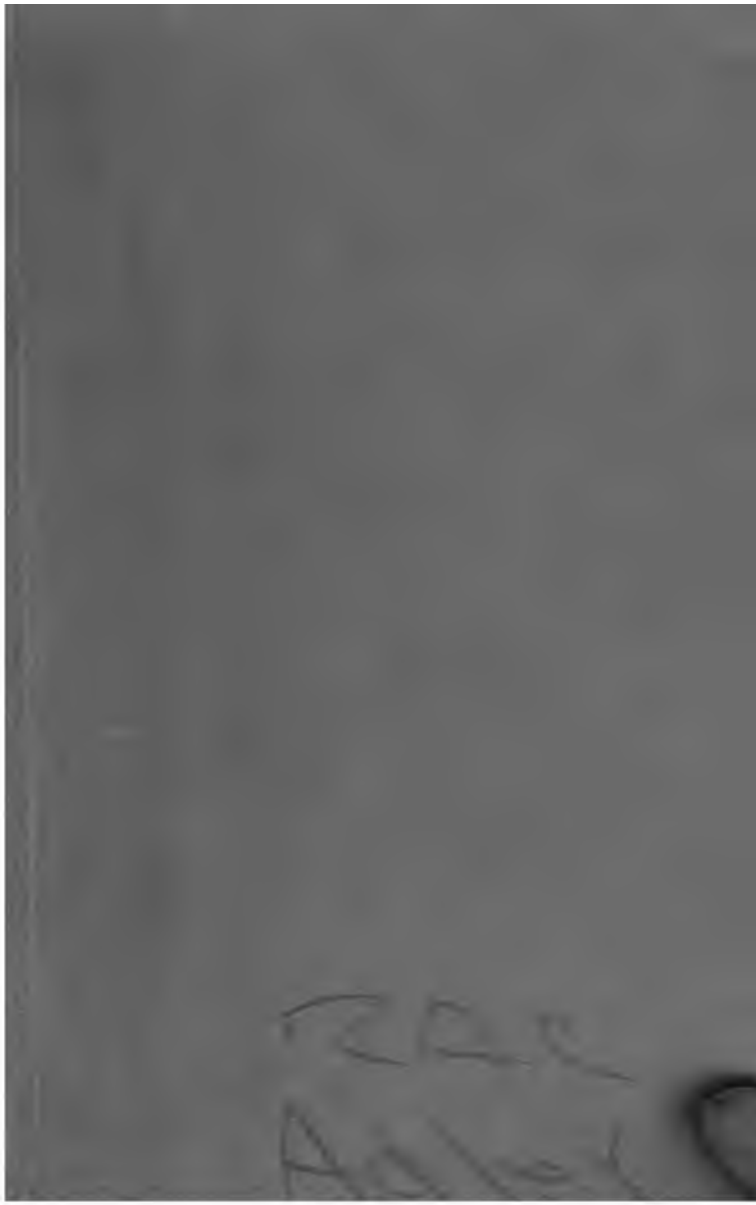

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THE RELIGION OF DUTY

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BY

FELIX ADLER

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and Marriage and Divorce

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

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THERE has been a growing demand on the part of many people interested in the ethical and religious problems of the age, for a book by Professor Adler, giving the results of his thought and practical work along these lines. To gratify this demand has, naturally, been a wish on Professor Adler's part; but his exacting labours as Leader of the Society for Ethical Culture of New York City, and his interest in the constantly enlarging international fellowship of Ethical Societies, together with his work as a university professor, and the no less exacting service of the various public causes which have challenged his efforts, have rendered impossible the needed leisure in which to formulate his thought and give it appropriate literary expression. Through the past twenty-eight years, however, Professor Adler has been speaking regularly to the large audiences which have gathered on Sundays to listen to his teachings; and, fortunately, these public utterances, while de-

livered extemporaneously, have been faithfully re corded by capable stenographers, whose report afford a large revelation of his best thought throug these years.

In the absence of a more carefully prepared volume it has seemed that to draw upon these spoken ad dresses for some expression of the principles whic are most central in Professor Adler's thought, and t place them within the reach of the many people wh desire to know more fully the conclusions of thi earnest moral leader, would be a real service to th ethical and religious interests of the present time.

Some of the material which goes to form the presen volume has been published in Ethical Addresses an The Ethical Record; but the larger part is here pub lished for the first time, while that which is repub lished has been more carefully edited and arrange with a view to giving the sequence necessary for an adequate understanding of the point of view and th resulting conclusions.

It is hoped that in the near future another volum may be published, presenting the more practic aspects of Professor Adler's work along the line c social ethics, as the present volume gives the di tinctively theoretical phases of his thought.

The work of the editor of this volume has bee mainly that of eliminating those features of the spoke

address which would be out of place in print, and of arranging addresses delivered in various years in such a manner as to give continuity and organic sequence to the thought implied in the title of this volume. Some element of repetition is inevitable in such a compilation, but care has been exercised to eliminate all repetitions not absolutely needed to make clear the context of the several chapters. The opinions of this work, even though it has been prepared without his personal supervision, may safely be regarded as entirely those of Professor Adler; and the expression is, in the main, his, with only such modification as seemed necessary in converting speech into print.

The task of editing has been one of pleasure, and has been performed with a feeling that to put into the hands of earnest people these words of one who has proved a leader to many, will be to extend an influence which may contribute to the progress of the higher life.

LESLIE WILLIS SPRAGUE

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THE RELIGION OF DUTY

CHAPTER ONE

FIRST STEPS TOWARDS A RELIGION

THERE is something in religion besides its doctrines, its symbols and its ceremonies. There is something underlying, which we cannot afford, and do not wish to lose, — without which our lives would be poor and miserable, indeed. That which is everlastingly precious in religion is the conviction that life is worth while, because there is something going forward in the universe that is essentially worth while, something shaping itself, towards that

> *"One far off divine event*
> *Toward which the whole creation moves."*

Our individual lives are so poor, so petty, and so meaningless that there must be something greater which our lives subserve, in order to make them worth the while, something infinitely beautiful and holy, working itself out in things, that may be served by

even our poor lives. We need the conviction that this world is not a colossal loom on which the shuttle of chance weