could not satisfy us that world-processes and events were being harmonised to any unity of issue whatsoever. If compelled by the fact of the Dialectic of the universe to affirm an issue which is a purposed issue, we are equally compelled, by what we see around us, to affirm that the movement in Time towards the completion of purpose is by way of failure of the process in innumerable existences to guarantee the ends of the individual, and that what the movement does accomplish, it accomplishes through strife and difficulty. The incessant conflict ends abruptly in the dissolution of an organism where we expected the promised completeness of life ; or in regress where we looked for progress. Our empirical investigations might tell us that there is a living " system " ; but we should be at the same time compelled to recognise a pervasive casualty which seemed to be capricious, arbitrary, and even Bacchantic.

And yet, spite of all, the natural system, inorganic and organic, is held together ; it is a co-ordinated whole and so far satisfies reason ; physical science finds its own conclusions practically valid. Not only so ; the system, strange to say, delights in going far beyond our merely logical expectations in order to stir in us æsthetic emotion and ideal constructions. What a beautiful natural world we have ! " Its pictures," says Dickens, " are not in black and sombre hues. but in bright and glowing

tints; its music is not in sighs and groans, but songs and cheerful sounds." Solomon in all his glory was not clothed as one of these lilies.

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair.¹

"The Good" is assuredly *dominant* in unconscious Nature, and *so far* the mediating process, by way of contraries and failures, is vindicated. Let us conclude that this is so.

(b) *Evil in Sentient Creatures.*

When we next, however, pass to sentient organisms we have Evil aggravated by the presence in the animal of various needs that are not satisfied, and by the innumerable pains of disease, accident and death. "Look round this universe," says Hume,² "what an immense profusion of beings, animated and organised, sensible and active! You admire this prodigious variety and fecundity. But inspect a little more narrowly these living existences, the only beings worth regarding. How hostile and destructive to each other! How insufficient all of them for their own happiness! How contemptible or odious to the spectator! The whole presents nothing but the idea of a blind nature, impregnated by a great vivifying principle, and pouring forth from her lap, without discernment or parental care, her maimed and abortive children." Huxley, too, speaks of the "internecine struggle for existence of

¹ Wordsworth's Ode on *Intimations of Immortality*.

² In the *Dialogues on Natural Religion*, part xi.

living things". And yet we see that there is a vast and varied happiness in the animal world; and happiness as fruition is the note of the fulfilment of the idea. I would also point out that the pains of animals are exaggerated by man through what I would call the sympathetic fallacy. Death is no evil to them; they look neither before nor after, and it is obvious that, in the boon of life, God has given a joy in strife and activity which, taken in the aggregate, largely outweighs the evils that they suffer from the inevitable. Assuredly, the success of the animal system *as a whole* must, spite of much apparently useless suffering, be accepted. And we may say this, spite of the fact that there remain evils multiform and inexplicable. Hume exaggerates.

In the sentient as in the non-sentient world, let us then say, that, spite of all we see, The Good is dominant, if not always obvious. The system of Law, proceeding by way of failure, of pain, misery, destruction and death among sentient creatures, manifestly attains its end *as a whole*; for, here as in the inorganic, things are held together and continue; nay, they progress. The discord is co-ordinated, and the visible accomplishment overwhelms us with its wealth, although multitudes of individual beings have perished by the way. Chaos and contingency would seem to be more patent here than in the inorganic world; but yet all is controlled to order on the whole. *That* would seem to be the record of Nature, including in Nature the body of man. Whether creation was an inevitable emanation or an act of Will, it must be admitted that a world, in which all vegetal and animal existences always and everywhere without effort and pain attained the completion of the idea in them and grew into that rounded harmony and equilibrium

of parts which we call fruition, would have been a world asleep.

This, I think, we may conclude: the cosmic process both of the vegetal and sentient worlds is one which can attain its end, *i.e.*, the cosmic order that we see, only through struggle and defeat; and yet, while recognising this necessity, we see destructive forces involving misery and pain operative to an extent which is manifestly in excess of what is necessary to attain the purposed result. If this be so, then there is no use shutting our eyes to the fact that if God be One and Good, He is limited by His own conditions of externalisation. Something happens which He did not "purpose," but which could not but happen if there was to be a finite world at all, and which He is labouring to overcome in order that He may actualise the Good. The head of the serpent is, we may say, already bruised: it has to be crushed.

Now, the attainment of the Good would not mean the cancelling of the conditions of effort and pain necessary to the fulfilment of each or of the Whole, but the making of these conditions possible of fulfilment without superfluous suffering. A rounded happiness of organisms, unachieved by effort and conflict, would be impossible in a world which was a system of "individuals". Let us make up our minds to accept this proposition as self-evident; but let us also face the fact that the mediating process for each existence too often fails, and, even when it succeeds, too often involves superfluous pain.

(c) *Evil and Man generally.*

In man we see evolved an individual which, as Ego, affirms itself and its own supremacy over all natural conditions. But the bare abstract Ego is of no worth.

As mere Ego it is only the first "moment" of "Spirit," as we have said ; it is by reducing the Real of experience to itself and so bringing itself into harmony with its positive relations to the Whole that it becomes truly Spirit : only by so doing does it vindicate its title to the designation. So much is this the case that a man who in ordinary life is constantly determining his course of thought and action with reference to the negating Ego *as such*, is supremely immoral ; and may, in fact, become insane. Only by living in and through the "Other" can a man fulfil himself and vindicate his claim to the name of Spirit. From abstract Ego, he makes himself a concrete personality ; and the fulfilled supremacy of Ego over all is Spirit.

We need not dwell on Man as illustrating cosmic evil in so far as God fails to fulfil the idea in him ; because our position is that the "idea" of man contains the necessity of its own *self-fulfilment*, and if this be so, the idea is truly fulfilled so far as is consistent with his essential nature. The task of fulfilling *himself* as "Spirit" is involved in the idea : Spirit is the immanent ideal. The question rather here is as to the conditions of the mediation. And these conditions are such that we are often forced to say of the human race, "All their years are spent in Thy wrath". For, when we recall our own personal experiences of life, and, surveying the history of mankind, think of the universal pain, moral and physical, it would seem that we can hardly exaggerate the misery and severity of the conditions which contain the necessity of it all. Let us consider the situation.

The evolution of the finite life of God on to the dialectic plane, which evolution is simply Man, carries with it a natural body, as its correlate, with heightened

susceptibilities. Man's physical organisation is such that the pain he can suffer is excruciating, and yet he is pitilessly thrown naked into the midst of hostile natural forces. Then as a being of emotion he is capable of grief that is infinite: he has the fatal gift of memory so that the sorrows of the past may be ever with him and fill him with dread of the future; even his remembrance of the transient happiness that may now and then have relieved his troubled existence is infected with poison, for "a sorrow's crown of sorrows" is remembering happier things. Death, which to the animal is no evil, is to him a dire spectre casting a black shadow over his path—a king of terrors; and he is so experienced in the harsh uncertainties of life that the objects of his tenderest affection are enjoyed with fear and trembling: he must hold them as if he held them not. He is capable of an infinite longing for he knows not what, to which the only response is shadows of shadows. He has forced on him a perception of the evanescence of things and a haunting suspicion of the futility of what he yet *must*, in his most vital moments, pronounce to be the highest and best. He has an intelligence greater than that of animals that he may puzzle himself with the hopeless contradictions of experience; and this intelligence enables him to fight and tear and slay his fellow-man as the beasts cannot do, for now, by the gift of reason, cruelty each to each can be organised with a devilish ingenuity. When we think of all this, are we not entitled to expect some explanation of the strange cosmic event which we call Man? Or shall we in our despair once for all accept the conclusion,

Our life's a cheat, our death a black abyss?¹

¹ J. Thomson.

When we cast a retrospect in order to see what humanity has done and borne through the ages, we find no comfort ; for history is a tragic record of failure, of unmerited misery, and of flagrant injustice of man to man frightful to contemplate. And when we turn from the large theatre of events to the life of individuals, there is scarcely a family that does not yield a domestic tragedy ; there is not an individual who has not his record of pain, moral and physical. He must be a very dull man who does not see things happen that make him exclaim, "Shame on the universal order, if order there be!"

Again, we find that the weight of Evil, and of evils wholly irremediable, becomes more intolerable with the progress of thought and the heightening of human standards. "In much wisdom is much grief and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." The smug, self-satisfied citizen whose material circumstances content him and whose sympathies do not extend beyond his own barren individuality (the continued comfort of which he has insured even after death by signing the articles of some religious association), may go about in easy self-complacency so long as his own withers are unwrung. He leads a "ghastly smooth life," in Browning's words, "left in God's contempt apart"; and there we also may leave him. Where there are spiritual ideals and sympathy with suffering humanity, the bourgeois conception cannot survive for a moment.

This wide and universal theatre
Presents more woeful pageants than the scene
Wherein we play.

Even in moods of finest harmony with creation when

all seems very good, there yet lies coiled round the heart of all thoughtful men the "worm that never dies," and it is only in the hurry of the activities of life that it can be forgotten.

The theory of Evolution, while stating the cosmic case more rationally than any other theory, leaves things essentially as it found them. One of the modern prophets of Evolution, sweeping aside the shallow pratings of his camp followers, tells us of the "unfathomable injustice of the nature of things". We are also sometimes told, as if it lightened the load, that only for the "finite spirit does Evil exist". Such would-be explanations are merely re-statements of the fact. The finite universe is not a by-product; the Finite is *within* the Absolute Synthesis and must be so explained.

Let us note, however, that it is only when we thus generalise the Evil in the mediating process whereby alone "Spirit" can be achieved by man, and grasp all the ghastly details in one conception that what we have said is true. Let us leave this and fairly consider the ordinary conditions of the average man's life.

(d) *The Pain incident to the ordinary life of Man.*

We are, doubtless, quite justified in taking the sum of Evil in the past and present and placing the whole to the account of the Cosmic Process; but so far as each person is concerned, the Evil in the world is to be judged as it touches himself and his own daily activities. If, giving free play to his imagination, a man insists on carrying about with him a consciousness of the aggregated evils of the past, present, and future, and reads

the whole into every failure or misery of his own, he carries a burden which God alone can carry, and becomes the victim of a chronic sadness that may paralyse all his vital energies.

Let us, then, set aside large general statements as misleading. They focus all the evils of all the generations of men in a single point and overwhelm us; we then feel more than justified in pessimism and pronounce the world an evil thing. There is, however, no more evil in the world for each than each in his separate life experiences; and, in the average case, the pains and trials to which a man is exposed are not greater than his cosmic function demands. He has his daily difficulties to overcome: he has vexations and failures to encounter, and these both of a material and moral kind: there are the uncertainties, perplexities and defeats incident to the mere living from day to day, aggravated by disappointments often unmerited, that make him resent the seeming immorality of the system of things: there are the fluctuations of bodily health; the anxieties arising out of his relations to those he loves and that proceed from the sympathy that makes their sufferings his own; the consciousness of his own personal offences against the moral ideal; the awful helplessness which he feels in the presence of the death of those bound up with him in the bonds of affection; and, finally, when he looks beyond his own little round, the prevalence of meaningless and fruitless misery. This is a fair enough record of the experience of all men; but these pains are not, in the majority of cases, greater than is necessary to the self-fulfilment of a being like man.

All pains, however, are purposeless Evil, if we do not accept the teleological interpretation of our sphere

of Being, and the idealistic interpretation of Man. If the pains of life do not afford the occasions for meditating a man's own ideal perfection as self-conscious Spirit, and if, when he surveys mankind, the events and sufferings he beholds and the sacrifice of the noblest that especially afflict him, do not subserve a purpose, the world in which he finds himself must be regarded as the fortuitous result of blind forces originating we know not, and care not, how. All is vanity and vexation and wretchedness. There is no God, and Pessimism is triumphant.

(3) THE GOOD IS DOMINANT IN THE LIFE OF MAN.

We concluded that The Good, in the sense of the fruition and joy of life, was dominant in nature, inanimate and animate: what shall we say of the state of Man? I would answer: It is false to represent man's destiny here as wholly miserable, even if we ignore the spiritual meaning of it all. A wholly pessimistic estimate of man's cosmic position comes either from the self-indulgent who are not disposed to respond to the duties of self-fulfilment, or from the weak and febrile; or, it may be, from the victims of a morbid poetic imagination. There are tears of sorrow it is true, but there are also tears of joy. We may confidently say that to a man possessed of average health (and this is largely in his own hands) who well orders himself as the servant of the Living God, life abounds in happiness, if only he will generously accept it—the happiness of activity in the practical or theoretical sphere, the arduous happiness of striving to harmonise the inner life with the divine idea, the happiness that attends the contemplation of the beauty of nature

and the inexhaustible riches of God's displayed Being, the happiness of doing good and labouring to compensate those on whom the imperfections of this scheme of things have fallen most heavily, the happiness which Art in all its forms yields, the consecrated happiness of human love, and the supreme blessedness reserved for those who see God. Nor are what the worldly call "pleasures" denied the righteous. Christianity is not asceticism; it is the infusion of the ethical spirit, which is law, into the natural system; and the pleasures that belong to that natural system are our birthright, if only all be subject to law.

Then, to man alone among animals have been given laughter and the sense of humour to relieve the oppressiveness of life—surely gracious boons. Nor should we, in summing up the account, forget that a characteristic of the creature Man is that, by a necessity of his nature, he forecasts ends and hopes, and with every rising sun he does so. It is only in unhealthy and morbid constitutions that it is otherwise. And we would ask those who, in the contemplation of the seeming futility of all the efforts of man and the frequent irrationality of things, despair of life and see no meaning in it, to explain this irresistible instinct of Hope. It is the antidote of despair, the ever-recurring proclamation of an end that is good and worth striving for—the daily affirmation of the value and significance of human life.

If, further, we take mankind in the aggregate, let us not, even in our gloomiest moods, shut our eyes to the fact that, spite of the pains and miseries of earth, the sum of unimpeded life is always at every moment of this mundane existence, greater than the sum of pain.

“It is much easier,” says Huxley, “to shut our eyes to good than to evil.” The animal joy of the child contributes to the general sum of happiness ; and as to the young and adolescent, may we not safely affirm, that, save in exceptional cases, no young man or woman is subjected to more evil than he ought gladly to accept, if he is to be moulded into true manhood, for

Not without toil to earthborn man befalls
To tread the floors of Jove's immortal halls :
Never to him who not by deeds has striven
Will the bright hours roll back the Gates of Heaven.¹

The melancholy so often characteristic of youth is the pleasing melancholy of the poetic imagination only ; the true pains and sorrows of existence come later. In reckoning up the sum of felicity we are further justified in pointing to those numerous cases of men and women who seem to be left untouched by evils. Their material conditions give them no anxiety for those dear to them ; the path of life is for them smooth : they have never heard the beating of the wings of the Angel of Death. Moreover, the selfish finite individualistic mind is protected by a cuirass of triple steel from sympathetically feeling the shafts that deal death and misery to their luckless fellows in the struggle of life. Nor, again, do the despair and the tears of things—what may be called cosmic sadness—affect the honest and well-meaning “natural” man as they affect the reflective and imaginative. He accepts his conditions, and lives in them happily enough until things go seriously awry. He asks no questions which he cannot, after a fashion, answer ; he aims at nothing which, with good fortune, he may not reasonably

¹ From the Greek poet, Nonnus, thirteenth Book of the *Dionysiaca*.

hope to achieve. He takes short views, and for the rest accepts the authoritative teaching that "all is for the best". He is not afflicted with the soul-sickness of speculative thought; and if he fulfil his ethical function in the world, he has no more cause to dread the Unseen than the writer of theodicies; for "All service ranks the same with God".¹

It may be objected that to the credit account of world-happiness I bring man when still largely in and of nature, while at the same time holding that his true function is to transcend it. But none the less is the happiness there as matter of fact; and I would rejoin by asking the man of thought and of spiritual ambitions, would he, the sage, exchange his condition with that of the natural man or the pre-historic savage? If not, then the evils that accompany thought and elevation of life must have their compensations and a profound meaning.

Again, we must not ignore the fact that the very distinction of Man involves our having the solution of our own difficulties thrown on us. Social betterment, material and moral, is in our own hands. We can, by the use of our rational endowment and by self-abnegation in the name of a large Justice, remedy many of the material and moral evils that oppress mankind. So to set ourselves against the spirit of evil is surely more manly than the whimpering sentimentalisms of the philosophical valetudinarian who sedulously cultivates a paralysis of will; more worthy than the laboured composition of melodious verses on pessimism as the last word of philosophy.

The reflective pessimist will admit that it is only

¹ *Pippa Passes*.

when our vitality and our rational powers are on a fairly high level that we can possibly think sanely. The Truth, which we then see, we formulate in speech ; and in the darker moments of the obscuration of the soul, we instinctively and wisely cling to the "sound form of words," waiting patiently till once again a living insight takes the place of a cold and formal faith.

The conclusion of this Meditation is that as a matter of empirical fact the Good, as measured by fruition, is dominant in the world ; that obstructions, contentions and failures are inevitable if the world is to be a living world ; and further, that if the function of Man be the moulding of himself as a free spirit, what are commonly called evils are necessary to that end. All that we resent or deplore arises out of individuation and the contraries and opposites through which alone each can fulfil itself in a Whole which is a system. Why this method of God-creative ? I may as well ask, Why creation at all ? Such questions have to be answered by the speculative thinker who vainly attempts a synthesis of the Absolute, not by me. A synthesis of the Absolute must reveal the characters of Absolute Being and deduce the world of particulars from these !

MEDITATION XVI.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL (*CONTINUED*).

The Mediating process whereby Man constitutes himself Spirit:
Pain in all its Forms is Evil only if its purpose is exhausted in
Time—Excess of Pain.

The Mediating Process.

I FEEL under no obligation to write an apology for God's world in view of any interpretation of that world save my own. Enough if I can in any way meet my own difficulties. And I need here only allude to our theory of God-creative, of the function of Man to realise himself as Spirit, and of the conflict and casualty necessarily inherent in a world whose method is the method of individuation. I now take these positions for granted.

If our interpretation of Man be a true interpretation, he *must* be left to find out for himself the purposes of God through the exercise of free reason in the midst of a multiform and (apparently) anarchic and painful experience. He himself has to build every step on which he plants his foot and to erect altars of sacrifice as he climbs.

No thinking man, I presume, will call the conditions under which the idea of Man is to be fulfilled, in *so far as they are necessary to that fulfilment*, "Evil". If man is to be man, it is of his essential nature that he should ever strive and fall and encounter defeat in the actualising

of himself. In the sphere of personal conduct, as well as in the domain of knowledge, he must pay the price of toil for all he hopes to achieve as truth, and then, alas, too often accept the fact of non-achievement. Such is man's place in the scale of Being, and it is weak as well as futile, to protest. Doubtless, if such be the method of man's spiritual fulfilment, then truly he has imposed on him a hard and never-ceasing task. Neither sentimental maunderings about the Good and the Beautiful nor the quietistic resignation of mysticism are relevant to the needs and duties of a being so conditioned. He must resolutely strive to realise himself as a Will-dialectic *supra naturam*, or sink to a lower plane of Being.

Let us clearly understand, then, that the position in which we all find ourselves is one involved in the very notion of Man. So far as our vision extends, he occupies an exalted, though perilous, place in the mysterious life of The Absolute. For he is himself a free Ego, called upon to constitute *himself*, and to give *himself* a place as Spirit in the divine hierarchy of finite beings. Ego as Spirit, supreme over conditions, is not possible save as the victorious issue of a long and uncertain campaign.

As regards the difficulty of maintaining his corporeal existence, it is obvious enough that man cannot afford to evade his conditions without forgoing his specific manhood. Without these labours of uncertain fruit, and the chances and changes of this mortal life, his free personality would have no meaning: while to imagine it existing on other terms would be to imagine a self-contradiction. The general question, then, is, "Given

the Man-plane of Universal Being, does it contain its own justification?"

Of this we may be assured that the supra-natural movement within us which we call Will-reason (the subjective dialectic), and which, lifting the subject-individual out of the series of finite determinations, assigns to us the headship of our system, is compatible only with conditions similar, at least, to those in which we are placed. The same Will which, in its dialectic, constitutes reason in each of us, is, we have seen, at once the possibility of knowledge and the generator of moral and spiritual ideals: out of it also spring Hope and Faith.¹ It is in the very structure of this reason also that God Himself is revealed as creative God whose End is The Good, and that we find ourselves sharers of His eternal life in the finite. We are thus privileged to be fellow-workers towards some divine issue. With a great price, doubtless, we buy our imperial position in the divine scheme, but are we quite in earnest when we curse the day we were born? There are moments of gloom for all; but which of us is prepared to sacrifice his endowment of subtle sympathy with all the riches of Being, the charm of nature whose "infinite variety custom cannot stale"; the susceptibilities of feeling which admit us to all the wonders of God; the heart-pulse that beats responsive to all the divine modes of revelation—the ocean, the recurring seasons, the spectacle of the starry heavens? These things make men as gods in their largeness of comprehension. Then, the thrill of human love is ours, the dramatic intensity of life, the graciousness of it in its finest forms, the search for truth—

¹ See "Death and Immortality," *The Notion of Futurity*.

The patient tracking of the world's great plan
Through sequences and changes myriadfold,¹

the humanity which makes all men one, the privilege reserved to man alone, freely, in the name of the Most High, to proclaim Him in the face of the finite, the imperfect and the false. Which of us, I say, is prepared (save in some passing mood) to sacrifice all this on the altar of indolent ease and animal content—the inglorious alternative? When a man reflects on these things, he is constrained to read a great meaning into himself and to be proud of the sad distinction of having assigned to him a share in vindicating for God, as for himself, the supremacy of Spirit in a world of oppositions and negations.

The processes of Nature and the facts of life are not to be measured by the desires of man but by the end of man as spirit. As regards physical pain, moral suffering, and the bereavements that afflict us: let any justly judging thinker cast a retrospect on his own past, and he will see that not only his struggle for material existence and the pains of the body, but the more grievous pains of the soul, the tears of spiritual distress, the longings for the unattainable, the shattered ideals, the enduring memory of errors and shortcomings, and the sorrows that have wrung his heart in the sadder experiences of life—have all been contributory to his fulfilling himself. Spiritual Law assuredly prevails. He has now, as his days multiply, gathered “the far-off interest of years”: the past evil is now his good. “Happy is the man whom God correcteth,” says the Temanite. The spiritual pain of ethical failure perplexes us most. We know that this increases with

¹ J. Thomson.

the elevation of spiritual ideals and the earnestness of ethical purpose. But if man's essential nature and his function on this plane of Being as understood in these meditations be correct, these pains, as correlative of the ideal, are necessary and in their issue good. The fact that pains increase with heightening ideals confirms our reading of man.

Some of the more timid spirits among men will remind us that there is the load of Sin, not in the sense of actual transgression of the moral law, but of that connate depravity that separates man from God. Of this I would say: the consciousness of Sin is the consciousness of the antagonism in which the finite Ego as an individual finds itself to the universal Spirit. This is an inevitable characteristic of the plane of Being into which man is born, and has been rightly designated by theologians "original sin". But man is not responsible for this; and his task is precisely one of conciliation of himself with the Universal. The method of the evolution of God as man cannot be placed to man's account. It is his actual transgressions that each has to see to. Assuredly he has to suffer for these according to the grade of their iniquity; and if man is to grow in virtue, if his moral culture is to be made sure, if he is to be truly "spirit," it is impossible to see how matters could have been otherwise. We must accept our punishment with dignity. Repentance and remorse well befit us. Penalty we must bear—nay ought we not to insist on it for ourselves as a kind of moral right, in the interests of our own perfection and growth? Whatever may be doubtful in this difficult world, the moral order is not doubtful, and will not fail to assert itself

for individuals as for nations. "Every morning doth He bring His Judgment to light ; He faileth not." But abject despair does not become God's partner in a half-born and inadequate world. Our true penance lies in action. If the condition of our self-forgiveness is suffering and renewed effort after the Good, ought it not to be so? Man's transgression is not his damnation but his opportunity ; it subserves spiritual growth. Our weaknesses build up our strength : our defections reaffirm and elevate our ideals.

In fine, if man be a free finite self whose specific function it is, as Will-dialectic, to know, and in that knowing, to affirm spiritual ideas which yield an ideal of life infinite in its character which he is to strive to make his own ; then, such a being is unthinkable save as subject to pain, exposed to error, to temptation, to deflection from the right path, and antagonism to the Good. Difficulty, failure and the stress of battle, are implicit in the notion of finite freedom and personality. "Providence has willed," says Kant in his *Pädagogik*, "that man shall bring forth for himself the good that lies hidden in his nature and has spoken, as it were, thus to man : 'Go forth into the world ! I have equipped thee with every tendency towards The Good. Thy part let it be to develop those tendencies. Thy happiness and unhappiness depend on thyself alone.'"

All might have been different doubtless : but not *any part* of the system in which we are involved. We occupy a certain stage of the universal Divine evolving life.

It is not happiness as a diffused sense of well-being which is the end of man's activity. The Stoic and the Apostle alike repudiate an interpretation so banal. Let

us clearly understand this. The end is simply the harmonious fulfilment of man's nature as a Will-Dialectic, whereby he becomes a Spirit and attains to that fulness of Being which is blessedness ; just as the end of all other existences is the harmonious fulfilment of their specific ideas. On this stage of Universal Being let us recognise the fact that such an equilibrium, physical and moral, as goes by the name of "happiness" is impossible for a creature constituted as man is constituted. This fact alone would drive us to find some other purpose in man, and to recognise in ethical completeness and the fortifying of Will the supreme end of his daily life. And when we do this, we find that ethical completeness—the virtue that consists in the dominancy of the Ego over circumstance is not possible unless it has obstruction, pain, inadequacy, failure to endure and to overcome. In a world where everything was easy and smooth, man would be wholly out of place, though the amoeba might find itself well situated.

These words contain an answer to those who tell us that if God is infinite, he cannot be good, because infinite power could, from the very first, make all things straight. But if the end proposed be a virile will—the dominancy of a free spirit over all that is not spirit, a creature so exalted could not be moulded save from within and by effort and struggle and suffering. No arbitrary act of the Divine Will could effect this end ; it would be a contradiction. Only by a toilsome process in time can the end be achieved.

Let us conclude then that the conditions necessary to the fulfilment of man as a free spirit are not, speaking generally, "Evil," but Good in the making—the inevitable method of a teleological world of free individuals.

Pain in all its forms is Evil only if its purpose is exhausted in Time.

I conclude that what are called evils in the life of the average man are the necessary steps of a process which is justified by the end. Evil appears only where the mediating process, whereby he is required to fulfil himself, presents obstacles greater than is necessary to that end. In a large number of cases it is so; and we shall speak of this in the sequel. Again, if we limit man's life by the present finite conditions, that is to say, if Death close his history, then, I think, there is "Evil," in the sense of impotence, at the very heart of the world-process. For spiritual ideals are necessarily affirmed, as we have seen, by a creature on the dialectic plane of Being, and these contain their own impossibility of realisation under present conditions. As limited by these, man is in his very essence a hopeless contradiction. God Himself affirms a higher in him than can be mediated here, and thus man is necessarily a failure. The system of which we form a part is irrational; and if it be true that God seeks the Good, He is in some mysterious way unable to accomplish it. A conviction of the continuance of life after death is consequently the very nerve of rational optimism. The Christian conception,

Life is probation; and the earth no goal
But starting-point for man,¹

is the truth. That man (interpreted as we have interpreted him) should "ripe and ripe" only that he may "rot and rot" is an incredible supposition.

¹ *The Ring and the Book.*

I have not spoken of Death itself as an evil, because on this plane of Being it cannot be so regarded. The death of those we love is the supreme sorrow of our lives—one of the chief means whereby the human spirit is proved; but death, as the private lot of each individual, is not an evil. Notwithstanding the dominance of the Good on the whole, we yet see that man is in a distressful and perplexed position, which must, if the Good be the purpose of the divine process, be ended or mended. Death ends it or mends it. Man's destiny as spirit cannot be brought to an issue here. That is certain. And when to these considerations we add the multitude of evils that would flow from the annihilation of death on this plane of Being, we see that man's condition, so far from being aggravated by the fact of death, is alleviated, whether it be extinction or continuance. Death is one of the conditions of our tenure, and it is a condition that is in harmony with all the others, and lightens the load of existence. If the idea of man is to be fulfilled, there must be death: it is simply a necessary step in the evolution of the human spirit; it is birth into a higher plane of the Divine evolution. But if man be what I have shown him to be, then death as end-all, while still desirable, is yet a flagrant contradiction in the spiritual order: it is then, to the speculative mind, the sum of evils: it is a grim sarcasm on man's ideals and aspirations, and makes a mock of the best and highest in him.

Could man be interpreted as only a higher type of animal with a larger power of adaptation to environment than other animals and as concerned only with material necessities, there would be no contradiction in death as extinction; but, on the contrary, it might be hailed

as the too tardy conclusion of his difficulties and distresses. It is the potential greatness and infinitude of man as spirit that recoil from the thought of death as a cosmic insult, if it be truly extinction. But, if there be continuance, we then see that death is an intellectual and ethical necessity for a creature constituted as man is constituted. He exhausts this life : he can see no deeper : he can go no further : for good or evil he has fulfilled the probation of earthly existence : he is weary : he must be born again. Nay, that mankind as a whole may advance, the individual must retire. The mystery of death is not by itself a mystery : it is a mystery only in so far as life is a mystery ; and it is an "evil" only in so far as it is extinction—only in so far, therefore, as it is a profoundly immoral and glaringly irrational event.

The whole spiritual interpretation of life is involved in the answer to the question—

Do we move ourselves or are moved by an unseen Hand at a game
That pushes us off from the board and others ever succeed ?

Are we organic products, like any other, passing from nothingness to nothingness, coming out of the dark and passing into the dark after fretting our little hour upon the stage ?

Come from the brute, poor souls—no souls—and to die with the brute.¹

Were it certain that man was not a free personality ever on his way upward—a way that must be rough and steep, if it is to afford him his opportunity of spiritual fulfilment—if, I say, he were not this, but only a vehicle for a Universal Life, being merely allowed to

¹ Tennyson's *Despair*.

pick up a few crumbs as they fell from the table of "The Absolute," with the added insult of a few necessary illusions, the conditions of human life would be wholly evil; because they would be unmeaning. Were this so, not one word could be uttered in defence of the system to which we belong save by the fawning slave, or by the traitor within the camp of humanity who, stupid in his astuteness, believed he was making private terms for himself with an all-powerful and arbitrary demiurge. If, on the contrary, our analysis of man and our theory of God be correct, the difficulties and pains whereby man mediates the highest for himself are incorrectly called "Evil". Even his errors and transgressions subserve his true life.

It may be thought that the optimism of these pages is too pronounced. I submit, however, that I have tried to look at the facts of life fairly as they affect the average man, and this from the point of view of my analysis of knowledge and of the consequent Notion of God as set forth in previous meditations. If, however, I part with God as a God who necessarily seeks The Good and with Man as I have defined him, then, unquestionably, our universe looms before us as a huge blunder. Human life, heaving with emotion, borne aloft by ideals, vivid with hope, and all this wondrous world with its various beauty, its infinite subtleness of grace and tenderness, is a mask of—Nothing!

Excess of Pain.

I have been speaking of the average condition of man. But what shall we say of the excess of pain so obvious to all who have a sympathetic feeling for their fellows?

Unquestionably we must include all excess beyond what is necessary to the ethical fulfilment of men as "Evil". And yet, even this is not wholly Evil if it can be shown to subserve the Good in the individual who suffers, and the Good for the Race. Sorrows and trials of endurance are often seen to accumulate on the more unfortunate of our fellow-men, but we may say with Shakespeare that "in the reproof of chance lies the true proof of men";¹ for it is in the bitterest experiences that the specific attributes of man are called forth—faith, courage, resoluteness, spiritual greatness. The excess of pain that afflicts some may be said to be

. . . the protractive trials of great Jove,
To find persistive constancy in men.²

It also, I have said, subserves the Good of the Race; for by the evoking of the highest spiritual energy in the few, it extends the moral possibilities of humanity. The sufferers (and we find bright examples in those who have endured, and even invited, persecution and martyrdom) will even rejoice in the sacrifice to which they are promoted. The supreme trials of faith and courage are the means whereby they are elected to the highest spiritual life. "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." "When He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold."³ It is our duty in the excess of suffering to rise to the demands made on us, for our own sake and for that of our fellowmen.

Let us admit then that even in the extreme strain to which the best are often exposed, and in the apparently wilful flagellation of circumstance, we yet find a profound significance. The man that suffers and overcomes

¹ *Troilus and Cressida*.

² *Ibid.*

³ Job xxiii,

is himself thereby elevated to a stoic steadfastness and mastery of fate, while the general human level is raised for all time by his heroic example. He is one of those who are elected to shine forth—

Like a great sea-mark

Standing every flaw and saving those that eye them.

But why, it may be asked, a higher spiritual level? Why not be satisfied with the prosaic morality which secures material well-being? Is it not clear that our acceptance of the excess of pain contains a theory of human destiny without which such excess could have no possible justification? Man must bear much in order that he may be man—as the inevitable condition of manhood, provided he is assured of an ideal purpose in the divine order: we can see the reasonableness of this. But on what ground can we justify the more than enough of pain, a call for endurance and conflict that is inequitable—the demand made on some by the system in which they find themselves that they shall encounter and overcome in an unequal contest? Only on the ground that spiritual ideals constitute the truth of man's being.

Nor is this all; for so close does man lie to the Universal that he feels that his acts and sufferings are not for himself alone, but for God. His spiritual victories are needed for the attainment of some Divine purpose for the whole as well as for himself. In other words we believe in God as Spirit and in man's sacrifice and crucifixion as essential to the evolving realisation of that Spirit in creation, as well as to man's own personal distinction and growth. In very truth, God would seem to need the help of man to bring His creation round to its true fulfilment, which is the full actualisation of Himself in the finite. For it is veritably

Himself that He has committed to the finite. God has given Himself as hostage. The ethical act of each man co-operates with the cosmic movement towards The Good, and is a factor in the actualisation of it. The answer accordingly is "Yes" to the question of Eliphaz the Temanite (Job xxii.): "Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? Or is it gain to Him that thou makest thy ways perfect?"

Let us then not desert God in His difficulty. It is only through a persistent striving after ethical ideals that we help Him and help our fellowmen. Do we not also help ourselves? Or, when we have served the cosmic purpose, are we cast aside as broken vessels? Surely not: the acceptance of an infinite ideal here, with all its toil and repression and pain, is the affirmation deep in the reason and the heart, that we are only on the threshold of life. Save on this supposition, the demands made on me, if I am one of those elected to excess of suffering, are the ingenious devices of an enemy of mankind rejoicing in evil for evil's sake: there must be a disinterested wickedness in the cosmic process: or, to put it popularly, a potent and super-human devil at work whose special object of hatred is Man. Pessimism now rightfully takes possession of us, not merely as a passing mood, but as a philosophy.

It would appear, then, that if we take the idealistic view of man's life and destiny, we can explain not only his life of struggle and hardship in the ordinary case as a necessary correlate of his spiritual position—involved indeed in its very notion, but may even see a meaning in excess of suffering. Where is this excess most cruelly felt? In the highest men and women. It is in them

that the pains and oppressions of life are most intense and overpowering—the distressfulness of physical, intellectual and moral difficulties most conspicuous. Mental elevation, refinement of nature and breadth of sympathetic imagination, so far from bringing alleviation, give universality and infiniteness to personal suffering, at the same time that they give the fatal power of more fully comprehending the universal sorrow. And yet, with whatever intellectual pre-eminence and elevation of ethical thought a man may be endowed, he is as helpless as the humblest of his fellows. Assuming the God whom we have tried to understand in these meditations, is it not a wholly inexplicable fact that the man who most fully responds to His idea should have the greatest capacity for suffering, and that he should often have to pay such a terrible price for realising God in himself; and *that* in a world for which God alone is responsible? Are we not forced again to say: if it be necessary to the far-off purpose of God that creation should be as it is, it *must be* that the platform which we occupy is only a step in the evolution of that purpose—an evolution in which we personally shall partake. If it be not so, and if man “goes down into silence” when he has served cosmic uses, then he is being utilised for the life of God as a means, and is not himself an end; and the conclusion is inevitable—God does not seek the Good: He is little more than a sentient, unpurposing process, indifferent to man as to all else. Or, finally, there is no God at all, and Nature and Man are the casual, mistaken, and abortive products of an unconscious Force (to be called brute Will if you please) which it would seem to be our duty to defy and outflank somehow or other. We

ache in the grasp of an idiot power.

That interpretation of our experience would seem alone truly to interpret which gives it unity by fulfilling the requirements of the reason in us, while sanctifying and ennobling the life of man, and carrying it forward to those spiritual and transcendent issues to which his whole nature points. Thus we are again brought back to Death as holding the master-key of the problem in its hands. Continuity of life beyond the grave is, I have said, the postulate of all optimism, as it is of Christian ethics. If it be not so, then assuredly the non-fulfilment of the idea of man on this plane is wholly evil: if it be not so, God and Man alike go to pieces before our eyes: they stand or fall together. It would be mockery were the vindication of the excess of evil to take place in and for the cosmic evolution alone, whether in Time or out of Time (whatever that may mean). It is *we* who bear the burden, *we* who faint by the way. Shall we not (says Amiel) at death finally "understand, in its unity, the poem or mysterious episode of our existence?" *To us*, as persons, and *in us*, the conciliation must effect itself. We are prepared, as beings of finite reason, to accept much and endure much that the purposes of God in us and in the universe may be effected: we are ready, in a free and virile spirit, to reconcile ourselves to our position within one circle of the mighty Orb of Being with all its necessary consequences: we are proud to co-operate with God; but we are entitled to demand that our ethical perplexities and inevitable failures shall *to and for us* be ultimately resolved. God's honour is concerned. We wilfully, it seems to me, turn aside from the clear indications of general experience and of reason when we refuse to be satisfied, during our brief time-transit, with the

prescience and prophecy so firmly rooted in our nature.

In the discussion of these questions it is not so much man and his future that concern us as God and the meaning of His world. Strange it would be if a cruel and immoral natural system could cast up on the surface of existence a being like man, who could judge and condemn it, who could even shed despairing tears over his unconscious and implacable creator, and be ready to sacrifice even life to remedy His fatal blunders. Out of what elements in the natural system could such a creature come? It is only the fact of Absolute Spirit, itself instinct with purpose and love, and striving, along with man and through man, to reduce a troubled system to the harmony of a great idea (which is Himself) that can explain the fact of man. What could a brute unconscious Will effect save the brutal and the unconscious?

The suns of the limitless Universe sparkled and shone in the sky
 Flashing with fires as of God, but we knew their light was a lie—
 Bright as with deathless hope—but, however they sparkled and
 shone,
 The dark little worlds running round them were worlds of woe like
 our own;
 No soul in the Heaven above, no soul on the earth below,
 A fiery scroll written over with lamentation and woe.¹

So far as we have gone in our meditation on Evil, we have, I think, shown that both in nature and man The Good is dominant; and, above all, that what is popularly called Evil is not Evil in so far as it subserves The Good in the large acceptance of that expression. And further, as regards the chief sufferer and actor—man

¹ Tennyson's *Dospair*.

himself, we find that (so-called) evil is necessary to the mediating of him as spirit. They are involved in his very definition. In short, God as Dialectic mediates ends that are Good through strife, oppositions and failures; and man, also, as the finite subjective dialectic can and does mediate the Good for himself, for the Race, and for God through strife, oppositions and failures.

If Man, although within nature, is yet above nature as Will-dialectic, and if he can be formed to excellence only through toil and suffering and has, moreover, an immanent divine impulse that carries him beyond the present condition of things into a more harmonious environment, we can acquiesce in the disorder of this inadequate world, accept our load, and contemplate, with the eye of reason and the hope of faith, a great Purpose on its mysterious and majestic way. Only an idealistic view of man and his destiny can, I repeat, justify the ways of the cosmic forces: only a Willed teleological world has any significance; only in such a world can there be found anything we can call God.

It is a superficial way of talking to say that a God infinite and omnipotent could have attained His purpose in a single act. God Himself can act only in accordance with His nature, and can mediate His ends only by the means which can accomplish them. We have to emphasise to ourselves the teleological necessity embedded in the objective dialectic. It is this (and not experience alone or chiefly) which enables us to say Error subserves Truth, Evil subserves Good, Contradiction subserves harmony in the Cosmic system. It is thus alone that God, as finite, can evolve His purposes; which purposes are Himself as *All in All*.

Meanwhile, wherever there is End (be it Truth or the Good), every step in the series that leads to it, already contains the End.

I cling, accordingly, to the conviction that my analysis of man and of the method of God-creative yields me the truth ; and, in yielding it, vindicates the method of creation, revealing a God of Love as well as of Reason, and not merely a vague characterless and purposeless "Absolute," still less a blind Will or a helpless and ignoble Sentience. If it be not so, then am I the irresponsible product of irresponsible and fortuitous forces; and my function, as a castaway on this turbulent and deceitful ocean called human life, and as sole pilot of my fragile bark, is to steer my course as best I may, avoiding shoals and rocks, and setting my sails so that they may waft me into the sunlight of happiness wherever I can detect its gleams. My sorrow-stricken imagination I must repress, and leave some dread unknown Power to bear the burden of the painful and unmeaning world which It has accidentally generated.

MEDITATION XVII.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL (*CONCLUDED*).

Superfluity of Pain—The Casual and Anarchy—Faith.

THE contingent and casual arising out of the conflict of individual is, as we have seen, man's opportunity as a free self-fulfilling Ego. Given the truth of the interpretation of experience which follows from our metaphysic, we leave the question of the ages, to some extent at least, answered. We are justified in calmly accepting the inevitable, and even in being proud of our heritage of difficulty and pain and death. But, we are not yet at the end of our indictment—an indictment which, if justified by facts, compels us to modify our view, if not of the nature, yet of the conditions, of Absolute Being as creative God.

We have been speaking of the excess of pain which oppresses those who are yet able, by virtue of a high endowment, to contend and overcome. But what of those who from birth are marked as the failures, the waste, of humanity, and who may be found everywhere, but chiefly in our slums, prisons and asylums? "The soul that sinneth *it* shall die," says Ezekiel. Just and true; but what of those who suffer, agonise and die for another's sin? Children are born into the world crippled in body or diseased in mind through no fault of their own, and are not even allowed to perish. Millions, who escape the worst conditions, yet grow up with organisa-

tions or under conditions that make the true life of a human being impossible for them — men and women whose intellectual and moral failure cannot, in common justice, be counted to them for sin. We have children's hospitals full of cripples and semi-imbeciles. An unheeding and inexorable nature seems to pursue its way relentlessly, here lifting up and there casting down. What Hume says of the animal world is much more conspicuous and appalling in the man-world.

Look abroad and we cannot fail to see that some vessels are *made* to honour, some to dishonour. The individual would seem to count for nothing so long as the race continues; and as if to ensure this continuance, man is endowed with an overpowering sexual passion which is itself the source of a large proportion of the misery of the world, and the enemy of all that is highest in his nature. For such things it would seem to be impossible to find any justification. As to inherited miseries, bodily and mental, it is surely no apology to say that we are thus taught the solidarity of mankind through the ages. This is to sacrifice individuals to an abstraction.

We see also that intolerable suffering falls constantly on those who need it not for moral purification. "The hidden and awful Wisdom," says Thackeray, "which apportions the destinies of mankind is pleased to humiliate and cast down the tender, good and wise." "There be just men," says the Preacher, "to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked, and again there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous." And in the words of Milton—

Just or unjust alike seem miserable
For oft alike both come to evil end.¹

¹ *Samson Agonistes*,

"If," says Huxley (Romanes lecture), "there is a generalisation from the facts of human life which has the assent of thoughtful men in every age and country, it is that the violator of ethical rules constantly escapes the punishment which he deserves, that the wicked flourishes like a green bay tree while the righteous begs his bread ; that the sins of the fathers are visited on the children ; that in the realm of nature ignorance is punished just as severely as wilful wrong, and that thousands and thousands of innocent beings suffer for the crime, or the unintentional trespass, of one."

Unquestionably these are things that might have been otherwise without interfering with the divine purpose which strife and pain subserve in the spiritual economy. Even in the ordinary history of each, many can truly say that in the calamities that have befallen them there were aggravations that might well have been spared, and against which they righteously rebelled. There is often also a tangle in our lives from which we cannot extricate ourselves and for which we are not responsible, and which, demonstrably, serves no good end. Even the sanguine, but ever candid, Bishop Butler says : "We cannot find by experience that all our sufferings are owing to our own follies" (*Anal.*, c. ii.), and (we may add) promote, even remotely, the good of ourselves or others. In very truth, we cannot, even with the best will to do so, see that much of man's suffering (not to speak of the suffering of animals) is other than perverse, arbitrary and cruel—often remorselessly cruel. Much of the pain and the torture that abound are not indispensable to the attainment of any purpose ethical or other, and it is only obsequious adulation that can always say, "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world,"

even if we accept the highest interpretation of the purpose of our present sphere of Being. The discipline of the human spirit is not served by all that we see and that history records. Much of the misery and sorrow of life might have been withheld without detriment, nay with positive advantage, to the purpose of man's existence as a rational and ethical being charged with his own destiny. Even if the grave be not the end-all, there are yet distresses, here and now, whose significance is far to seek. Man is sometimes subjected to extravagant and purposeless trials of his endurance. There would seem to be a spirit of malevolence at work. Even at those felicitous periods of our own lives when things are so balanced that existence may be not only tolerable but joyous, we have to banish from our minds the thought of the iniquities being perpetrated on our fellowmen by the cruel system of things, if we are not to relapse into gloom and despair. Let us honestly face these facts of experience, whether we can explain them or not.

An adequate interpretation of man and his cosmic position not only vindicates, I have tried to show, the usual conditions under which he has to live and work and die, but establish their necessity. Even excess of pain has its obvious meaning ; but why should there be superfluous pain ? Spiritual purposes can unquestionably be served without this. The prolonged physical torture which many of our fellows endure, has no ulterior significance, the moral distresses are sometimes intolerable. The unmerited suffering of animals, unable even to cry for help, is a standing blot on the fair face of creation. It is only the ignorant, the unfeeling and self-complacent

who can speak of these things with patience. Again, death is a spiritual, no less than a physical, necessity we have seen; but why should it not be always a euthanasia? The purpose, the lesson, and the meaning of death would not be affected thereby, save for the better. Consider also the pains of child-birth. That an act so wonderful as the renewal of life should involve effort we can understand; that it should involve pain might be accepted; but that it should cause agony is evidence of the superfluity of evil. It is an easy process, we are told, among savage races. Think of the contradiction here; our duty is culture, and yet culture brings with it a grievous penalty; and this to be endured by women only, not by men!

Yet again: the contemplation of the world in which we live reveals an enormous waste. Multitudes of beings suffer and die that one may live. And when we come to man, whose function is to find God and live in Him, there are multitudes whose native organisation and environment make it impossible for them to find Him. Think of this soul-prodigality. The contemplation of it gave rise to the doctrine of Predestination and Election with the consequent *horribile decretum* (as Calvin called it) of Reprobation. "He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy and whom He will He hardeneth." We in these days reject a doctrine that would refer all to the arbitrary exercise of Absolute Power; and yet the dogma of Election would seem to be the teaching of history. "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, another to dishonour?" "The Lord hath made all things for Himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."

Think, also, of the total failures in the living world—the abortions, the monsters, the idiots. A miserable attempt has been made by Nature in the last-named, and we have the human shape, and that is all. No physiological or heredity explanation of such things can alter the melancholy facts. The Negation in the system of the universe has somehow been too strong for God.

Moreover, as regards the constitution of all alike and the conditions we have to accept, there are many things brutally offensive. They come “between the wind and our nobility”. There are the indignities (to a being of reason, who is capable of sharing the life of God Himself) which are often inseparable from the humiliating incidents of a death-bed, and the crowning contumely of being cast aside into the ground to rot! Such things are *not* necessary to man’s fulfilment. In brief, contradictions are everywhere; and man, himself a bundle of contradictions, intellectual, æsthetic and ethical, is hurled into the midst of them to effect his own life as best he can, naked, unaided and unpitied, beaten, harassed and insulted.

When we contemplate the irrational element—the everlasting No in the finite system, soft words, smooth phrases, are out of place. Strong words and strenuous acts alone fit the situation in which we find ourselves on this plane of God’s evolving Being. Look around, for example, and think of the present-day social facts of what is called an “advanced civilisation”! Think of *la misère*—“a condition in which the food, warmth and clothing which are necessary for the mere maintenance of the functions of the body in their normal state cannot be obtained; in which men, women and children are forced to crowd into dens wherein

decency is abolished and the most ordinary conditions of healthful existence are impossible of attainment ; in which the pleasures within reach are reduced to bestiality and drunkenness ; in which the pains accumulate at compound interest in the shape of starvation, disease, stunted development and moral degradation ; in which even the prospect of steady and honest industry is a life of unsuccessful battling with hunger rounded by a pauper's grave " (Huxley, *Struggle for Existence*). It would almost appear that such things must be, as they have always been. An economic organisation more in accord with the ideal of social justice might remedy many evils, it may be. But not all : the individualism of men is too potent. It is our duty, notwithstanding, to do our best to subdue what is, in truth, anarchy, and to cherish the hope and faith with which man is endowed. These characteristics must have a profound meaning.

I have been speaking of what we see around us. And if, now, we turn to the record of the past and consider the history of mankind, we shall find that God would seem not to rise to the moral standard of man. The record of the way in which the Supreme Power accomplishes the advance of the Race from the abject misery of its infancy by working through the passions and devilry of contending tribes and nations, is too awful for steady contemplation. Torture, sacrifice, the shedding of innocent blood, and misery too deep for utterance, fill the story of the past. Grant that the results for future generations are good (and they are not always so), can this justify the demonic character of the "march of progress"? Can this wipe out the blood-stains, dry up the tears? Assuredly, it cannot.

Was all that we deplore in the past, all from which we shrink horror-struck, in the original "purpose" of God? We cannot, and do not believe it.

As some solution of the mystery, we are told that God is not the author of evil, but only "permits" it. But if it be permitted, it must be a fact and power in the cosmic scheme. The ebb and flow of the tide of human progress is the advance and enforced retreat of God, like that ebb and flow in organisms which we call Progress and Reversion. Let us face that fact. If we say that Divine purposes which are good can be attained only through the superfluous physical and moral pain which is rightly called Evil, surely it follows that they cannot be *otherwise* attained. Evil, defect, negation, are not, says Bishop Berkeley, the *object* of God's creative power. True; but this can only mean that there is a *necessary* element of evil in creation; in other words, that creation—externalisation of Absolute Being is impossible save as embodying, as a matter of fact, the principle of Evil. Injustice, nay, even implacable cruelty, beyond the limits necessary to effect the Divine End seem to be everywhere.

Doubtless, if the cosmic method be that of Evolution, we find, as I have already indicated, a partial explanation of much that perplexes us. If Absolute Spirit, contemplating its Idea as wholly rational and good, passes into creation, it can do so (so far as we can see) only as a finite in extensity of parts and a finite in protensity of parts—both alike a negation of its One-ness. Consequently, it is only as a "one-after-another" that the Divine Idea can make itself an actuality in each and, through each, in the Whole. If there be no evolution in Time towards the actualisation

of the Idea under finite conditions, then, either the movement we see is not a progress at all, but an aimless repetition of the same that leaves things neither better nor worse; or, it is a movement towards the worse. On the former alternative, what men call God is either impotent or idly indifferent; on the latter, He is evil continually. It is only by accepting the actual as necessarily involving Negation, and Time as part of the Negation, that the imperfection of the finite and the fact of progressiveness can be reconciled with the Absolute Idea. Evolution is movement: it is the naturalistic generalisation of the metaphysical "Becoming". All is Becoming: all moves either forward or backward. Forward unquestionably, and whither? To the fulfilment of the divine Idea doubtless; but through difficulties and obstructions many. Thus we have a living world and a living God. But the failures, pains and injustices in the process are more than is necessary even to a scheme of things in which struggle and progress are inherent.

Is it not evident that the contingency and casualty in our system have outrun their function in the whole, and set up for themselves as wild, Bacchantic, purposeless forces? We may call this cosmic fact the spirit of Evil or the Devil. Doubtless this, too, is *of* God, but it is not *by* God as Dialectic. It is the Negation which makes possible a finite system of individua whose necessary liberty would seem to pass into licence.

The Casual and Anarchy.—The only conception which contains an explanation of superfluous pain lies, as I have said, in this that in the fact of negation (the conditioning moment of the Divine nature as creative) there is chaos caused by the clash of individua. Meanwhile,

let us remember that the negation in the Absolute Synthesis is not an act or affirmation proceeding from God as Dialectic but only an inevitable "condition" emanating from His absolute Being as determining itself into individua; the negation is *in* the affirmation, and has to be encountered and overcome by the Affirmer in the fulfilling of the Absolute Idea in Time, or out of Time. The divine movement has to fulfil itself in and through a stubborn anarchy; what I have called "cosmic sin". The idea in each, the divine affirmation, will ultimately become identified with the individual and, through the individual, with the whole; meanwhile, the casual which the causal does not yet wholly control, the demonic which resists the divine, is the way of man's world. The Negation has been let go, so to speak, out of the Being of Absolute God as condition of the possibility of creation, and cannot be wholly arrested in its fateful and stupid career. Herein is the devilry, the "something that infects the world".

It would appear then that this world is not the image of God; but is a system of individuals, each in search of its own, through conflict, struggle, destruction, death. And yet the limits of each are determined by the idea which *truly is it*, and beyond that it cannot go: thus is the universe saved from total wreck. Meanwhile, the evidences of the triumph of the Good, the Beautiful and the True, are all around us.

The moment we realise that, whatever God may be in His absolute self-identity, He, as creative, could not fulfil Himself as finitised save through discord, pain and death, and that we men, his highest product, have to accept this, and to fulfil His ends in ourselves and in others — nay, also in nature itself, and are needed to

co-operate with Him in the overcoming of necessary Evil, we become so far reconciled to our fate: at least, we seem to understand it. But if that fate involve our own annihilation when we have done our work and suffered (I speak of those who are the victims of the system), then we must fail to see that God is Love, and be content to reconcile ourselves to a position that defies all ethical interpretation. That we, who know that we are Ends in ourselves, should be used up as means for God's purposes and tortured in the using, is a conception that leaves us forlorn indeed: it alters the whole aspect of life and duty, while dethroning God from our hearts as unworthy of either love or worship. "If I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage it me?" If all the toil and suffering of self-conscious beings end in extinction, they may yet, spite of this, courageously carry on the contest, but it must be with sorrow and hopelessness and a silent protest. The braver sort, recognising the pains of their fellows, may set themselves to remove these, but, in so doing, they must feel that they are combating a demonic or blind force that permeates all existence. Good and great men are all we can have to take the place of a now discredited God. And these, doubtless, will teach us to take to ourselves the words of Pindar: "Forasmuch as a man must die, wherefore should one sit vainly in the dark through a dull and nameless age and without lot in noble deeds" (*Olymp.*, i., 82). Man, in any case, must not part with his distinctive nature, and must fulfil it, come what may. But this is the point—that his judgment of the whole (call it a Divine or a Demonic or a blind Will-movement) must be to condemn.

On the other hand, if the cosmos be truly a spiritual cosmos and the end of all be the realisation of the fact and meaning of Spirit in the highest organism, Man, so that therein God may be fulfilled, the system is so far justified ; but not, even then, wholly. The stunted tree evokes our sympathy ; the toad, crushed under the passing wheel, whose head still lives and blindly feels about for help ; the young birds in the nest who call in vain for the mother whom the hawk has devoured ; the father who sees his children the victims of incurable disease ; the man who is fated to a cell in a madhouse ; the child with a rotten inheritance appealing for relief that can never come, are not justified. *All* creation travaileth. There is something amiss.

I seem to be forced to the conclusion that God is a Spirit, but a Spirit in difficulty. I find that I must modify my inherited conception of God ; and it is only when I do so that I seem to approach the understanding of the great enigma, and in doing so, affirm, with more emphasis than ever, the high position of the spirit of man in the hierarchy of Being. God Himself is, I repeat, in a difficulty from which, it may be presumed, He is slowly extricating Himself and us. His life is, in truth, a strenuous life. He sympathises with us ; we also must sympathise with Him. Every victory we register is a victory for Him. This is not rhetoric. If the One of Being was to pass into the Many of existence, there was no other way than that we see. The Creative Energy cannot, even if it would, escape these contradictions. They are inherent in creation—at least in this Man-Orb of Being—this plane of the Divine Evolution. The principle of anarchy is involved in the creative

movement ; but it is not "purposed". God does not "*willingly* afflict". If we are not only fellow-workers, but fellow-sufferers, with God, we then become reconciled with the universe. We gather ourselves together and fortify ourselves with a great Faith, a generous Trust and a resolute Will.

When we think of these things, we realise the greatness and difficulty of the task assigned to men. Men of science must toil to make nature the friend of man : the Healer of the body must pursue his self-sacrificing labours to defeat disease ; the statesman must ever strive to bring about better social conditions : the spiritual teacher must labour to fortify the moral energy of man, to conciliate him with God, and to console him in his sorrows : the artist must create ideals of beauty : the philosopher must ever search for ultimate truth. Man's life must be a strenuous life, as is the life of God. God looks to him to save himself, and in all his relations finite and infinite to give true content to the Absolute Idea : and he has equipped him for this task.

Our duty, then, though we are unconsulted partners in the present scheme, is, I think, plain enough. We have to face the fact of failure, of evil, of inevitable misery and cosmic devilry, without exaggerating these ; on the contrary, seeing the end in the means. Our duty, I say, is obvious enough ; it is to know God in His world and to fulfil His idea in ourselves and in all sentient creatures, bearing our yoke manfully since we are men. To stand aside, and, under the cloak of an effeminate despair or of a self-satisfied cynicism or even of a self-indulgent seductive mysticism, to affect a certain superiority to actual and inevitable conditions is the very suicide of manhood. Out of the strong come forth

steadfastness and loyalty ; and even a certain sweetness : nay, also, the humour so nearly allied to tears. By every ethical victory which we gain for ourselves or our fellows, we help to build up the universal Kingdom of Spirit. He who calmly accepts the fact of contradictions and imperfection, superfluous evil and demonic forces, and courageously faces the fact, has already partially overcome it. Not, however, by entrenching himself against the multitudinous forces of the Devil will he overcome ; but only by going out to meet him in the open field. If men stand together, they can do much for themselves and for God. They have already done much to reduce chaos to order ; and that is “ but earnest of the things that they shall do ”.

It certainly seems to me that our faith in the ultimate issue and our ability to bear present evils are strengthened by thus fairly recognising cosmic anarchy as ever resisting the entrance of the divine Spirit, ever defeating The Good. If it be that the great God Himself is engaged, here and now, in a very serious business, then even to be a humble private in His advancing hosts is a distinction. There will always be a certain proportion of weak combatants to be pitied and helped, of traitors to be shot, and of craven spirits who slink into the rear with the baggage under cover of an easy scepticism as to the conduct of the campaign, or a supercilious and egotistical superiority to their fellow-soldiers. Not to such have the advances of humanity in the past been due ; but only to those who have been faithful to ideals and pursued them to the end.

In fine, let me recur to what I have so often said, that, when we contemplate evil rampant in its dire

and myriad forms among the sons of men, we are forced to the conclusion that Man represents but one plane in the evolution of the Life of God and, as only one step in an evolution, he is, *ipso facto*, incomplete. "Suffering," says Huxley, "is an essential constituent of the cosmic process." Humanity bears a cross. In what we see, a "further" is involved, if the End be The Good. And when we contemplate the frequent superfluity and cruel purposelessness of evil, the contemplation forces on us the further conviction that the Divine Life has, at this stage of its unfolding, to encounter difficulties which it cannot wholly overcome, but which the actual good we see and the ideals of reason force us to believe mediate a higher and better. We men are sharing the pain of God Himself: we are partners in His cosmic difficulty. Our personal hope is in death, our victory is the grave. This world is a promise; our life an infancy; our knowledge in the last resort a prescience.

Let us have faith that the absolute idea—the initiating all-comprehending Thought—contains the issues of the finite. The finite is as negation *within* the Absolute Synthesis; it is the method of procedure whereby God lives, and can alone live, as a revelation in Space and Time. There is a necessity in the method; but it is a necessity from within, not a coaction from without. The finite, vast as it is, is not so vast as the Infinite Being in whom all is One. The finite is within Him, and all is being worked out by Him into a conciliated Harmony when God shall be all in all. Finite things and ends will yield to the power of the affirmation, having attained to the fulfilment of the idea by strife and trouble, through which alone it was possible to attain to it. Meanwhile, we must accept Pain as the

path which all must tread if they would realise themselves in God and for God.

Consider, finally, the alternatives : The world is a world of Divine purpose and that purpose is The Good, as the Dialectic tells us ; *or*, there is no purpose either good or bad : man simply finds himself in the midst of an unintelligible whirl of atoms among which he has to fight his own way, seeking (foolishly) to preserve a painful life which he knows must soon vanish into nothing. These are the alternatives. Our interpretation of Man, his function and destiny, resting, we believe, on a scientific analysis of his characteristics and his experience, leads us inevitably to the higher and better conviction. And yet, at times, when the pulse of life is low in us, we cannot rid ourselves of the suspicion that it may all be otherwise ; and the supreme trial of the thoughtful spirit is precisely that temporary eclipse to which the soul of every thoughtful man is subject, and which even Christ, the prophet of Humanity, shared :—

The sense that every struggle brings defeat
Because Fate holds no prize to crown success,
That all the oracles are dumb or cheat
Because they have no secret to express ;
That none can pierce the vast black veil uncertain
Because there is no light beyond the curtain ;
That all is vanity and nothingness.¹

It is just at this crisis of despondency that we find in Man a wonderful thing—his peculiar distinction—the emotions of Faith and Hope which, like wings, support his sinking spirit, bearing him through the temporary darkness into the regions of eternal light. This

¹ Thomson.

ideal impulse is no vague sensuous imagination, born of organic desire, but emerges out of the very heart of the subjective dialectic and *will not be repressed*. It ever points with steady finger to a future in which Faith will become sight, and Hope will be fruition. Surely we are a perverse generation if we refuse to accept the utterances of that in us which distinguishes our plane of Being, *that* by virtue of which we are men and which stirs in us the very questionings to which it already, in its inmost constitution, contains an answer.

MEDITATION XVIII.

DEATH AND IMMORTALITY.

Introductory Considerations: (a) Dissolution of Body not necessarily dissolution of self-conscious Mind: (b) Ego presumably continues to live after the death of the body: Evolution of Ego as transcendental: (c) The common conviction of Mankind: (d) The recoil of the whole of our nature from Death when we truly see it as the supreme contradiction in Experience. A. *The Scientific Argument*: (a) The Argument from the genesis and nature of Ego. (b) From the nature of the Will-dialectic generally. (c) The Moments of the Dialectic. (d) The notion of Futurity comes from the Dialectic. (e) The Infinite in human Love for Man and God. B. *Further Considerations*: (a) Contradictions: (b) Personal Identity and the nature of the Future Life generally: (c) Conditions of the continuance of Ego after death: (d) Coercive demonstration impossible. Conclusion.

Introductory Considerations.

It is in the analysis of the Dialectic plane that I have found a unity of principle that lightens up for me (it may be for a few others) knowledge, ethics, æsthetics, religion. There would seem to be one meaning in all the higher activities of the finite Ego. Let us now see whether the Dialectic has any light to throw on the darkness of Death.

There are planes of finite mind: this is a proposition which may be said to have run through these discussions. Each plane has its own characters, potencies

and potentialities. These planes are the evolution of God *as* finite mind. Now, it would be as arrogant as it would be unscientific to doubt the continued progressive Divine movement beyond and above the plane occupied by man. But the question for each of us is not, Does the man-plane evolve into that higher plane which is predicted in it—a higher evolution of the life of God ; but, Does the individual man-person, himself and as a self-identity, pass into this higher plane, either necessarily or, it may be, on certain conditions of fitness ? Is what we call death the end of personal identity, or simply a mode of transition into a higher existence ? I have dealt with this momentous question indirectly when speaking of Evil ; but it demands a separate and closer treatment.

(a) *Dissolution of body not necessarily dissolution of self-conscious mind.*

Many arguments can be adduced, and adduced effectively, to show that, given the existent constitution of man and nature, Death is, *under present conditions*, not only necessary, but desirable, and that it fits into the existing scheme. None the less is it the most alarming fact of that scheme as its closing event ; for, although the system may necessitate death, how are we to explain extinction so as to harmonise it with those other facts of our system, rational and ethical, on which we have so often dwelt ?

The phenomenal or modal is, we have seen, at once the negation and vehicle of Universal Being and Dialectic : it is that whereby it is possible to constitute of Being as determination (idea or essence) a “determinate” or concrete

individual. Self-conscious mind is thus (to use Aristotelian phrase) the "Form" of the body of man. The "form" is involved in body : that is to say, it gives itself to the senses through spatio-motor qualities organised after a certain manner, and seems to live, grow, decay and die along with the phenomenal organism. And we should accept death in the sense of extinction at once as a matter of course, were it not that the peculiar attributes and cosmic distinction of the man-being give us pause.

The opinion that because the highest expression of Universal Mind, *viz.*, the self-conscious mind of man, is *in* body and through body, it is also body and *by* body, our whole previous argument has set aside. It would be as rational to say that the phenomenon is the cause of its own essence, and therein to proclaim our own complete enslavement to Sense and to the flux of a phenomenal series. We may, therefore, dismiss the hypothesis that the dissolution of the phenomenon *necessarily* carries with it the dissolution of mind (essence, idea, form) of which the phenomenal is only the temporary display.

Nor does physiological science advance any effective argument against such a conclusion. The interweaving of life and mind with physical conditions is granted by all ; and the primitive savage who saw death follow a blow on the skull knew all that the present-day physiologist knows. The more detailed expositions which we now have of the relation of mind and life to its physical incorporation do not affect the question at issue in its broad aspects. It was precisely because the abolition of the physical *seemed* to involve the extinction of the individual that the question of the continuance of the spirit of the dead man originally arose ; and the

(so-called) scientific argument of the biologist merely re-states the old question in terms of present physical knowledge. We may accept the words of Huxley,¹ who says that physical science "effectually closes the mouths of those who pretend to refute it [the continuance of the human spirit after death] by objections deduced from merely physical data".

But even so, it is possible that, just as the individual in its mind-differentiation and its further phenomenal equipment is always a negation of the All-One, and exists (in so far as it is a determinate and independent entity) by virtue of this negation, the dissolution of the *phenomenal* vesture is the dissolution of that whereby an individual mind is constituted as a "for-itself"; and that the self-conscious "person" thereupon loses itself in the infinite ocean of Unconditioned Being. And it might be held that the final issue of the Divine externalisation must be precisely such a return into Absolute Being, the initiating impulse of creation thus falling back into identity with its source. God, as creative, it might be held, lives as an eternal outgoing and return. Now in this universal process the human spirit would share the fate of all else.

On the other hand, while all living individuals alike vanish and have their places taken by others of the same kind, the mere fact that one, and only one, can *question* its own dissolution and affirm its own continuance, compels the scientific mind, in the interests of mere exactness, to pause. The more "scientific" a man is the more is he open to facts; and to the larger minds, taking a comprehensive world-view, it might naturally occur that, perhaps all creation is a spiral, and that the

¹ *Science and Morals*, p. 143.

topmost turn of the spiral curve, which is capable of questioning and denying its own extinction, may *ipso facto* contain, in the very immanent energy that effected the topmost turn and propounded the question, still one turn more that carries the curve into the Unseen. This, assuredly, is a biological conception at once reasonable and rational; quite apart from the necessity involved in the very idea of Man.¹

(b) *Ego presumably continues to live after the Death of body. Its evolution as a transcendental fact.*

If all individua below the man-plane perish when the body of each dissolves, on what ground do we maintain that man contains, if not the necessity, at least the highest probability, of continued life? The first answer that occurs, even to the unthinking, is (as I have above indicated) that man is not an individual like other individuals. It is the individuation of the dialectic in the attuent subject, we found, that constitutes it Ego. The free-will movement, generated in that which is *already conscious mind* on a certain plane, lifts it into a higher category—the category of self-affirmation. The conscious subject becomes *self-conscious* as a Ego, and the contemplation of the mighty movement never fails to call forth our wonder. A small and apparently insignificant part of the Absolute Whole stands erect and itself proclaims its *own* identity—*I am I*. By a pure act of Will, subject is prehended and affirmed as equal to itself—a self-identity which no sophistical reasoning can ever sub-

¹ Of course, if a man's general philosophy has concluded that because mind and matter are co-variables, therefore matter productively functions life and mind, the disintegration of the matter will necessarily be the annihilation of life and mind.

vert ; and this Ego has, through its constitutive dialectic form of pure activity, to mould all experience and direct itself to self-projected ends.

This self-conscious subject is not a bare unit, save when abstracted. The concrete whole of recipient and reflexive attuition is carried forward into it and constitutes, along with the new revelations of the dialectic, the "matter" of its being. Every step in evolution carries the lower step with it—sublates it. My personal identity is meanwhile assured, for it consists of the transcendental Ego (product of Will-reason)—the first "moment" of concrete personality—along with the infinite wealth of experiences, inner and outer, which I hold and determine to those ends that, as motive ideas, generate the forces of the life of man. Ego comprehends the universe in its sweep, and affirms and makes its own the very God of the universe. It is in conscious kinship with the Universal. It is admitted to the fact of Absolute Being and to its infinity of life as a finite world. It shares with God the magnificence of His creation ; with Him it walks the waters ; it wanders among His stars as a higher being than they, and tells them their courses ; it measures His handiwork in the measureless spheres ; it identifies His footprints before Man was ; it makes its own the dead past and projects the future ; it penetrates the secret counsels of Deity, till it reaches, in its restless daring, the very gates of Eden where the flaming sword proclaims "thus far and no farther". Thus it is that Ego realises itself as "spirit" through the finite conditions of Time and Space ; and, in its highest mood, dares to claim a certain equality with God Himself.

It is obvious that we have here before us a new

creature of high distinction ; and, were it not that we see the body of it dissolve and the self-conscious entity thereupon disappear, we should certainly conclude that the affirmation " I am I " was the utterance of that which must live for ever.

(c) *The Common Conviction of Mankind.*

And such has been the instinctive belief of mankind.

The tendency, and in the case of man the conscious desire, to go on living is involved in the very notion of life itself ; and, accordingly, in discussing the question of immortality, we cannot rest an argument on this alone. It has, however, its own value as contributory to a scientific treatment of the question. Our pre-historic ancestors saw that the *body* was dead, but they were convinced that the true man still lived as a ghost. Anthropology teaches this, and ancestor-worship bears witness to it. The conviction among primæval men of the continuance of the dead "man" could scarcely, however, be called an act of reason : it was rather the result of that recoil from nothingness which comes from our whole nature. Self-conscious life is vaguely felt to negate in itself the very possibility of death, and to proclaim that extinction is an illusion. The affections, moreover, of the survivor decline to entertain the thought of the annihilation of those bound in bonds of fellowship with him. Such is the instinctive impulse of man ; and the continuance of life after the death of the body is the teaching of almost all religions in forms more or less crude, quite apart from the argumentation of philosophers.

It is only in organic beings endowed with self-

consciousness, that the affirmation of the continuance of life can arise. The most highly developed animal intelligence lets the death of another pass, and gives no sign of disturbance beyond the vague and brief feeling of a want caused by the removal of that response from its fellow animal to which it has been accustomed. Not so with self-conscious intelligence; and this assuredly is a significant fact. If this projection of mind-life into an unseen future, after the phenomenal appearance has vanished, arises only in self-conscious organisms, it must be due to the fact of self-consciousness; in other words, to the transcendental affirmation of self-identity (issue of the subjective dialectic), and that other characteristic of self-consciousness which enables man to contemplate a past and forecast a future—a characteristic also, we shall see, involved in the dialectic.

Nor do we find this belief or, rather let us say, conviction, of the continuance of the human spirit confined to the crude mind of the savage with his undeveloped self-consciousness; for, as civilisation and culture advance, the instinctive conviction is strengthened.

(d) *The recoil of the whole of our nature from Death, when we truly see it as the supreme contradiction in Experience.*

Let us then look more closely at the Fact and the Question as they present themselves to us in these days as beings of reason, emotion and a certain culture. It appears to me that the clear *seeing* of any fact in our experience in all its naked reality, and the rejection by our *whole nature* of one of two alternative interpreta-

tions, is a potent argument in favour of the affirmed alternative; at least in a world where the Good is the ultimate aim of the Divine activity, even if the Good be merely fulfilled End emptied of emotion.

When first we face the fact of death, our feeling is like that of the pre-historic savage, one of incredulous surprise. Nothing is so awful, nay, alarming (save perhaps the first clear realisation of oneself as ego), as the thought of the extinction of Self. A man who dwells on the thought, cannot believe that the issue of the inner toil and striving to build up the spirit as an energy supreme over its natural conditions, should be the victory of these very natural conditions; the victory of the Grave. Can the Ego, whose very function it is to control nature out of which it has emerged and which has lived a life of resistance to the solicitations of nature, be doomed to fall back into nature?

The question is felt by thinking men to be a question as to the cosmic significance, dignity and ethical meaning of the human soul, and the rationality of the present system of things: it is not prompted by the mere vulgar desire to go on living.¹ It is not death, but the "fact that there should be death," that concerns us when we think of it as extinction. If it be extinction, it is an irrational event.

The moment the self-conscious mind of man becomes alive to the fact of the infinite God in which and of which it is, it seems to itself to share in His life and to

¹ In certain moods of mind a man may even resent the continuance of life beyond the grave. He has had enough of it here. The prospect of immortality may be a burden too great to bear.

be involved in the eternity of the Eternal Spirit. This so elevates man and gives him so high a distinction in the Divine scheme, that to imagine his annihilation is like denying God Himself: God and Man seem to die together, so to speak. Our highest life becomes a futility. We feel that the bond of the finite and infinite cannot be thus rudely broken without involving humanity in ethical bankruptcy and religious nihilism. Hence it arises, that it is as a general concern for humanity, and as part of the philosophic interpretation of the system which man as a free Ego sums up, that the question of the continuity of self-conscious life ever keeps recurring. This is the essence of the whole question—its ethical and spiritual import in an ethical and spiritual Order. We even ask, Is the death of spirit thinkable without involving a logical and ethical contradiction in the very heart of the system to which we belong? That, I conceive, is the ultimate problem; and the answer must depend, manifestly, on our interpretation of the system as that is gathered up into Man—its head and front and End. Of other apparent contradictions we know that they are resolvable, and indeed already resolved, in The Absolute, for the simple reason that things are existent and actual. But this supreme contradiction, if it is to be resolved at all, must be resolved *in the person of each man*, and elsewhere than on this plane of Being; and the personal question becomes part of the larger question of the reality of the life of finite spirit outside the world of sense.

One of the most singular things about death is that so few are capable of realising it, save when face to face with it; and not always even then. Now those, who do

not vividly realise death, seldom think of immortality save as a remote and pious opinion, although the anticipation of it doubtless operates sub-selfconsciously (as most of our motives do) and determines to a certain extent the world-view and personal activity of even the most callous. The life with which we are endowed is so very living that it practically from day to day denies death, and goes on, with unreflecting complacency, seeking earthly and finite ends as if the final catastrophe were not assured. One reads of death, admits the fact of death, and has seen dead men; but this is not to realise death. Nor is the contemplation of one's own death, nay, not even the act of dying, to realise death in all its dread significance. In the vast majority of cases the mental attitude in the act of dying is well expressed by Milton in his *Samson Agonistes*—

Nature within me seems
In all her functions weary of herself;
My race of glory run, and race of shame,
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

He alone has seen death face to face who has stood by the cold, unresponsive body of one whom he has loved. To gaze on a dead friend, a dead child, a dead lover—this is to realise death, and to be overwhelmed by the dumb mystery of it. That the vital frame which was eloquent of all the graces and charms of life should lie in “cold obstruction and rot”—“the sensible warm motion become a kneaded clod” while the animating spirit vanishes and its place knows it no more, seems to be the crown of human misery. The effulgence of reason in the eyes, the love and moral radiance that shone in them and spoke of infinite possibilities

far beyond the requirements of this earthly existence, have now passed into nothingness! Their light is quenched! There is a strange alarm, as well as a deep pathos, in the spectacle. The silence is cruel. To our despairing appeal "there is no voice nor any that answer". It is at such moments that the most callous must ask: "Can all that gives distinction to our humanity go out like a common candle that is spent?" In that dead body and the dignified protest in its still countenance we seem to find concentrated all the mystery and futility of man's existence. The "strange, eventful history," it would appear, *must* end so. It is this thought—the sadness, the pain and the evanescence of things now brought into vivid light in our own personal experience by the cruel extinction of what was so much to us that makes us forlorn, and drives each of us back on himself to ask the meaning and purpose of the strange drama in which he is an actor. At such moments we feel it to be impossible that a God who is the Father of spirits should use them up as mere raw material for the larger purposes of the universe, or cast them out as refuse. The situation is so cruel that nothing can atone for it, and nothing can explain it, save the impotence of God Himself; for we feel that if there be God, He *cannot* so order His universe.

The questions of philosophy are now forced on every man who thinks as well as feels: Are we mere passing embodiments of a One life, "impotent pieces in the game God plays," our very personalities existing only as the issue of past life and the seed of a future not ours, like the grass of the field? Or is each man an end in himself? It is only a truly contemplative mind, however, which sees the fact in all its horror, and it is at the

highest point of its own spiritual vitality that it so sees it. Indeed it is of importance to note that it is when man is on the highest plane of reason and emotion that he is most beset by the problem. He may see the necessity of death and accept it for himself; but death as the final issue of the life of Man—the fact of the passing away into nothingness of human souls touched “to the fine issues” of spiritual excellence, he cannot contemplate with indifference. He even pushes it aside as absurd. The end of Plato, Paul, Shakespeare, is to be cast into a hole to consort with worms! Impossible.

Some will tell us that we ought not, as scientific thinkers, to treat such questions emotionally. Why so? Is emotion not a fact like any other, and accordingly within the sphere of science? I have tried to show the place of feeling and emotion in immanent God, and have also dwelt on the emotion inherent in the activity of finite pure reason itself. The emotion with which I contemplate the dead is an emotion not arising out of the mere sense of loss, but out of a consciousness of reason baffled and spiritual ideals mocked. This it is that makes death so grim a spectacle to the thinking man; and when he sees in it the summing up of all the toil and pain and contradictions of human life, the mockery of the deepest needs of his heart and the highest aspirations of his spirit, the event is tragic indeed; it calls forth our tears as it called forth those of the Prophet and Master of the human race Himself.

These sayings about death will appear obvious, commonplace and trite. But in this very triteness lies precisely the sadness of it all. Generation after generation of living men have faced the mystery, have suffered

laceration of heart, given voice to their wonder and alarm with wearisome iteration, and resigned themselves, with more or less of hope, to the common destiny —“once to die, and after death?” Thus it is that we often feel that no utterance of man to men is of permanent value, if it cannot be uttered over a new-made grave.

While giving full weight to these considerations the significant fact that arrests us is that, of all finite creation, it is man alone that can put the question of his own continuance. This being so, it is manifestly of prime importance to show that it is by the analysis of that which is specifically Man, *viz.*, Ego as Will-dialectic, that we can in this question, as in all others that have formed the subject of these meditations, hope for an answer that may be called scientific.

A. THE SCIENTIFIC ARGUMENT.

(a) *The Scientific Argument as resting on the Genesis and Nature of Ego.*

In dealing with the question of Immortality, as in dealing with other questions of vital concern, I do not part, I cannot part, from the analytic conclusions of my Epistemology or the synthetic statement of the Notion of God and Man deduced from the Epistemology. In truth, my purpose here is not to discuss all the doctrines of immortality from Plato downwards, but to limit myself (as I have done in discussing other matters) to the bearing of Epistemology (as I understand it) on scientific solutions. Accordingly, it seems

to be incumbent on me to look again, as closely as I can, at the genesis of Ego, and on the subjective dialectic generally, if I am to find for myself scientific grounds for exempting man from the fate of creatures on a lower plane of Being.

But before doing so I would remark that the general interpretation of the whole of experience carries with it the interpretation of the parts ; and if it be, as I have endeavoured to show, that the reality of the phenomenal consists in its being Absolute Being as creative dialectic expressing itself in terms of quantity, quality, motion, degree and so forth (all that we call the sense-categories), the disappearance of the present Universe would not be the death of the Absolute Spirit. He would merely reach forth into fresh manifestations or rather transformations of His infinite activity. So with the body of man. Man is a creature of peculiar and high distinction whose characteristics demand that he be not annihilated when his phenomenal conditions are disintegrated, but survive in a life in which the continuity of the spiritual evolution will be maintained.

To put the position in more popular language : Does the Power which evolves itself until it reaches self-conscious mind contain the necessity of the reversion of this self-conscious mind into atoms of matter (whatever that may mean) or into nothing ? I believe that if this be so, it would be possible to establish the doctrine that the universe not merely involves the casual (as I have tried to show), but that it is radically anarchic.

It would be to break away from the method of procedure which we have hitherto followed, were we to speak of Ego as if it were a new creation discontinuous

with the attuent subject out of which it emerges, and as devising for itself, somehow or other, a link of connection with that which it has left behind. We are simply now face to face with the highest evolution of that which we found in its inchoate form as Pure Feeling, and there is no disruption anywhere. All is One.

To unfold the genesis of Ego is a task of supreme difficulty, but of great significance for philosophy. By making good one or two incidents in the evolutionary travail, we may better understand the resultant birth, and prepare the way for some more competent analytical microscopist.

Attuent reflexive subject is (like all else) a determination of Being, and contains (like all else) the objective dialectic process. But now we see it evolve into an active-activity—a pure activity; and that activity is the very dialectic *in* it now become *for* it. Subject does not split up into two; there arises *within it* a fresh potency. This new potency is not an Ego standing apart; it is conscious subject itself that, by virtue of a new energy, becomes “subject conscious of subject,” *i.e.*, self-conscious. This conscious subject is now “mine”; “am” is now “I am”. Ego thus plants *itself*, as an individual actuality, within the Absolute Whole.

The new endowment of the subject is the pure dialectic—the dialectic extricated from things *in* which it is and become “for” the subject as its highest potency: or we may put it thus: as reflected into a subject which has reached the highest plane of reflexive sentience (attuition) the Dialectic reveals itself as pure Will whose living process is the Dialectic formal movement.

Subject, meanwhile, as merely attuently conscious, does not, in the fact and act of evolving its supreme

immanent energy, cancel its other characters. It carries itself as a recipient, reflexive, absorbent, conscious subject into the new sphere of life, and the pure dialectic activity which has been evolved in it, is in it, and of it, as well as for it. Will-dialectic and the resultant Ego are not in the air : the roots are in the soil of conscious subject ; and thus conscious subject carries itself and all its content, actual and possible, into the new plane of mind-activity. This is what I have meant by saying, in brief phrase, that "I" or "Ego" sublates the conscious subject into it, and is thus ever in intimate converse with Reality. Perhaps, however, it would be better to say that subject, in functioning will-dialectic and thereby constituting itself an "I" or "Ego," still remains empirical subject with all its own functions.

In fact, *all* previous grades of Universal Mind in its finite evolution of Itself, from Pure Feeling upwards, are here gathered into the one of "I," by the "I" itself. For the specific function of subject as "I" is to subsume all these grades and their content under its dialectic energy, and so to interpret them. Subject is, as "I," now on the plane of the Dialectic, *i.e.*, of knowledge and self-determination ; and it has a difficult and unending task before it. As "I" it now determines and affirms *itself*, and exercises its imperial rights over all the "given," whether the "given" be external or internal nature.

And what is this Dialectic—this Will-reason ? It is the very form of God-creative revealed (not *to* finite reason but) *as* finite reason. It is God as finite conscious mind evolved into self-conscious mind.

We now have the subject (feeling reflexive entity) as

Ego; and in Ego we have the intensest form of individuality. The individual, we saw, was a synthesis of affirmation (the idea) and the negation that is inherent in the modality or phenomenon. But now, we have before us a very remarkable fact; for in Ego we have an individuality which is product of the pure dialectic alone. It is instituted and constituted by Will-dialectic as its essence or idea, and, unlike all other individua, needs no *phenomenal* "negation" for its individuation. Subject, through its new potency, lifts the subject-individual into an Ego-individual by the mere affirming of itself, and sustains it by that pure affirmation. Subject, in short, by virtue of this new potency, proclaims "I am I". It is a spiritual act with which the negating phenomenal has nothing whatever to do; its negating individuating services (so to speak) are superseded.

And yet, Ego is negation in its supreme form! Ego negates all save itself—even the subject-individual out of which it emerged, and is always emerging. It puts all else at a distance, so to speak, as *not* itself; and by dint of the Will-dialectic that institutes it and constitutes it, it dominates all else. It is, as final resultant of an evolutionary process, at once pure affirmation and pure negativity. And yet, by virtue of its institutive energy—the Will-dialectic, it goes forth, and *must* go forth, to seize and subsume all into itself. For Will-dialectic as constitutive as well as institutive of Ego, is its idea or form, and determines its positive relations to the universe in which the subject, thus transmuted, finds itself.

In thus evolving Himself as finite Ego, God affirms, as an existent within the Absolute Whole, pure Negativity. Ego negates God and the Universal; but by

virtue of its constitutive will-dialectic, it *must*, I say, go out of itself and make the Universal and God its own—bring all into itself as the “Real” of its Form; and it must do so in the form of its Form, which is Will with Form of End implicit. It might *be* as Ego; but it could not *live* save through the “Other”; it is ceaseless activity, innate and spontaneous. And when it fulfils itself as a concrete by subduing all experience (including the feelings and passions of the empirical subject) to itself, and so identifying all with itself, it is finally self-achieved “spirit”. The subject, as Ego, thus itself creates itself a “spirit” by overcoming the world. This is the specific function of the supreme individual—the releasing itself from the intolerable isolation of a barren Egohood by taking the Universal to itself. This is what the highest evolution of God as finite means. It is the sum of the reflecting of God into the finite, and is thus the finite image of the Infinite God. And yet Ego *per se* is not to be regarded as a bald abstraction; for it always has itself for content, and is thus from the first a completed “actual”.

Since, as we saw, a finite individuate is possible only in and through the negation inherent in the phenomenal, we cannot be surprised that, when the phenomenal dies, the individuate too should die; the energy of the Divine movement, which we call determination or idea, finding other but similar valuates of externalisation by ordinary generation or otherwise. But when the conscious subject through the immanent energy of Will-dialectic generated in itself, affirms itself and so institutes Ego, thus lifting *itself* on to a higher plane of Being—the dialectic plane, the case is different. The subject as Ego

not being dependent for its "egohood" on the phenomenal negation—the body within which it emerges, it ought not to be affected by the death of body. We found that mind, on this dialectic plane, though involved in brain, spontaneously *initiates* the using of brain for its purposes, while, at the same time, it is in reciprocity with brain, sublating the attuent subject with *its* enslavement to body (see Meditation XIV., First Book, Note).

The above analysis reveals, I think, what it is that underlies the instinctive conviction that self-identity involves continuance, and how it is that man, at all stages of culture and most of all in the most advanced, has felt that in this self-identity lies a distinction of being which makes his continuance assured. His whole *specific nature* starts back with incredulity from the thought of annihilation as intrinsically a contradiction. In short, the genesis of Ego reveals the strange distinction of being which belongs to man; and the utterance "I am I" proclaims immortality.

(b) *The Scientific Argument from the Nature of the Will-Dialectic generally.*

In the affirmation of the subject as an existent Ego by the subject itself lies the fact of freedom, as we have frequently seen. If we look long enough at the secret process of evolving mind, we find that the consciousness of subject by subject is not a mere "feeling" emerging in us as an inexplicable event; but is itself an act of Will—a primary free energy which, emerging in and out of an empirical conscious subject, seeks to reduce all experience, in accordance with its own dialectic form

or process, to the Ego, because Ego contains the dialectic as its "idea"—its pure affirmation.

Now the Will-process, as I have often pointed out, has a *way* of moving, the process which we call the Dialectic ; and, speaking generally, we may look at it as consisting of four prime moments : Kinetic ; Mediating ground as negation (formal) ; Determining-so (formative ground or idea), and End,—the affirmation of the truth of things being the purpose of its movement ; and this affirmation is knowledge. The formative idea in its fulfilled concreteness is the ideal—rational, æsthetic and ethical. This free operative activity, as thus set forth, is the finite dialectic ; and its results are science, art, ethics and politics. We commonly call it Reason. Now, we have seen that it is this reason which alone is capable of putting the critical question, "Does this Ego of ours continue its activity after the limitation of earthly conditions (the body) is destroyed?" And in the necessary functions of the reason which starts the problem, we ought to find an answer ; just as we have so far found an answer in the genesis and nature of Ego as a spiritual fact reason-constituted.

(c) *The Moments of the Dialectic.*

(1) The first moment of dialectic is Will as initiating Kinetic. Will by its very nature is mind-force or energy : it finds limits for itself on every side, but only to transcend them. Ever-moving, ever-living, it carries itself forward into limitless regions in search of that which truly *is*. It thus assumes its own continuity, as well as its inherent superiority to natural conditions.

If the reader will ponder long enough over the distinction between the animal and the rational subject, the full force of this fundamental fact of reason will be clear to him.

(2) The first and fundamental *function* of the dialectic in man is, as we found, the act of percipience. This act is the determination, arrestment and limitation of an object in space and time. The affirmation of the determination is an affirmation of limit, and *ipso actu* an affirmation of non-limitability. The slightest reflection reveals to us that this *must be so*; and, consequently, the *act* of determining the finite necessitates the affirmation of the infinite—the fact of infiniteness relatively to space and time. This tells us that there are regions and spheres of fact and thought outside the sphere of finite reason. We, accordingly, decline to say more than this, or to indulge in talk about infinite space and time—save, perhaps, for rhetorical and ethical purposes. This Infinite is equally present in all thought-determination—rational, æsthetic and ethical.

Now surely the most startling fact in finite nature is that a finite being should appear at the head of it to fulfil his own destiny as a creature, and should, at the same time, necessarily affirm in the very limiting of himself and of his possible knowledge here and now, the illimitable for himself as a “knowing” being. It appears to me that he therein affirms that this sphere is only a beginning of the possible for him. It may be said that this is a cunningly devised illusion, which serves its human purpose in so far as it enables man to rise above the prosaic judgments of ordinary life. But in that case the sun and moon are also cunningly devised illusions.

It may also be maintained that this "further" of possibility is true of "man" as a creature thrown up out of absoluto-infinite Being, in its process of evolution in Time, merely to fill a place necessary to the adequate life of a Universal self-conscious Spirit. But there is no such thing as "man," but only men. And if I, a man, find that the most wonderful characteristic in me is *in* me but not *for* me a person, I find in this a flagrant breach of the spiritual order. The burden of proving such a view of rational persons is certainly laid on other shoulders, and not on the shoulders of those who accept the direct affirmation of finite reason *in* them as *for* them.

Accordingly, just as pure Will contains a further, so Will as a "knowing" energy affirms, in the apprehended fact of the infinite as given in percipience and in all thought, its own continuance after its present conditions are dissolved. Nay, it even foretells the necessity of dissolution that the spirit may be liberated for a fuller life.

(3) The third and fourth moments of the dialectic further affirm the idea, which is the truth, the essence of a thing as a concrete whole; and only in the apprehension of the idea as fulfilled ideal can there be repose for the restless and ever-progressing Will-reason in its pursuit of knowledge. But when will-reason has found truth, or rather, let us say, thinks it has found it, it finds it as still limitation. The ideal, as conceived, is only a stepping-stone, a moment's pause for the sole of the foot: the ideal, achieved, at once reveals itself as part of a greater and higher, namely, absolute Truth (which is God); and the task is to be begun again. The search for the idea and the ideal being of the essence of the Ego

as containing the dialectic, it thus, *ipso facto*, affirms its continuity in a series of ever-ascending and self-fulfilling acts. The "idea" of Man ordains that he *shall* search for ideas and fulfil ideals, but to this he can only approximate: and if this be all, he remains an everlasting contradiction as a cognitive activity in the general scheme of things. The evolving life of God as finite suddenly ends in the abrupt. The essential characteristics of the finite dialectic thus affirm the continuity of the human spirit as implicit in the very nature of human reason. We are always, in fact, silently postulating continuance; all the issues of our rational life being infinite.

As with absolute Truth, so with absolute Beauty, and absolute Goodness. By virtue of the will-dialectic, man creates æsthetic ideals which he moulds out of the sense-forms of universal Being as revealed to him, and also ethical or spiritual ideals of life and conduct which he moulds out of the feeling-forms of desire and emotion. These ideals constitute the divine meaning of creation here and now as contained in the heart of The Absolute. They are God-immanent mediating his spiritual ends through man. Man as Will must, by his very nature, seek to realise them. To realise them is to actualise them for himself and in himself. This is impossible. He may ever advance nearer to the actualisation; but in so far as he does not reduce them to himself as actualities, he suffers from the pain of defeated purpose. He dies contemplating ever-vanishing ideals. The "far-off" goal recedes as we advance". The fact of these ideals as sum and issue of the reason-life of man, and the hopeless striving after them in this sphere of being, affirm a continuity of existence for

their actualisation, unless God be indifferent to the fulfilment of His idea and does not seek The Good. Now, even if there were no God, the truth would remain that the finite spirit here is embarked on an infinite cognitive, æsthetic and ethical progress, the continuance of which beyond present limitations is just as likely as its existence here and now. Even if there were no God, I say, the dim groping of godless nature or *weltwille* to evolve itself would in man give the promise, if not necessity, of a "further," in order to complete the work which had been here only partially accomplished.

Think also in this connection of the toil and hardships which men endure in the service of ideals for a terrestrial future in which they can have no share. Death itself they face in all its forms for the benefit of the race to which they will shortly cease to belong. Whence this, if it do not come from an ineradicable reason-conviction of the continuity of life? All heroic action would seem silently to assume a personal immortality.

(d) *The notion of Futurity is given by the Dialectic.*

All thought-processes are for us under conditions of Time, for Time is the mode of externalised Deity who is found by us here under temporal and evolutionary conditions. Now, what of the strange conception of futurity in Time, and the consequent Hope—our forward-looking thoughts? The animal does not hope, and has no conscious future. In the specific differentiation of man, then, we must look for the explanation of these facts of human experience. Man looks before and after; he can forestall his experience, and by

the help of his imagination project a future of activity. How is this? I would answer thus:—

It is in the essential nature of the dialectic that we find the possibility of the conception of futurity. The eternal *nisus* of the dialectic contains the “form of End,” and this end is necessarily projected under conditions of Time. Thus it is that the future, as a conception of the imagination, is possible. The animal, I have said, has no conscious future. We men, on the contrary, forecast in imagination a future of achievement whether the aim be material or spiritual; nay, were it not for repeated experience of failure, we should, under this dialectic impulse, contemplate the achievement of our purposes as assured and guaranteed by being simply affirmed as end. Assurance would be our mental attitude. Failure, however, brings down the pride and confidence of expectation to the humility and veiled distrust of hope. We then learn to take elaborate means in both the moral and material world of our activities to secure the fulfilment of our hopes. Hope, then, is to be defined as the “form of end” under conditions of Time. It does not owe its origin either to our organic or our emotional nature, *but to the dialectic*. It is of the essence of reason in man and thus it is that it “springs eternal in the human breast”.

Everywhere man is a creature of disappointed hopes: in the struggle for the sustenance of the body first of all; and, even though we may be in possession of a superfluity of the means of sustenance, we are yet ever enduring defeat in other lines of effort. In our ambitions, affections and emotions we encounter the failure of our hopes, whether these be for humanity at large or for the satisfaction of our love in those nearest to us; in our in-

tellectual efforts after truth, our partial successes are through numberless defeats ; in the fulfilment of our moral and spiritual ideas, even when we are always hopefully advancing, we are never attaining. Man, thus made the victim of illusory anticipations here, and yet having in him the well-spring of the dialectic which ever points to the possibility of fulfilment, *necessarily* projects a future beyond the desperate conditions of earthly existence. The notion of futurity, then, and the consequent hope, contain the affirmation of a continued existence as the affirmation of reason and not as a mere appetite or organic impulse.

Too often, it is true, the future after death is contemplated as a satisfaction of unworthy desires ; or, at least, of those desires which can be shown to have value only under present and earthly conditions. To the eye of the philosopher these earthly conditions are, even now, wholly subservient to the spiritual life : they are the material in and through which man as spirit can alone fulfil himself. And yet, as are a man's life and ideals, so will his future be imagined ; and, knowing our own weakness, we are not hard on our fellow-men because they contemplate with fond anticipation a deliverance in a future existence from their personal miseries, the righting of personal wrongs, and eternal rest from toil. Somewhere and somehow (they feel) the manifest purpose of their existence will surely be fulfilled. The Good, whatever it may be, *must be* on its way.

The point which I wish to make here is, that this Time-projection of life into a future after death is, however crudely it may be conceived, a *necessary* issue of the dialectic in man—a note of reason and not merely a vague organic feeling of expectation. Conse-

quently, as that which is truly and specifically man, *viz.*, reason, grows, in the course of the ages, into fuller self-consciousness, the reasons for the conviction of continuance after death grow in cogency.

It would appear, then, that pure reason as Ego which alone can raise the question of immortality, when closely interrogated, gives, in its genesis, nature, and process, affirmative answers. Accordingly, it is not out of the mere desires of men, but out of that which specifically constitutes man, *viz.*, the Ego with its contained dialectic, that the conviction of life beyond death issues. The answer is a scientific answer. As Emerson well says: "When the Master of the Universe has points to carry in His government, He impresses His will in the *structure* of minds".

As I have frequently pointed out, unless we take up all our experience, cognitive, emotional, ethical, in the *whole* Dialectic, there must be endless contradictions, intellectual and moral. It is in the true analysis and understanding of the Dialectic movement as a *one* movement, that we find the solution of the Universe as presented to man. But even with this key in our hand there are doors which we cannot unlock. We are driven back on the conviction which the Dialectic itself has generated in us that, beyond, there is a solution; and that conviction is not at all the product of despair or of feeble sentiment, but created in us by that which is supremely ourselves, our strength as it is our distinction—the subjective dialectic, which is also the ground-plan of the whole creative process—the Form of God-creative.

(e) *The Infinite in human love for Man and for God.*

Love for Man.—The Dialectic enters also into the Feeling and Emotions of man and clothes them with infiniteness. Hence the pained alarm when the object of love vanishes from our side in consequence of what seems the ruthless and arbitrary act of a destroying Power. If our interpretation of God as a God of Love be true, we are justified in demanding some relief from the anguish of the heart—some explanation that will console. It is not merely the common desire to meet again those that have been snatched away : it is the shock that almost paralyses us as we think of the wealth of love which it is possible for one human being to lavish on another thus made a mock of.

Death, as a universal human event, calls forth our wonder, horror and incredulity : now, when it is close to us, it calls forth our resentment and indignation, if it be what it appears to be. Man cries out against his being endowed with emotions, deep and infinite in their range, which yet seem to count for nothing in the system to which he belongs. The sad experience, if humbly accepted, is good for the soul of man, we are told, and broadens and deepens his whole life. But what is the use of all this enriching of his spiritual nature if terrestrial conditions sum him up ? He can get on well enough without it—nay, it is a fact that he can get on better without it : finite purposes on this earth and in our relations to society can be quite well, nay, much better, attained without it.

Quite apart from the theistic argument, “surely,” as Martineau says, “it is no romance to say that human love reaches a pathetic depth and rises to a sublime

height which make it greater than its uses, and ally it to the proportions of more enduring being".¹ Listen to the cry of Henrietta von Willich in her letter to Schleiermacher on the death of her husband, and which I quote because of the universal note in her agonised utterance:—

"O Schleier, in the midst of my sorrow there are yet blessed moments when I vividly feel what a love ours was and that surely this love is eternal and it is impossible that God can destroy it; for God Himself is Love. I bear this life while nature will; for I have still work to do for the children, his and mine: but, O God, with what longing, what foreshadowing of unutterable blessedness do I gaze across into that world where he lives! What joy for me to die! Schleier, shall I not find him again? O my God! I implore you, Schleier, by all that is dear to God and sacred, give me, if you can, the certain assurance of finding and knowing him again. Tell me your utmost faith on this, dear Schleier. Oh! if it fails, I am undone!"²

Schleiermacher answers by playing with the word "personality" and offering a highly Buddhistic consolation—absorption in The Absolute—the euphemism for annihilation. The source of the error in such views is to be found in an indolent and mystic pantheism. We have urged in these Meditations an interpretation more in accordance with the experience and needs of men, in our emphasising of the patent fact of finitude, individuality, personality, as the form in which Absolute Being *loves* to live. Otherwise, why is it so as matter of fact? The depreciation of the individual in order to make

¹ Martineau, ii., 344.

² Quoted by Martineau, ii., 358.

good the life of an abstraction called "The Absolute" is not justified by experience. God as concrete Notion (in the absolute synthesis as given to us) finds His own life and joy in the existence of other beings in their ascending grades. He mediates His own finite life in an infinite series of finitudes. In the case of man He throws out from Himself a free Ego and calls on it to make good its *own* life, as if it were a matter of eternal cosmic concern. It has to actualise itself in and for God. The very purpose of man's existence, his function in this scheme of things is defeated, if God breaks faith with him and steals him to aggrandise Himself, absorbing him in what is called the Absolute. The pantheistic All-one becomes a mere abstraction when its content is ignored. The Absolute, if we look straight at the facts of life, is a One in Many and through Many, not a blank One of meaningless continuity. We ask no more in the future than exists now, and, which, by existing now, has shown its possibility, if not its necessity, within the nature and thought, of the One God. What is called "The Absolute Idea" can only mean the mighty thought through which God, as creative Will, thinks Himself as externalised; and this thought cannot be an abstract Whole, but must contain the issues of each individual activity in the Whole. If it do not mean this, it matters not what it means. We may be assured that in the divine order there is consolation for the stricken heart. It was in the name of God that Christ said, "Ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer". Bold and splendid words; none but a prophet of God who was very near to God could have dared to utter them.

Love for God.—Again, what shall we say of Love for

God Himself in which the finite spirit expresses its supreme intellectual need and its infinite joy in ethical and æsthetic ideals therein consummated—a love so intense in some minds (and when we weigh the capacities of a race we rightly speak of its best types) as to make them, in their intellectual rapture, dream even of the abnegation of their own personality that they may pass into the Universal? The love for God is an “emotion of reason” arising out of the dialectic as one whole, and is animated by the apprehension of ideals in which the divine movement completes itself in the world and in man. Pure reason itself is charged with emotion. The sympathetic “feeling” of Being lies at the very root, we found, of our notion of God. Feeling is in the ground-plan of the universe. It is only when we “feel” God that we are drawn into an emotional identity with His eternal Being and process. This (which may, indeed, reach an overwhelming intensity as in the mystic beatific vision) is the love for God. And, “How can it be,” says Jean Paul, “that our heart is parched and fretted and at last crushed by the slow fever-fire of an infinite love for an infinite object and must be assuaged by nothing better than the hope that this heart-sickness, like a physical heat, will sometime be removed by laying on it the ice-slab of death?”

Note now that the human love for Man and God is what it is because we are on the plane of the Dialectic. Its character, significance and infiniteness arise out of the dialectic movement; and if such love exhausts its meaning in the finite, it is an illusory futility in a stupid Absolute.

Finally: forasmuch as Man is an Ego whose specific function in the cosmic system is the realising of

itself as concrete "spirit," the dissolution of present conditions is obviously necessary to this realisation. The continuance of life after death is, accordingly, involved in the continuity of the cosmic spiritual order. Death is a necessity, but it is also a deliverance: the dire event does not belong to the casual and demonic in the cosmic series, but is the only way of mediating a *purposed* evolution immanent in man here and now. If it be not so, God is bankrupt.

B. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

I have been putting forward what I consider to be a scientific argument to show that the nature of Ego is such as to make its continuance after the death of the body (shall I say?) natural, and that the Dialectic, which initiates and sustains Ego, contains also the necessity of its continuance if God be a God of Spiritual Order. Our whole interpretation of God and Man carries with it this conclusion. There are further considerations, however, relevant to the general discussion of the question which have their own weight.

(a) *Contradictions.*

Evil, that is to say the contradictions, intellectual and moral, which beset us in a notoriously imperfect world, the rampant injustice, the physical pains, the unmerited sufferings (but why resume the painful enumeration?), the wickedness of men by which Divine ends are mediated, ever remain an insuperable difficulty, unless they are explained by the thought and fact of a higher evolution of life possible only through this painful process. A certain type of thinker takes refuge in "The

Absolute" and seems to be satisfied if he secures *its* Happiness or Perfection by giving it the power of resolving the contradictions which it is always generating. This is his act of faith; for he cannot *know*. So far, he is as helpless as the peasant. "Somehow or somewhere, but not for man, there is a conciliation of all things"—is not this the substance of his final utterance? And is it other or better than the faith of the humblest ploughman? But this fond conception of The Absolute, which is simply the old Calvinistic decrees put in terms of ignorance and which veils the hasty retreat of the philosopher from ultimate problems, will not meet the clamant need of men. It does not interpret. Things are *somehow* reconciled in "The Absolute"! What is this to me? As a "person" I have my rights. It is *personal* continuance, in which contradictions will be resolved in *himself*, that man seeks—the "perfect day" for which he longs, in which God as Justice and Love will shine forth in the individual spirit that has loyally striven and endured, in which the spiritual ideals that man must by his very nature form will be actualities, the miserable defections in his own personality be made good, *his* pain and share in evil explained, and *his* humanity glorified in its final fulfilment: in brief, it is redemption or deliverance that he seeks. It is in the name of suffering mankind, and not of himself alone, that he demands this. This argument manifestly resolves itself into a faith in God as eternal order, justice and love, who cannot, unless He be impotent (in which case He is not God and we have to re-cast our theory of the universe), leave His creatures as ever-recurring testimonies through endless generations to the essential inadequacy and imperfection of

that sphere of being of which they are the highest term ; and, as such, are alone endowed with the capacity, and therefore put under obligation, to *judge* it.

The only possible justifying explanation of the afflictions of humanity—growing always (mark) in intensity with growing knowledge and heightening moral elevation—is the Christian explanation, that they have a purpose ; as the objective dialectic tells us all creation has. These afflictions which “are but for a moment” are the discipline whereby a man may mediate himself as “spirit”. The purpose of ethical probation is to strengthen his personality as supreme over the solicitations of natural passion, and to lift his habitual life of thought and action out of the seen and temporal into the unseen and eternal. If this be not the purpose, then the pain and sorrow of this world become ends in themselves, and man is justified in protesting against the (so-called) “Order” into the midst of which he is thrown. If good be not in the heart of evil, then God is Evil. Call it, if you will, a hypothesis that man is in this life moulding himself and being moulded for a higher existence, yet it is a hypothesis which alone explains the facts ; and such hypotheses are valid in science. But it is not a hypothesis, for it rests on a scientific interpretation of man.

The melancholy meditations of Amiel suggest themselves here : “The moral education of the individual soul—is it then wasted ? When our planet has accomplished the cycle of its destinies, of what use will it have been to any one or anything in the universe ? Well, it will have sounded its note in the symphony of creation. And for us individual atoms, seeing monads, we appropriate a momentary consciousness of the whole and the unchangeable ; and then we disappear. Is not this

enough? No, it is not enough; for if there is not progress, increase, profit, there is nothing but a mere chemical play and balance of combinations. Brahma after having created, draws his creation back into the gulf." And after saying that God, at least, grows and profits by it, he gives expression to the hopeless view: "We sink gradually back into the darkness, just as we issued gradually from it. The play of faculties and organs, the grandiose apparatus of life is put back bit by bit into the box. We begin by instinct; at the end comes a clearness of vision which we must learn to bear with and to expend, without murmuring, on our own failure and decay. A musical theme once exhausted finds its due refuge and repose in silence." Here we have the utterance of a religious mystic in whom personality was weak. If it be as he thinks, man's highest life is an incoherent dream and he is in his right when he murmurs.

And what of God Himself? He is not merely an infinite contradiction-resolving machine; He works as immanent in the universe—His own Mind and Body—towards ideas and ideals; and, if our interpretation be true, He is a God of Love. But in His creation of Man we find notorious failure to be the last word of philosophy on this plane of God's finite life. God has to be explained in order that Man may be explained. If there be, at all, necessity in God, it must be a necessity to actualise His own idea. Or is He content with imperfection? Does He Himself make terms with the Devil of Negation by casting aside personalities as broken pitchers which the said devil may have for nothing? "From the first dawning of life," says Professor Fiske,

“we see all things working together towards one mighty goal—the evolution of the most exalted spiritual qualities that characterise humanity. Has all this work been done for nothing? Is it all ephemeral, all a bubble that bursts, a vision that fades? On such a view the riddle of the universe becomes a riddle without a meaning. The more thoroughly we comprehend that process of evolution by which things have come to be what they are, the more we are likely to feel that to deny the everlasting persistence of the spiritual element in man is to rob the whole process of its meaning. It goes far to putting us to permanent intellectual confusion, and I do not see that any one has as yet alleged, or is ever likely to allege, a sufficient reason for our accepting so dire an alternative.” And we may add: In the evolution of the organic world, it is the higher which finally explains the lower; the lower, in an immeasurable “one” of manifestation and process containing in it the prophecy of the higher. In this way alone are contradictions resolvable.

(b) *Personal Identity and the nature of the Future Life generally.*

It is scarcely necessary to say that the continuance of self-identity in the *formal* sense would be purposeless and of no concern to any man; for Ego is in itself a bare universal, and, as such, is not what men mean by *themselves*. The *ground* and first “moment” of personality is certainly bare self-identity—“I am I,” in no way dependent on memory but renewed every moment; but personality, as distinguished from bare self-identity, is a concrete of formal and real, and, as such, is largely dependent on body and its relations, and involves the

consciousness of the continuous one of self in all experience.

We may put the question thus : The abstract Ego might rise to a higher plane of the Divine Evolution without thereby satisfying the demand for a continued personal life ; for it is as a *concrete* Ego or Personality that each demands continuance. Personality I have explained to be the subsumption of experience by the Ego as itself a dialectic and *supra naturam* illuminating and controlling that experience to ends of Truth, Goodness and Beauty. This, it is said, involves memory, and inasmuch as memory is dependent on the phenomenal negation, personality must perish in the dissolution of body. But, in dealing with the psycho-physical, we found that memory was a deposit in mind, as well as brain, even at the attitudinal stage where there was mutual reciprocity ; still more on the human plane where experiences are discriminated and co-ordinated, and brain made subject to the uses of the Will-dialectic with its inherent initiative. If so, there can be no difficulty in the way of the Ego carrying its concrete content with it into a higher sphere. What and how much it will carry we cannot say further than this, that it will carry all that fits the new environment. The immanent purpose of Ego is to become not merely personality, a term which may be of no ethical significance, but personality which is Spirit ; that is to say, Ego as fulfilling its essential function of moulding the Given within us and without us. And, we may say that all that falls into this category—all that we have subdued to ourselves—will go with us into the higher sphere of the Divine evolution, and find there fresh illumination. Love, Ideals, Beauty, and whatever has given substance to

these emotions in this life will find their fruition in a higher. The purpose of life, generally, is simply living; but in a self-conscious being of infinite possibilities, it is at the same time, as we have frequently seen, the shaping of the Self to a higher and better, which is never a highest and best, but which starts it on the way of an ever-advancing growth. The varied experiences of life have unquestionably this for their aim; and the Ego which absorbs and makes its own such of these as promote the creation of itself anew and develop and fortify it as "spirit," carries with it all that can live, and furnish impulse and motive, on a higher plane. The identity of the "person" continues, sustained by the memory of all here that is worthy of a higher existence there—truth, love and ideals.

Why should we doubt that we shall carry into a future life all the ethical experience that is worthy of a self-conscious spirit, thereby preserving our personal identity? Those bodily relations which belong to the natural system here must fall away, but all in man that has transcended these relations will survive. We rise from one of God's systems to enter another and a better, and, as a first step, we leave our bodies in the earth, thereby proclaiming that the things that are exclusively of earth concern us no more. The attitudinal subject in evolving into Ego, carried, we saw, the "subject" into Ego—the lower into the higher; so, when Ego evolves into the fulness of "spirit," it will carry with it all that is compatible with the new conditions; and in these, it carries the identity of its personality as now achieved Spirit.

There are thinkers who, while seeming to grant the continuance of personal identity, would seem to confine the

destiny of an immortal spirit to the activity of pure reason and a certain ecstatic contemplation of abstract thought. But we have shown that, if it be through the world as we have it that we know God, then He Himself is a being of feeling and emotion; to which indeed the dialectic is, in a sense, subordinate: just as Form, generally, is of significance only as contributory to actuality of Being and of life. If the concrete of feeling be an essential moment in the immanent being even of God, is it derogatory to the dignity of man, that, even on the higher plane of a future existence, life and love, only partially realised on earth, should constitute the purified "real" of his suprarational spirit? Feeling and emotion, when inreasoned, we have found to be thereby transformed into ethical and spiritual ideas: as such, they are opposed to the natural desires which find an adequate sphere within terrestrial conditions and seek no Beyond: that alone, we may say, will survive which fits the new sphere of Being. And if there be truly a higher plane of Mind for us which sublates our present non-corporeal nature without cancelling it, it will be, we may imagine, a condition in which the Negation being now wholly identified with the Idea—Ego having become Spirit, the sweet reasonableness of a fine harmony of inner and outer relations will make mere living a perpetual blessing. The love for God and for our fellow-spirits will govern our lives and sustain them in an everlasting spring-time of energy.

Again, Time, it is said, will be no more. But this is merely a rhetorical expression. What is Objective Time save a "one-after-the-otherness" of experiences? Why should this cease? The timeless is for any finite being a condition incompatible with anything that can be called

existence. The "time-span," we may presume, will be increased ; but if the life of the spirit be a timeless life, all experience must collapse into an "eternal now". This is an epigrammatic expression invented to denote the wholly unknowable relation of God to series and successions : and on this subject no man can say anything worth listening to, save by way of showing the possibility of a contradiction—a Time-series which shall also be a "Now". God may be said to be Timeless just as He is said to be *primum mobile* ; but He holds both Motion and Time within Himself, not outside Himself.

The only legitimate conclusion as to the nature of a future state is that, just as we find graded planes of being on earth, so the dissolution of existing conditions will introduce those who are worthy to a higher plane than the present. This higher life will sublimate the life of reason into it, just as the life of reason sublimes the life of intuition here and now. The infinite God will have evolved Himself in and through us into a higher plane of finite mind.

[Difficulties as to a future state suggested by the sense-imagination of the physicist are obviously wholly irrelevant to a life presumed to exist under other than terrestrial conditions, and accordingly it is unscientific to raise them.]

(c) *Conditions of the continuance of the Ego.*

Our argument affirms the continuance of all human souls. But there may be many cases in which there are obstacles in the path. Assuredly we are right in saying that continued life after death is immanent in each Ego. The prediction and affirmation are unques-

tionably to be found in the innermost inner of reason, as well as at the heart of our ethical and emotional nature. It may be said, however, that it is by life in the universal of ideals (rational, æsthetic, ethical, which are of the essence and sum of the teaching of the subjective dialectic) that the individual widens himself into an infinitude that can alone fit a human soul for a higher evolution. Failure in this is what I mean by an obstacle in the way of continuity on a higher plane of being. As the tree falls so must it lie. In other words, the continuance of life beyond the grave *may* depend on the extent to which the potential in each man has here become an actual—the extent to which the idea in him has made good its fitness for a higher grade of being.

. . . only he,
His soul well-knit and all his battles won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.¹

The wings which are to bear us into a higher sphere may have to be grown here and now. He who has not found eternal life here will not, it may be said, find it hereafter. But, as Amiel says, "the Kingdom of God belongs not to the most enlightened but to the best". And Plato says: "Let a man be of good cheer about his soul who has cast away the pleasures and ornaments of the body as alien to him, and has followed after the pleasures of knowledge of this life; who has adorned the soul in her own proper jewels, which are temperance and justice and courage and nobility and truth".² "And they *that be wise*," says the Hebrew prophet, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many

¹ Matthew Arnold.

² *Phædo*, 114.

to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”¹ “Do justly and love mercy” and God will see to the rest.

However it may be, assuredly the man-being who attains to true manhood and becomes conscious of the inadequacy of the finite (in even the most felicitous combination of circumstances) to admit of the fulness of his specific life as a spiritual being, contains in himself the necessity of a life under conditions that will truly admit of fulfilment. But if a human being abnegating the life of a rational ego allows himself to sink into the lower plane of a merely attuent individual seeking the satisfactions of sense, he must share the fate of living creatures which are on the sentient plane of being to which he has reduced himself. He, in truth, belongs to the casual and anarchic element of the present system.

Our argument throughout has been that the method of God is the throwing on man the working out of his own life on earth ; and, if this be so, each Ego has its eternal destiny in its own hands.

(d) *Coercive demonstration impossible.*

The question of continued life after death is a question as to a matter of fact, and cannot be demonstrated in the sense of coercive proof. I can “know” God ; I can “know” freedom, and I can “know” duty ; but the fact of immortality I cannot *know*. Here enters philosophic faith which, as distinguished from religious credulity, is the acceptance of a conclusion to *which all experience and reason steadily point as true*, and the non-truth of which would be a manifest

¹ Daniel xii.

contradiction of that which we do know. Belief in that which we should like to believe is an abuse of faith: so also is belief in that which is opposed to reason or to the postulates and imperatives of the moral nature. But it is a very different thing when we are asked to believe in a conclusion on the line of reason—a conclusion immanent in the dialectic and in ethical ideals, and involved, moreover, in the fact of an ethical God. This is what is meant by “the evidence of things not seen”. It has more claim on my living faith (if I am a sensationalist) than my trust in the uniformity of nature on which all science rests. Are we to be arrogantly told that it is “immoral”¹ to have faith in that which is *almost* demonstrated, and which, if believed, gives a new inspiration to all life, not by the vulgar inducement of a continued existence under happier conditions, but by the higher interpretation of the nature and destiny of the spirit of man out of which the conviction of immortality comes? “The moral or theistic conception of the universe,” says Professor Campbell Fraser, “takes its sublime interest for persons in and through their faith that they are *themselves* destined to continue in conscious connection with the realities during more than the short life that now depends on the mortal body.”² The argument that justifies faith may be likened to a mathematical curve of which we know enough to calculate its terminus *ad quem*. Philosophic faith is restricted to such cases: reason builds the road to within a short distance of its goal; faith bridges a narrow chasm and completes it. Faith in the sense of a belief in that which contains an inherent contradiction is credulity and superstition: so with faith in that which is

¹ Clifford.² *Gifford Lectures*, ii., p. 247.

out of all relation to the rational mind of man and is, therefore, for it, necessarily null ; but that which is in the very heart of reason itself is quite another matter. If facts and reasonings are such that only one conclusion is consistent with their truth and rationality, it is surely irrational to doubt the conclusion which they affirm.

We have anxiously to define the true sphere of Faith. Spiritual ideas and ideals and God Himself are not the object of faith, but of knowledge. If a man cannot rise to the consciousness of that knowledge, then so much the worse for him : he has to be born again. I cannot rise to the demonstration in Newton's *Principia* ; so much the worse for me : my mathematical aptitude must be born again. By *faith in* God we constantly mean *trust* in God, but "that God is" is not an object of faith, but of knowledge. We do not erect an altar to the Unknown and Unknowable. Again, that the world, spite of all its misery and inadequacy, is moving towards a goal is not a faith, but, a knowledge. On the other hand, that the goal is "The Good" in the sense of the harmonious we do not "know" ; but it is an object of rational faith, for it is interwoven in our knowledge of ideas and ideals as spiritual realities. Without that faith, these realities are vain shows : it is the postulate, as Amiel says, "of that higher truth which is to bring all into harmony". So with the continuance of personalities. When we realise the eternal verities, we believe in immortality. It is only when our realisation of the spiritual is obscured or obstructed that our faith grows weak. It is then that we say, "our life is but a vapour that appeareth for a little and then vanisheth away". In hours of clear vision,

on the other hand, we see that God Himself is involved in the spirit of man and its function in the cosmic scheme. That "which is in communion with the unchanging is unchanging," says Plato. Man finds himself to be a sharer in the Eternal Spirit. His high calling is assured. The striving after the Infinite contained in the ideals he has of absolute Truth, Beauty and Goodness, must have some meaning. Or is the world wholly irrational?

Again, we may ask: Is there such a thing as eternal life here and now—a life in God and with God, the sole truth and reality of transient things? Is not this possible only on the assumption that man transcends nature in his essence? A man striving after union with God here and now is, *ipso facto*, making himself immortal, inasmuch as he is bringing his finite spirit within the very life of the eternal spirit and is being borne along in the current of that which cannot die. Either it is so, or man, even at his highest and best, serves only a temporary purpose in what is called "The Absolute".

The passing of the man-person into a higher sphere when the body dies is, I think, as nearly demonstrated as the nature of the question permits. Strange it would be if, just when the buffetings, failures, sorrows and empty successes of life have taught us how to live, we should pass into nothingness. In presence of the great problem our attitude is not nescience, but prescience. And if a man accepts the doctrine with all its implications, he accepts what must always be the most potent

factor in determining his activities : by which I do not mean that he looks for reward in any banal sense ; but that the realisation of the truth lifts him into a spiritual order which is eternal and gives a new significance to his daily life by allying him with the purposes of God.

Continued existence after death is much more than a "hope" or "faith" : it is an assured conviction resting on reasonings, concurrent and convergent, which give it all the certainty that fits our present plane of Being. Nay, the conviction seems to be built into us as self-conscious persons. It is, in truth, the universal postulate of self-conscious ethical activity, always implicit though not always in evidence. It is not too much to say that, as a matter of fact, every man, in *so far as he acts as a being of reason*, does so on the silent presumption that he is an heir of immortality—as being himself somehow involved in the eternal life of God. Unless this be so, Reason in man stultifies itself : the evolution of conscious organisms into self-conscious beings which in all their relations generate the thought of the Infinite, must be pronounced a fatal blunder in the system within which we live and work—the product of a blind Will. Man is steeped in the Infinite. Is this merely a cosmic device for sustaining him on a high ethical level, just as we men may dangle a toy before a child to lure him on ? If it be so, there is a lie at the heart of the cosmic scheme. And a useless lie. For so far as mere earthly living is concerned, we could get along, as I have said, quite well with finite moralities and finite aims.

CONCLUSION.

It may be subject of complaint that, if the fact of the continuance of the human spirit after death be of so

much importance in directing and sustaining the ethical energies of man and giving worth and dignity to his daily life, if earth be truly only "God's ante-chamber," it should not have been clearly written down in the scheme of things—so clearly that he that runs might read. To this the only answer is that it would have been a contradiction of the essential characteristic of the present system (at least as that has been interpreted in these Meditations) had immortality been put beyond all possible question. Man finds himself naked and helpless on this planet, and is virtually told to achieve his own redemption, material and spiritual. He is left to search and find for himself. To have had immortality proclaimed with every rising sun would have run counter to the general plan—would have weakened, not fortified, his spiritual energies. The command: "Work out thine own salvation," may sound like that of a hard taskmaster, but it is the only one which is consistent with the notion of man as man. It is only through pain and failure and sorrow, through evil, through error, repentance and contrition, and through intellectual doubt and difficulty, that a man can achieve for *himself* the fulfilment of *himself*; and, for aught we know, one of the very marks of personal fitness for the life eternal is the living conviction which man has of the necessity and truth of that eternal life, although it is not written across the sky. This is, indeed, the true meaning and function of Faith—it is an intellectual conviction with an emotional content that transforms it into a living and life-giving force working in us to will and to do. An operative faith in the higher life of spirit (not a mere vulgar belief in continuance) is itself a guarantee of fitness for it. It is "a touchstone for God's purposes," to use a phrase of

Browning's. Certitude of knowledge would subvert the Divine method. God will not thrust Himself upon us, but to no man does He refuse Himself. To each the door will be opened ; but each must knock.

With a profound sense of mystery we begin our thought on the ultimate of things, and with a still profounder sense of mystery we close it. But mystery on the man-plane of Being is, we may be assured, not for the sake of mystery, whether we mean by that word the as yet unknown or the unknowable : it has a deep significance—an intellectual and ethical worth that is incalculable. Without the ever-present mystery of the unsoundable depths of Being which lie at the roots of all existence, and the immeasurable reaches of the Infinite-finite, we should be living in a cold pedantic world of dogma, and our highest life would be summed up in mathematical formulas and arid moral precepts. Mystery is necessary to the full growth of finite reason : it is an intellectual, ethical, and æsthetic force urging men on to ever larger readings of experience. When man ceases to wonder and to question, he will cease to strive, and will sink back into a lower grade of Being, passively re-acting on his environment with a view to the more or less ordered satisfaction of natural Desire.

THE END.

APPENDIX.

1. NOTE ON THE IDEAL CONCRETE (page 42).

Were there one individual of each kind in the world of experience, *e.g.*, one horse, or if there were many horses absolutely alike, the Notion of the ideal horse—the perfect or consummate horse, could not, it might be said, suggest itself to finite reason, unless finite reason itself shared the specific determination of Being—the *arche* which had a horse for its *telos*. Every moment in the dialectic is in the other, and the *telos* is, consequently, in the differentiating or mediating process, as well as in the kinetic *arche*: if we shared in this movement of the universal, accordingly, we should be aware whether the concrete phenomenal horse fulfilled its design—its idea and its ideal as phenomenon, *i.e.*, its Notion as a total concrete. Not sharing in the cosmic purpose, should we accept a horse, if it were the sole existent horse, as a perfected whole? Not necessarily. For we see a horse as an organism of a specific kind having certain obvious “ends,” and *so far*, we share in the original purpose to be achieved. If these purposes were awkwardly accomplished in the single horse of experience, we should be under the necessity of conceiving a fulfilment of these purposes in the creature before us which would more nearly approximate it to its *telos*. This would be the ideal horse to us—a horse of fact fulfilling the “notion” of a horse. As, however, there is a variety of horses differing in the characteristic features of a horse; some failing to fulfil one of the postulated ends of a horse, and others achieving, some one sort of excellence, others other sorts, we are largely *helped* to push on to an ideal conception; but that is all: only *helped*. In this process the ordinary concept—the *e pluribus unum*, is of value.

2. NOTE ON THE TERM "ONE" (page 53).

It is not the arithmetical unit nor the abstract point of mathematics which is the One of philosophy. Even the logical concept—the *e pluribus unum*, is not a unit; much less the metaphysical reality which we call the "idea" in and of a concrete whole; least of all the "Absolute Idea"—the one of Being and Dialectic in the many of individua. The ascending Categories of existence—the inorganic, organic, the vital, the conscious, the self-conscious—are not discontinuous, but a synthesis of Being and Thought continuity—a One.

And this is true also of individua and their relations to other things and themselves as growths. There is no discontinuity in the spiritual; and all is in very truth spiritual. It is in the modality of space, motion and time that discontinuity insists on troubling thought. Each monadic existence is certainly a definite determinate, but it is a determinate in and of and through Absolute Being. Absolute Unconditioned Being is Potentiality, but when it "Becomes" we are not to think of it in terms of space and motion; it is *itself* that it dialectically determines. Being immanent in things is simply Unconditioned Being immanent in its own conditionates which are within itself as all existence is. We have not presented to us God *and* the World but God as comprehending the Negation within Himself. To say that each individuum is a "for itself" and distinct down to its roots is not to say that it is separate in a spatial sense and independent. The necessities of its fulfilment as an activity demand the system of individua, and all are One in Being. The Dialectic also is a One of purpose in each for the Whole.

3. NOTE ON THE TERM "ABSOLUTE" (page 71).

- (1) The Absolute as Spherical Totality—(2) The Absolute as One of Fact and Process: Monistic Pantheism—(3) The Absolute as Sum of Experience—(4) The Absolute as Being-Absolute.

The naming of God as the Absolute Synthesis suggests to me the need of considering some of the modern uses of the word Absolute, regarding the presumed content of which there seems to be much variety of opinion.

(1) *The Absolute in the Sense of Spherical Totality.*

This Absolute embraces the whole orb not only of actual, but possible, Being—the All-One. It is spoken of as the "supremacy, unity

and the all-embracing sole reality of the Absolute,"¹ or, to put it otherwise, a supreme, one all-embracing sole reality which *is* The Absolute. This may be accepted; but it is vain to try to deduce out of this both experience and a coherent explanation of experience. That the fact of such an all-embracing One is possible to the intellectual imagination, and that it is indeed forced on it by the very nature of the dialectic, is beyond question. I think, indeed, I have unveiled its genesis in finite mind. It is the Empedoclean Sphaira. But such an Absolute has no content in its own right, and can have no content save that which is conveyed into it from the true Absolute or Actual of experience which, as a matter of fact, is a relative Absolute; that is to say, relative to the whole. "Man knows the All," said Valentine Weigel, "*in so far as* he is the All."²

We can affirm, nay, we are forced to affirm, The Absolute as All-One: but no more can be said. When we attempt to rationalise it, we purloin our categories and predicates from the true or actual Absolute of finite experience, thereby constructing a "somewhat" which is, and is not, these categories, as our mystic fancies and vague, super-subtle logicalities may suggest. (See all forms of Alexandrian neo-Platonism—not to speak of later developments.) Accordingly, to deduce experience and its explanation from the Absolute, in any sense in which that expression can be used, is to weave a web without threads. The Absolute itself has to weave its wonderful creation on the loom of Time.

The true Absolute, on the other hand, is the reasoned unity of the phenomenal presentation and the totality of experience as these rest in, and emerge out of, "absoluto-infinite Being": in brief, it is *our* human Actual bedded in unconditioned Being, and conceived under the category of the quantitative and qualitative infinite as this is necessarily generated in the finite dialectic which we call reason. But this reason is itself only one plane of Being in the Absolute Whole: its experiences and products are true, veritable, real, actual as God Himself: but this only as a "moment" within a spherical movement which we can never grasp in its wholeness. The noumenal in the universal concrete of our experience and also that concrete itself; in other words, the sum of the Actual, is a known, or at least a knowable, Absolute. We may and do (nay, must) abstract the noumenal moments in the Actual, as *prius* and possibility and ground of all existence, and call

¹ Royce.

² I put my own emphasis on this.

it "God"; but we never have it as an abstract, but as a concrete. This Noumenal of implicates *along with existence* (or the phenomenal presentation) is The Absolute Synthesis or Actual or Notion—is, in short, the full God. God is finite as well as infinite.

When I go beyond this, and would speak of The Absolute as exhausting the matter and form of all that is or can be, the notion is necessarily an empty schema. The moment we depart from our own subjective record we are apt to fall into all sorts of aberrations and illusions. We have left Experience behind us and are engaged in an exercise of the dialectic imagination. For example: not content with the mere affirmation of the All-One, I deduce certain conclusions from the "All" and the "One," and the Absolute then becomes—

(2) *The Absolute as a One of Fact and Process; or Monistic Pantheism.*

In presence of this conception, the Many almost disappears: individua are of little or no account—mere shadows on the wall. They are exercising grounds for the One—playthings of the Absolute. In the true Absolute, as yielded by the analysis of experience, we on the contrary, find the Many existing by as good a right as the One. If the constructive imagination, disporting in the reason-sphere, abstracts and contemplates the All-One, it cannot permit the terms or individua to count for anything at all in and for themselves. A one of fact or of process alone remains. Individuals are the non-significant atoms which feed the Saturnian maw of "The Absolute". And it is evident that the conclusion is inevitable. Is it not also evident that we have been purloining the idea of the One as we found it in the concrete of our experience in happy union with its contraries, and conveyed it as an abstraction into a fictitious All-entity of our own making? Have we not converted the metaphysical One into the numerical one? And with this result, that individuality, freedom, personality, responsibility, and the duty of organisms to fulfil *themselves* all perish. I prefer to say that I simply know nothing about "Absolute Being" save the "That" of it, although I am, it may be, entitled to certain legitimate inferences as to it from the True Absolute. "Who can find out God?" His ways are not as our ways: they are not even summed up in the ways of the True Absolute, although these are in and of Him as a moment in the total of His Being: and His thoughts are not as our

thoughts, although our Actual is contained as a moment and as truth within the full Orb.

I would illustrate further in order that my error, if I err, may be pointed out. I find in the True Absolute the Dialectic, *i.e.*, the Teleologico-causal Notion—as *prius* and efficient of the externalisation as well as mediating ground; including, in the externalisation, the mind and conditions of man. I cannot see *how* Cause *in* which lies mediated purpose or end, can determine itself into the contradiction of a self-conscious existence which is itself free—a free Cause in relation to its own conditions, *viz.*, I myself. I thereupon abstract this Causal Notion in all its given necessity and place it in the heart of the All-One. Nay, not content with this, I place the All-One under the causal category of the existent series as that emanates from Itself! The Conditioner becomes Himself conditioned. It is then apparent that it is by dire inner necessity that Saturn devours his own children. He, or It, cannot help Itself, and thus we have a mechanical theory of the universe, none the less mechanical that it is in terms of Mind.

Nay, “absolute” knowledge of any one “thing” is impossible for a finite being; for this would carry with it knowledge of “The Absolute”: and this again means a knowledge of the total content of Absolute Mind by a finite mind. Does any one seriously believe that this is possible? That men of passionate intellect, vivid imagination, intense feeling and lofty idealistic impulse should dream of this apotheosis of finite mind we can understand. But it is a dream—the poetry of Mysticism. May such men never be wanting among us. The Vision they strain after is the sole absolute truth. They point to the ultimate goal of finite spirit.

The belief that it is possible to know the Totality of the actual and possible as a coherent Whole rests on the presumption that we are outside and above the conditioned, whereas we are inside it. What Professor A. S. Pringle Pattison calls the “specular outlook of Deity” is not for us. But to conclude that, because we cannot know each thing in all its relations to the Whole, and the Whole in all its relations to each thing, we cannot be said to “*know*,” is, surely, absurd. God is not such a bungler as some metaphysicians would make Him out to be. There are degrees of knowledge according to the stage of Being occupied by the knower. Even a snail is aware of the object *truly* within its possible range: a higher knowledge sublates the experience of the snail.

What we *do* know is "The Many," and it declines to be crushed out in the interests of a One of process—be it a real or a dialectic process. It is "The Many" we are interested in, and "The One" in The Many. To cancel the former in the interests of the latter is to ignore facts; and if facts should yield to me, seeking for truth and truth alone, a contradiction, why, then, I must accept the contradiction as the last word of Thought in this my sphere of universal Being. And when I further find, in the sphere of sentient life and moral evil, that the fact of an inherent contradiction—the moment of Negation, alone explains what is painfully visible to all, I am confirmed in the modesty of my intellectual attitude.

The conclusion we come to is that the conception of absolute totality as the all-embracing Real of fact and process so comprehended as to reveal the harmony and How of differences, the meaning of the Finite in the one continuum of infinite Being, and the conciliation of contradictions in the sphere of the phenomenal, is beyond the power of finite reason. But it is not beyond our power to attain such a thought-comprehension of the Whole as shall so reveal the harmony of the Whole for knowledge and the subservience of contradictions to Ends (and their consequent transformation into mere contraries) as shall more than justify a Philosophy. We can know much, for there is possible to us a Dialectic synthesis of experience. Outside this, we are slaves of the intellectual imagination.

(3) *The Absolute as Sum of Experience.*

The Absolute may also be presented to us as the Sum of things and their relations real or logical (or both) as a system—in other words, "Experience" as an all-embracing system. And inasmuch as the world holds together, it is assumed that all contradictions in the diverse of experience—intellectual and moral—are conciliated. The Absolute is Perfect. Have I a right to say this? Sitting in my study, I indulge in the conception of an All-One which yet I find existing as finitude, and as parts in relation, which to my mind are contradictory. But there can be no contradictions in the Real, otherwise it could not exist as a *system* of experience: therefore the Absolute as Total resolves all these and is itself *totus teres atque rotundus*. Then, if all contradiction disappears in the perfect Absolute, the contradictions as presented to me cannot be the ultimate reality of things, but only "appearance," or it may be quasi-reality. Thus I start with the

statement, as known *fact*, of the *faith* in which most of us have been brought up, and use this presumed fact as a criterion of all experience, and as exposing its non-reality as tested by the Absolute. Why? Because, grant my definition of the Absolute, *It* can have for its content no contradictions that are not reconciled.

Thus "The Absolute" (*i.e.*, Infinite Being comprehending the totality of things) is perfect, and, as perfect, contains the conciliation of all differences. Certain writers of eminence affirm that they *know* this, and lead off with this *a priori* conception. But is it not evident that the Finite is *within* the Absolute and constitutes its manifestation, and that we have, in this finite (or on this plane of finite mind), contradiction and evil which are not conciliated. And unless we take the view of experience which the Dialectic compels us to take, *viz.*, that it is a teleological system in which God as Creator mediates some End in the only way in which that mediation is possible in finite terms, we have no ground for saying that the Absolute is Perfect; but quite the contrary. It is a merely formal expression. Translate it into real terms—its content, and we are compelled to say that the Absolute is notoriously imperfect. And yet I cling to the "faith" instilled into my childhood that Absolute God is absolutely perfect and that, if we could comprehend all, we should see that it was so. A Scottish boy has for his answer to his first serious questionings the "absolute decrees" and has impressed on him the mysteriousness of the "way" whereby God effects His absolute idea which is and must be absolutely good, although it seems to be evil. And even now it is, to the eye of Faith, a harmony to the pious peasant woman as she bends in sore tribulation over her dead child.

Now I do not know why it should be thought necessary to demonstrate that the knowledge of a finite being *within* a Totality called The Absolute cannot itself be absolute in the sense of equating itself with the Whole. But while admitting this, there surely must be a defect in the philosophical interpretation which would find in this fact a gateway to universal scepticism as to distinctions intellectual and ethical which actually exist. We may dare to say that the Absolute ultimately (nay, even now) reconciles all existence so as to bring it into harmony with "The Idea"; but meanwhile on this plane of Being the distinctions which our thought makes between error and truth, good and evil, are just as real as the finite reason that makes them. They are the steps by which we rise. The facts of experience—the contents of The Absolute do not exist for the mere purpose of being

cancelled in order that the Totality may collapse into a numerical One in which there will be death. Alone through contraries and apparent contradictions can there be Life and Thought.

Pantheism affirms Being, or Mind, as *anima Mundi*. If the above new Absolute be Pantheism there is then mind of some sort—probably *anima Mundi*, which, though sentient, is only mechanically active among the totality of parts—not creative and teleological. Nor can it, according to this Pantheism, be accurately said that the totality of existence is even an emanation from that which is other than itself. The Whole merely exists as a dynamic fact, and that is all. And yet not all: for the sentient Absolute THING, as sentient, feels that which is not itself: otherwise it could not be sentient. Where, then, does the Content come from? Suppose we drop the question, we must at least admit that the sentient THING, pervading the relations of its own content, feels the contradictions and its own process of conciliation, and that its life is a continuous conciliation of eternally emerging and conflicting contradictions—a miserable existence indeed.

Or, The Absolute in question is a merely mechanical system of things and relations in which there is no sentience—the contradictions and diversities in which are being constantly conciliated after the manner of the operation of a mechanical contrivance—an ingenious logical machine made by a Chinaman.

I make no pretension to criticise the eminent propounder of the above Absolute: it is merely as a student desiring information that I make the above remarks, and in no polemical spirit. I may not understand it; but in so far as I do understand, it seems to me a most unsatisfactory interpretation of man's experience and his cosmic position. The only world of human experience which could equate itself with a perfect Absolute would be the silent sleep of achieved unity.

The true Absolute can contain (I have in the text tried to show) only what we see, or may see, in the whole as the unified result of our experience (perception and thought); and, as so conceived, it embraces the ultimate Ground of the possibility of all things, our attitude towards which is agnostic. "It must be essentially impossible," says Professor Pringle Pattison, "for a finite being to realise the manner of the Absolute Life". Our *knowledge* begins with the Becoming and Begotten, *viz.*, Being-Absolute as passing and passed into the Concrete of Experience.

And what do I find in that experience? I find the Noumenal Universals which enter into the ascending stages of concrete subject-object,

viz., Being-Absolute, Being immanent; and the Objective Dialectic, this is to say, Will-initiation, and mediating ground (formal and formative) both moving towards, and both containing in their notion, Telos or End. There are three supreme Ends or Ideals, again, which are revealed by this dialectic, when it finds its way into Man, *viz.*, Truth, Goodness, Beauty. A little thought shows me that these words have no meaning save through their contraries—Error, Evil, Ugliness. That is to say, through their contraries alone are they possible as achieved Ends in me, and consequently in The Absolute *as here and now living*. This is the *Method* in or of The Absolute as creative. I thus see in the teleological comprehension of the world to which my Epistemology has compelled me, the meaning and elucidation of contraries—the golden thread which runs through all and conciliates all. Can I, a finite being, expect more than this? Is not this an interpretation of experience? Is it not a Synthesis of the Many?

(4) *Being-Absolute.*

Sometimes we find ourselves speaking of "The Absolute" in another sense, *viz.*, Being Absolute and unconditioned. And with reason; for Being-Absolute or Unconditioned is involved in our Absolute Synthesis. It is the object of Pure Feeling. It is *felt*, and subsequently affirmed, as non-finite or unconditioned ultimate ground, to be "known" only as Potentiality. Potentiality and Actuality correlative involve each other: in the world of thought each is a reality. This non-finite Timeless Ground we are (I have tried to show) driven to affirm, just as we are driven to affirm The Infinite in its other meanings; but at the point of affirmation we here again stop. The former is the underlying but living possibility, the latter the vanishing apex, of all experience—they are the termini of thought which loses itself in the Beginning and also in the End. While Being-Absolute is necessarily affirmed as in itself Being-Potential, we can affirm nothing *of* it save that which it reveals as immanent in the finite and determined, and those negative attributes mediated through the finite which, as negations of negations, are positive. The percept "Being-Absolute," accordingly, contributes nothing to the explanation of things. It is merely a necessity of Feeling and of Thought; and is, as such, part of the content of the human spirit. Ultimate reality or God is the Absolute Synthesis, and the Absolute Synthesis or Notion *contains* Being-Absolute as ground-moment of the whole. It reveals itself as

immanent in the world we know. It loves the finite and lives the finite, and gives to the finite all of reality and meaning that it can have. Being-Absolute, as one with its own Identity, is simply the one of all possibility.

In brief, as I have again and again said in my Epistemological Meditations, Man is within a system and of it, and outside it he cannot get by any beating of his wings. Is an ultimate philosophy, then, impossible? Not so; provided we accept the fact that the ultimate for finite reason lies within a sphere relative to the Great Whole, in presence of which Whole we bow with reverence—a reverence not born of ignorance, but of knowledge. The impulse to pursue Truth posits ultimate Truth; but it does not posit its attainment here and now any more than the pursuit of any other ideal, æsthetic or ethical, posits its attainment here and now. Are truth and goodness thus for man illusions? Far from it: they are *very God as immanent*—the idea as opposed to the Negation. We men are only scaling Olympus, on whose summit high Jove sits majestic, but not wholly inscrutable. Every stage of existence is within its own sphere true and good in its potencies and purpose, and each ascending movement takes the lower with it into a higher evolution in which it is not cancelled, but illumined. And the great God Himself receives the whole into His all-producing, all-conciliating Being, every part entering into the final consummation of the Divine activity or Absolute Idea, whatever that may be. Nay, The Absolute God Himself could not, in His own nature, *as immanent*, realise Truth, if He did not also realise the possibility and fact of Error; He could not realise Goodness if He did not also realise the possibility and fact of Evil. The words Truth and Goodness would have no significance—they would denote a mere static condition which by man was unnameable and to God unmeaning. Were it not so, the whole process of the Divine externalisation would be a futile amusement, an everlasting pastime.

If I say that "The Absolute system is a perfect system," I pause to ask, What are my grounds for saying so? And I fail to find them. On the contrary: Of Absolute Being as Potential and Ground, which Epistemology yields us, I can say nothing; but of the said Absolute Being as externalised and presented to my experience (and *ipso facto* revealed to itself); in other words, of the Absolute Synthesis, I cannot affirm perfection without shutting my eyes to facts. The reverse is

the case. That this Absolute System, however, is truly a rational system both experience and the Dialectic compel me to affirm; and I see also that a system consisting of individua, differences, oppositions, contradictions, and imperfections, must, if it be truly a "system," in some way reconcile these. I find the ultimate conciliation of all proclaimed in the final moment of the Dialectic. But as things exist here and now, they are not reconciled, and I am unable to reconcile them; but under the idea of End I can interpret them. And yet there remains the unreconciled outside. On this stage of its Time-evolution Absolute Being seems to have plunged into difficulties: there is an element of Chaos. This stage of its evolution is therefore, if an inevitable, yet a passing stage. But it is only a Teleological interpretation of the facts which entitles me to say that that which is now unquestionably imperfect is moving towards The Good which is Perfection. Meanwhile, the finite life of The Absolute is a very real life in which all distinctions are real distinctions. It is only through the stern reality of antagonism and evil that Harmony and The Good, it would appear, can be generated. It is in the great world as it is in the moulding of my individual spirit. The Absolute can accomplish its Ends only thus. To make a perfect rose it has to use soil and manure and stand the buffeting of winds and rains. If the far-off Good were possible for the finite externalisation without the realities of difference, the conflict of opposites and the labour of ideals, the externalisation would have been from the first Good; or, rather, a Neutrum, neither Good nor Bad. We men are born into a system which is *on its way*.

4. NOTE ON THE ABSOLUTE IDEA AS REALISED NOTION (*page 95*).

Hegel says that the Absolute idea is the "union of the Notion with its reality". That is to say, that the Notion as Thought is fulfilled in the realising of that thought as an existent and fulfilled world—which is the "Objective Idea". If that be so, the Idea as subjective unrolls itself into a world which is its Other or Object, and thus attains to itself. Is this Subjective Idea, then, to be called Absolute Spirit? Not, if we take account of Time; for Absolute Spirit arises only in the objective fulfilment of the Idea—it is the end not the beginning. If this be so, then the Idea as subjective is reduced to mere Potentiality, and a potentiality, moreover, which is not Beënt! For if Being is to be found anywhere in the Hegelian

system, it can only be (I say it with all submission) in the *fulfilment* of the Idea—the Whole. To find God in the Hegelian system we must affirm Him as Immanent Process in its totality—in which case He Himself would seem to be the *result* of a process: or, we must take Hegel's words that the end is the beginning. In the latter case, the beginning must already be Absolute Spirit holding in itself the process of its own realisation—that is to say, it is empty form with the potentiality of the possible in it.

It, accordingly, seems to me that if we are to find a starting point for the Hegelian Dialectic, it does not emanate out of Spirit at all but out of Being-potential, and that it merely gives us the evolved logical process constitutive of the Real of creation. Here, again, a difficulty presents itself. The logical evolution is either the *whole of Reality* or it is merely *constitutive* of Reality. If it is the whole of reality, it does not explain sentience, it throws no light on the mysterious "that" of things: it ignores Feeling. If, again, it be merely constitutive of Reality, Reality is outside it in a very real sense, and it fails to account for that.

5. NOTE ON THE IDENTITY OF BEING AND NOTHING (page 103).

If Being = Nothing there can be no interplay whereby Becoming may be generated. In the first reflective contemplation of the sensible universe a man exclaims, "All is Being". There are no differences in the thought "Pure Being"; consequently he adds, "All is One in so far as all is Being"; a tautology. Inasmuch as the beholder is himself a dialectic, he next says, "Whence," and it is this that yields the notion of "Becoming". All, he says, must have become out of that which is *not-Being*, *i.e.*, out of Nothing. So said the seer of Genesis. He then asks, and must ask, "How?" and then "Why?" or "For what purpose?" These are the inevitable questions of the subjective dialectic. Now, the "Whence" of Being out of Nothing yields the Notion "Becoming". He fixes his thought on this, and now finds that *it* and not "Being" is the initial fact and thought to a "reason". If he keeps his gaze steady, he next finds that Becoming is itself Being. This at least; but as he looks again in order to name what he sees, he says, "Becoming not only *is* Being, but it is itself out of pre-supposed Being". "Becoming" is, after all then, not the first but the second; for, it is ultimate unknowable Being on its way to its own determination.

What of "Nothing" now? The fact is that when he saw, or thought he saw, that Nothing was prius of Being, he was already in the grip of his own sense-imagination. The Being he saw was already determined. A confused chaotic mist it might be, but it was determined; and he had lost hold of the evasive Universal pure Being. But now he finds that All is Being—a One Whole, a Whole One—the first and last word of thought.

Being, then, is first and last; and now we are driven back to contemplate "Becoming" as second moment, *viz.*, Being as unfolding itself out of its own identity, and we find in that the Objective Dialectic (as *nisus* in Absolute Being)—the beginning of self-conditioning whereby a world may exist. The whole Objective Dialectic is there at once and I, a subjective dialectic, am at home with it.

And yet the fact of Negation remains; but it is, surely, to hypos-tatise it if we call it Nothing and identify it with Being. The "Other," and all others in so far as they are not the One, contain the negation of the One. The negation of the One is involved in being an "other". By virtue of this negation they are in themselves and for themselves. But A and B so far from taking to themselves "nothing" in order that they may be A and B are distinctions and unique characterisations of and within Absolute Being, and thus hold Absolute Being, *and more*. They are more than Being, I say, not less; and by this "more" it is that they sist themselves in the universe of things. The determination accordingly is not Negation (still less Nothing) but *contains* negation. The negation is in and through the affirmation, not the other way about. A *is*; and, further, *as* A it is *not* B. Thus we have Negation; but it is a form or process whereby the isness of A is (not constituted but) established—signed and sealed. Thus we should not say "determination is negation," but determination contains Negation. As a moment in a process Negation is, and has, Being; but only as a moment.

For, Negation is not "non-Being" affirmed by God along with Being in order to effect distinctions and pluralities; it is the *condition* of finitisation—the *condition* of difference and is, as such, the arrestment of the affirmation, and truly *denies* the affirmation (and God as in the affirmation), in the interests of bare, blank individuality. Negation is not simply the device whereby the rays that emanate from the central sun are differenced from one another: it blocks the free course of these rays in the act of their effecting an "each for itself".

Were it otherwise, the negation would be a mere tool or device in the hands of God, and we should have a monistic Pantheism. The Negation is the *conditio sine qua non* of creation and (if we may say so) is in earnest with God. The individual, in so far as it is Negation, gathers itself up into its soleness and antagonism to all else. It is a barren reflection into itself, and, with stupid persistence, it says, self, self, self. It is the stolid unmeaning singular. But as containing the "idea" of itself, the individual is also in outgoing *positive* relations to God and all else. As Negation the individual denies everything; as Affirmation, the positive of the idea, it opens itself to all influences and mingles with the universal.

In short, the Negation is not within the *dialectic* movement, save as implicit in affirmation: it is thus that it is within the Absolute Synthesis. Negation is not an act, but a fact within the totality generated by the movement of Absolute Being out of its own identity.

God in His Wholeness—Absolute Being, Dialectic and the Other—is not, consequently, an identity of Himself and the Negation; but only of Himself and the Other (*Natura* in its most comprehensive sense) in which Negation the abstract atom is. Negation is a sub-moment in a process; "nothing" is simply "nothing". Negate Negation and you have Being, it will be said. Not so; you have only affirmation, unless you first construe negation as "nothing": in other words, think it as beënt "something".

The ultimate form and fact of The Absolute is Identity in Difference, we are told. Be it so; but difference does not involve "nothing," but only "negation" of Being involved in determination of Being—a turn of the hand, so to speak, whereby the finite is made possible. Absolute Being does not pass into the negation of Itself, but *only of its own absolute unconditionedness*. It cannot effect itself as a many in any other way. It is that without which there can be nothing but Unconditionedness and Soleness, Silence and Death.

In determining a world, Being absolute and unconditioned remains as Fons and Source; but, in so far as determined, it is immanent in its own determinate which floats, so to speak, in the ocean of the Absolute Unconditioned. In short, Being immanent contains in its notion Being Absolute as ground and possibility of itself. There is no separation. And there is no contradiction; but there is opposition—opposition which gives a centre of resistance to Being now immanent in the individual—a centre of resistance. The individuum has now to work out its own life, which will be a blundering and calamitous

life save in so far as it subsumes the immanent idea in which reside its positive and universal relations.

Each thing or predicate *is* (we are told) "because" it *is* "not". Not so, I respectfully demur. Each thing *is*, and, as determined or affirmed it is *not* anything else—not even God. But the "not" is not the causal ground of its specific being but only the condition. It is in the identity of A as establishing *itself* that the "not" is to be found concealed.

6. NOTE ON HEGEL (*page 183*).

With Hegel the first (and last) is Absolute Spirit or Ego (Personality). The form of this is "Notion" or Thought and, as such, constitutes the Absolute Idea. The Absolute Spirit determines itself in a progressive evolution of notions which is Logic : which also is the Absolute Idea explicated. If, then, we can realise to ourselves Absolute Spirit as so determining itself, we have not only the Logic of the Universe, but also the comprehension of Absolute Spirit in all its reality as an object of contemplation, nay, of knowledge. The externalisation or *Natura* (in the widest sense of the word) is merely "The Other" of the Absolute Idea in its explicated notions. Every idealist must find himself in close sympathy with this conception. But it seems to me that Hegel, by a kind of *coup d'esprit* (if we may so say), reaches the First and Last, which is Absolute Spirit. I cannot see how a catena of evolving notions—"Absolute Idea" has anything necessarily to do with an Absolute Subject at all. I do not see how they lead me beyond themselves to a subject save by translating the term Idea into "thought in and by a subject"—the vulgar meaning of the term. The chain of notions may just be there as ultimate explanation of experience ; and that is all. [So it seemed to Heraclitus when he said The Absolute is Flux.] That they should be in an infinite Ego which so determines itself is not given in the fact of their being the ultimate of experience. They hang in the air, and the transition from their concrete totality to Absolute Ego as determining them, savours of Dogmatism. I cannot logically connect with the pure Hegelian Dialectic what we welcome in the Philosophy of Religion, namely this : "God is Absolute Spirit who is there not only in our thought, but as existent Person". And again (quoted by Hutchison Stirling on p. 145 of *The Categories*), the "Christian God is not merely the known God but the absolutely Himself-knowing God, and not merely conceived, but rather absolutely actual, Personality".

7. NOTE ON MYSTICISM (*page 205*).

God immanent as Feeling, Emotion, Love, is a subject which seems capable of being handled only by the Mystic or the Poet. But we cannot, as thinkers, be content with their utterances, although we must give them their due place in realising to ourselves the total notion of God.

God, we said, is the Absolute Synthesis: He is The All and The One; and what we may find in Him as immanent in things are only moments in His total Being, which, in its Absoluteness, is quite beyond our reach. It is for this very reason that many men, as I have previously said, and these not the least thoughtful, resile from all attempts to define "That" which can receive from a finite reason no *ultimate* definition, and would fain rest permanently in the vague feeling of Universal Being producing and sustaining all, in presence of which the Whole is but an outflow and reflow of almost passive activities. The mystic says, with Browning, "only in meditation the mystery speaks to us". And to a large extent, every thinker sympathises with this receptive and adoring attitude of mind. At the same time, I would point out that the feeling and thought of Absolute Being evolving all out of Itself as eternal efflux and reflux, while Itself all in all, when closely questioned, show that the mystic, while holding by the incomprehensible and ineffable, yet silently assumes much as to the nature of the Being in which his mind floats. In the first place, that which occupies his high meditation has all the (negative and positive) attributes which we have assigned to Being; secondly, it is the implicit of all and it moves out of itself to become explicit as a universe, *i.e.*, it is immanent in the Negation of itself; further, as immanent, it moves according to a certain process which may be more or less clearly apprehended: it is the beginning and the end, for the process is instinct with the end or idea which is in the beginning, although its final purposes are not made visible in their fulfilment here and now; and, above all, this Being is sentient, and capable, therefore, of an infinite hidden joy. Look closely at the mystic conception, and you will find it to contain implicitly all these characters. And what have we been doing in the past Meditations but endeavouring, on the basis of a criticism of knowing, to affirm these things? The mystic, who, I grant, is alone on the right track, cannot yet, with a wave of his shadowy hand, wipe out the attempt to perceive what he himself vaguely feels but indolently declines to realise in thought, while taking

credit to himself for superiority to vulgar anthropomorphic prejudices.

Nay, more, when we consider the grave question—Does God Feel?—in other words, Does God love His creation? the mystic can have no doubt about it; for it is Being, Feeling, Love Universal, which constitutes his formless creed.

It is, certainly, not easy to satisfy a thinking man that God feels, and goes out with desire and love to His creation. It has too anthropomorphic a ring. And yet much depends on this; for it really involves the question, Is God, *i.e.*, Absolute Being as creative energy, merely pure dialectic, or is He also an ethical God? The Formal moment of the great concrete must not be allowed to swallow up the Real. We find Feeling, and the ideal immanent in Feeling, in all creatures; and this is Divine Love.

The Trinity.—Speaking from the mystical point of view, we may say that (to use old and venerable forms) Absolute Being is the Father, inscrutable source, and immanent in all; the Will-Dialectic is the Logos; Feeling as sustained by Being and moulded by the Dialectic to ideas ethical and æsthetic in nature and man is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not an act, but the issue of the *fact* of Being and the *act* of the Will-Dialectic: consequently it is *of* the Father *and* the Logos. It is the Spirit of Truth—the Divine Breath that animates the world—the sole “Comforter,” for it is that by which man lives.

8. NOTE ON PROFESSOR JAMES AND SCHOLASTICISM (*page 205*).

Professor James criticises severely the attempt of theologians in the past to systematise the attributes of God, and goes so far as to say, if I understand him rightly, that all thought on such a subject is wasted energy in so far as it has no “cash value” for daily life. In other words, it matters not what we think God to be unless we can show the significance of our thought in relation to actual or possible conduct. My reply to this is, that I can never tell beforehand how knowledge of the Divine Nature may affect my conduct in this or that direction, any more than I can tell how the mathematics of the infinite or the physics of the molecule or of the ether may ultimately affect the conduct and the well-being of man. Am I, then, to shut off by an arbitrary act all scientific speculation? Professor James is the last man in the world to desire to extinguish the noble rage to

"know,"—the supreme function of man, and to call a halt until we have decided whether further knowledge would be "useful" or not. Besides, knowledge, if it be knowledge of the truth—nay, if it be only a genuine pursuit of the Truth, always must, by affirming God, or even *a* god, determine the plane on which a man lives; and life is conduct.

All will concur with Professor James in thinking that the scholastic discussions regarding the inner nature of God-Absolute are futile. On the other hand, while we have found that Absolute Being defeats all attempts to discriminate its characters, the metaphysics of all experience yields us God as creative and immanent, and points also with unwavering finger to His *nature*, in so far as that is revealed in His immanence. As immanent He has brought Himself within the range of man's thought. Thus far, then, I may hope to be out of the direct line of the arrows of Professor James's invective. But I would put in a word even for what he calls the "metaphysical monster" of the scholastic theologian. James himself accepts the fact of a "vital conversation with the unseen divine". There is here presumed that, away from the finite and its shapes and petty interests, there is an unseen—an infinite—a Ground in which all that is finite may find rest. We ask what precisely *is* this? The attempt to answer is not a mere freak of the human mind—a deliberate making play with adjectives, but an earnest and pathetic effort of the spirit of man to know something of the All-Being all-embracing and all-abiding. If scholasticism may be said to have failed as a speculative system, the attempt has at least exhausted a line of inevitable inquiry and left behind it the awe and mystery that invests the thought of God—a thought which has in it the power to lift every man who feels it out of his finite pre-occupations, and to bring him into contact with the Sole Reality. Does not this affect life? And if it affects life, it passes into every act I perform, including the humblest trading transaction.

This suggests to us to advert again to the question of the moral attributes of Absolute Being. These may be merely an attempt to put in fit language the ethical ideals of man himself; but as long as we do not speak of them as "properties" of God as if He were a "thing" we are supremely right in regarding them as verities within His activity. Assuredly they are the truth of God as manifested on this plane of His infinite life. This is the Divine mode of working, here and now, within our sphere of the Absolute. If in man as conditioned, virtue, goodness, wisdom, are the sum of his endeavour, in God

as conditioning and source, they must be in an eminent sense living. God surely is *in* the law of life which He imposes. When I say He is just, I mean that, according to His eternal counsels, Justice works out for the realisation of the Divine life in its moment of finitude. But in presence of the thought of Absolute Being *in se* and *a se* "I lay my hand on my mouth".

Even the thinking Agnostic who speaks of the "primal mystery" has his God. It is the irrelevance of anthropomorphic categories as applied to God that makes him relegate the question of God to the unknowable. God as Being and Thought held by reason, and felt (as S. Augustine says) to be "interior *intimo meo* ; superior *summo meo*" he is unable to realise.

9. NOTE ON ORGANISM AND THE INDIVIDUAL (page 238).

If The Absolute in the sense of the concrete Totality is an immanent necessity through and through, it is a waste of time to talk of man as self-fulfilling and self-directing. There is no use blinking the fatalistic outcome of pure Monism in its bearing on man's life. Philosophers have need to beware of "inadequate ideas" as much as the "man in the street". The monist, when he sees clearly, must hand himself over to Calvin and preach predestination, the absolute decrees, and the doctrine of arbitrary grace. Spinoza tried to wipe out teleology and consequent ideals, and yet he had himself to posit an ideal—a better and a best under the phrase "fulness of Being".

Principal Caird, in his *Philosophy of Religion*, clings to the notion of The Absolute in the sense of The Total as an *organism* in which Man exists, without due consideration, I think, of the facts of experience. Some are so enamoured of The One (unlike God who loves difference) that they fail to see that an organic one without *substantive* parts is a contradiction in terms. That a "thing" is its organising idea, we may accept: it does not follow that the parts "are not," simply because their truth or reality, here and now in a special organism, is attainable only in and through the whole—that is to say, by each sacrificing its individuality to the whole whereby alone it truly attains to *itself* in the *specific complex thing* before us. As a general statement, this is true of all organism ; and even also of inorganic nature itself wherever, in any whole, there is more than an ultimate unit. It is the way of the world. It would seem to follow

that the multitude of individuals which make up this world of experience "are not" in themselves, but that each attains to itself only by being "not itself" as an isolated individual—as denying itself in the absolute whole. Now this rings true as a general statement. But note that we know nothing of difference save as phenomenal difference. Being and the Dialectic, determining this or that, are universals and yield no difference except to thought. In the experience of subjective mind the fact of difference, as difference, finally emphasises its own individuality in the affirmation of Ego-hood. The determining idea in each thing is a One; and it is governing. As a concrete determinate it gathers round it its vassals—the various elements or reals which go to make it phenomenally possible. When the phenomenal dissolves, the idea vanishes: when the idea vanishes, the phenomenon also dissolves into its parts which now enter into new combinations. The individua in an organism do not derive their entity from the organism as such: *they are always themselves*. In short, it is the positive or affirmative in each individuum that carries with it its relation to all else, and its efficiency as constitutive of a higher organism, and, finally, of a coherent world.

True, the individuum cannot be itself except in so far as it is *not* other things; but the negation of all else is formal cause only—the ground of its *possibility* and does not *constitute* it. The existence of *A* is not through the negation of *B*. This holds of all units or individua, whether parts of an organism or outside an organism. It is incorrect, therefore, to say that the individua "are not" *for themselves*. In and for themselves they *are*; it is only in so far as they enter into an organism that they "*are not*" (for themselves alone but) for the organism: the idea of the organism controls them, subordinates them to itself, while yet leaving them in isolated individuality. In *this sense only* can they be said to be and not to be. The dialectic resolves the contradiction for thought. It is through the "not" of all else that any one individuum is *possible*; but it is not the "Not" which *constitutes* the individuum itself: this is a synthesis of affirmation and negation. It is *through the positive as prius* (to use Time-language) that the negative is affirmed as ground of the *possibility* of the positive. "*A*" is *A* and not *B*; but it is the affirmation "*A is A*" that carries in it the Not *B, C*, etc. So the "idea" of an organism does not determine the parts of an organism "for themselves," but only selects them and determines their *relation* to the idea, and to one another as servants of the idea. The harmony is a harmony of diversity, of mutually negating individua subdued to a

unity of purpose. The part or individuum is, all the while, an *in se* and *per se*, and does not, when sacrificing itself to an organic whole, commit suicide. If all the parts did that, what would become of the whole? The individuum can fulfil itself *for* itself, we have seen, only through "the other"; and it may be said that it is in the interests of *its own* fulness of being that it gives itself away.

The being of the individuum, then, does not consist in its ceasing to be. Its function in an organism is to cease to be for itself *alone*: it has to fulfil itself in its positive relations; that is all. It does not negate itself, but only its own negation of the Whole and of the One of Being. To be itself, it must go out of itself; to find itself, it must lose itself: otherwise there would be no organised world. An army engaged in a campaign is not an "organism," but an "organisation" instinct with one purpose to which *each* man must sacrifice himself, if the army is not to become a rabble. But each soldier is also himself a one of organism, and in sacrificing himself to the whole he works for himself; that is to say, for his own personality and its worth and dignity in his own eyes. The attainment of this is possible only through sacrifice of all that is unworthy in him; but he does not thereby sacrifice his true self—his own personality and worth; on the contrary, he gains them. A machine-made army will be defeated in the struggle of nations. So in the strife of life generally: I sacrifice even my will to the larger Will of God and so take the Will of God and my will into identity, but I am thereby myself greater, stronger, more of a personality than ever. Whether God has thereby made me *His* I may not know; but I do know that I have made God *mine*. And in every ethical act which I achieve I make God mine. If this be so, the Absolute Synthesis is not explained by the word Organism save in the sense in which we call an army an organism. A philosophy fails which does not find such a point of view as shall include all experience, and does not crush out the most insistent part of that experience in a fanatical prostration under the Juggernaut car called "The One," and that in the sense of a unit!

In so far as man is *merely* an individual he is negation or naught, and in so far as the One cancels his individuality he is naught; in so far as he is a merely attitudinal individual subject he can live only through the "other"; in so far as he is a self-conscious Ego, the "other" is of infinite dimensions including God Himself. But in the largest sweep of life possible for him, he can never commit suicide. The Ego stands firm and unshakable as the centre of his universe.

10. NOTE ON MORAL CONTRADICTIONS (*page 244*).

All are familiar with questions of casuistry. Those serious cases that paralyse action fall under the conflict of duties—the impossibility of fulfilling one moral law without breach of another. The moral situation thus created is itself confirmation of the supremacy of law in the ideal that is to be found in Harmony or Justice alone. Moral rules (as Burke, I think, has said) must sometimes give way to the principles on which they rest. All questions arising out of a conflict of duties are due to the weakness or the intellectual impotence of finite man, and the difficulty of adjusting to the ideal standard varying circumstances as they arise.

In point of fact, not only at each stage of moral progress, but at every hour of each day, a man is, more or less consciously, determining for himself Law as Harmony or the Ideal; and the fluent relations of men and things and even the idiosyncrasies of ourselves and others have to be taken into account. So subtle, indeed, are these relations and so incalculable the ramifications of every act, that it is impossible to draw up a manual of moral tactics. Happily so; for if it were possible, we should, by enforcing it, produce a race of moral pigmies.

Further, if experience teaches that a particular virtue, exclusively pursued, passes over into evil, this, again, is evidence that Harmony under the regulation of the Will-dialectic is the final truth of our nature—the ideal and standard of all ethical activity. And as regards the various virtues, Aristotle, in seeking the mean, is simply reconciling opposites, finding the harmony that defines the virtue.

It seems to me to be a morbidity of mind that dwells on the contradictions, intellectual and moral, that beset man, and in the name of these contradictions would arrest thought, and even sap moral and religious foundations. I am not sure that I understand the position, but I should like to make a few remarks on the assumption that I do. How could there be a world save in finite modes? How could there be finite modes save as different and, by the very fact of difference, contrary and opposite? The conditions of Time and Space and the very nature of the act of knowing prevent a man seeing things whole: that is all. It is no new doctrine that all man's science is, and must be, partial. My business is to adapt my conditions to the purpose of my existence as a self-conscious being alone can do, recognising that without these conditions a self-conscious being—a will-reason would die of atrophy.

We may construct a fiction called a Perfect Absolute and find that

from this universal point of view there is neither good nor evil, cause nor effect, and, I suppose, neither man nor beast. They all pass into a conciliating One or Total. Difference vanishes and we have nothing left but a vacuous "somewhat" which cannot be named—verily the "night in which all cows are black". But suppose The Absolute is "Being" which loves to live in difference and can have the sense of living only when involved in differences and oppositions, and who has poured out these differences and oppositions as the very mode of his finite life; who becomes, meanwhile, conscious of Himself as The One in those infinite differences which are his manifestation as finite reality; that the differences have consequently all the reality of Himself as finitised and are the way (the only possible way) whereby he can unfold his Being; suppose this, I say—Suppose, in short, that existence is a committal of Absolute Being to imperfection, as the only way of subserving a final Perfection in the sum of individuals, are we not then nearer the true reading of Experience than by interpreting the whole into a chaotic futility—the only alternative? The Absolute, whether of necessity or not, *comprehends* Time and Space. Each plane of its evolving contains its own truth—not a "relative" truth in the banal sense of that term, but a "moment" in the total life of God.

It seems to follow from the point of view to which I am adverting that—

(a) Self-realisation and Altruism are incompatible moral ideals. But suppose that by a study of man we can show that the former is attainable only *through* the latter properly defined—how does the argument stand then? Again—

(b) Justice has no "absolute worth" where there is no private property. First, I would remark that property rights are a very small part of Justice, which has to do with the claims of conflicting personalities in their whole range and in the most subtle hourly relations; and that, of course if there are no personalities, Justice vanishes. So Gravitation has no "absolute worth"; for it cannot exist where there are no bodies.

(c) If by saying that Morality is "empirical" it is only meant that it arises out of the relations of beings to their own constitution, their fellow-beings and their environment, what then? The moralities have "absolute worth" within these life-conditions. The physiological process by which a plant grows has no absolute worth outside the plant.

What is the worth of anything in totally different life-conditions? Nothing at all, it may be. What is the worth of Light outside a visible universe?

(d) One virtue, we are told, will be of more absolute worth than another at different times. True. The religious idea, primitive engineering skill in providing for the material wants of a starving city, self-sacrificing courage will all have their turn of dominancy according to the urgent pressure of circumstance. In certain crises of a nation's life heroism is of more worth than piety, if we have to choose. If I wish to know the relative worth of virtues, I must think of them in quiet hours. Their relative worth in an ideal harmony—the teleological conception of Man—is precisely their absolute worth. But there are times when one virtue must be emphasised in order that all the rest may be conserved.

Man seeks and must seek for the Law of his nature which resides in the Ideal of it. Plato is of more “absolute worth” within the universe than a cut-throat burglar.

(e) What, then, about ethics from the point of view of The Absolute? I answer, If The Absolute contains man, it contains the ideal of man as a verity—the ideal of body as well as the ideal of mind. The Absolute cannot ignore its own Content—least of all if it be a creative Absolute. Of old time we have heard that God's ways are not as our ways; and if we speak of Absolute God, this is true; but if we speak of God as immanent in His own Content, His ways are precisely our ways. But it is difficult to find them out. It is not required of any man that he should be such a devoted worshipper of the letter as to hold that in God's eyes all men are *alike* guilty. If this be true, then it is high time we set ourselves to find out what God would have of us: and this is the aim of Ethics.

Law—Moral Law—the Imperative has always been the same since finite reason appeared on the planet. The real of the Law, the Content, and, consequently, the Moral Ideal has had a history. And when we say that Ethics has a history, we do not take the restricted view of the evolution of the ethical in racial types or in successive epochs of human endeavour. We mean that it has a history now and to-day in every child and in every man. In the midst of difficulties, apparent contradictions and deflections, each is seeking and affirming Law. Were there not these difficulties and deflections, the ethical life would not arise. Man would be an automaton; and you could not call Aurelius virtuous, nor good, nor bad. The absoluteness of moral distinctions is affected by historical development precisely to the extent to which the absoluteness of astronomy is affected by the misconceptions incident to historical development.

There was a time when celibacy was held in higher honour than the domestic virtues, and also when the unjust man who saved the life of a citizen received the civic crown, while the just man pursued his lowly unregarded way. What is all this but to say that men take limited views because of their limitations, and that the larger ideal view to which philosophy tries to attain and which harmonises all and gives to us absolute ethics, is slow of coming—not that it is non-existent. So with ultimate physics. The absolute truth in the sphere of nature, of the ethical, and the æsthetic is in the idea, that is to say, in the immanent *purpose* of God-creative. Even were we never on earth to reach it, it would still *be*. The universal dialectic affirms it.

And as to individual men here and now, while the ideal and the Law in the ideal are unattainable, each has fulfilled himself when he has striven to realise his ethical possibilities. God is not a hard taskmaster.

When we talk of Ethics in their relation to a fiction called "The Perfect Absolute," are we not guilty of a grave error? If there be such an Absolute it must stand in *some* relation to its own content of differences and oppositions. These latter do not exist within the Absolute merely for the purpose of being annulled in the interests of a smooth perfection—a dead-alive sentience, or a somnolent balanced experience. They constitute the realities of the Content, and it is these that we have to interpret. This is philosophy; above all, ethical philosophy. The Absolute we can alone know is precisely these differences. It is the *Immanent* Absolute (or God) that is our field of interpretation; and *that* our Dialectic tells us is Teleological.

11. NOTE ON INDIVIDUATION (page 265).

Being and Dialectic are the universals of Reality and of Form respectively.

One of the fundamental principles of interpretation which pervade past Meditations is the fact of Negation. It is necessary to the explanation of the "many". It is not to be regarded as a positive substantive moment in the objective dialectic, but as implicit in the moment of affirmation or "determining-so,"—the idea. The "idea," which seeks to fulfil itself as "end," fulfils itself as a concrete, we said, in terms of the sense categories, and as fulfilled it is a "determinate" or "actual". It is in the moment of End fulfilled as a phenomenal determinate that the positive idea as essence and the

negation that gives individuality meet. Thus we say that the individual is a synthesis of affirmation or idea, and of negation. The negation is thus a constitutive principle of activity contained in the affirmation and enters into the method of the universe.

The positive "idea" or affirmation finds its vehicle of utterance in a spatio-motor world which is thus as "Being" a reality, just as the "Antigone," *e.g.*, is a reality; and as phenomenon is a true revelation of the meaning of God. Implicit in the possibility of its existence, however, is negation.

Individuals or monads thus constitute the universe and their positive relations effect a One in the Many—not merely the sustaining One of Being but the formative One of dialectic and purpose. And, as *individuals*, each monad resists all others and also the universal One. Each contends for its own bare individuality and thus the universe is movement,—life, strife, failure, success, and a slow and painful evolution in Time of the Absolute Idea. According to the grade of Being of each is the activity and the resistance of each to the idea in it (which is God immanent) and to the Universal One. This attitude of the individual to the One I have called Cosmic Sin.

When the objective dialectic becomes self-referent and self-conscious in, or as, a finite being, we have Man. We call his individuality by the name Ego. The peculiarity of this evolution is that Ego is not achieved as a "determinate" in and through the phenomenal, but is conscious mind *affirming itself* as a determinate and *eo actu* constituting Ego. In short, the will-dialectic in sentient mind or subject extricates itself in the act of affirming sentient mind or subject and constitutes self-conscious subject.

Mind in affirming itself and thus raising itself to Ego carries the affirmed sentient mind and all its possible content with it into the new evolution. This is the "matter" of the activity of the Ego, the nerve and constitutive energy of which is the Will-dialectic. Thus two things happen: the Ego as an individual is, as the most intense of all individuals, pure negativity and at the same time through its constitutive will-dialectic presides over the whole matter of sentient subject and directs that matter to the ends of truth, goodness and beauty. It seeks the One in the sentient Many. Thus it is by its very nature both pure negativity and necessary universality.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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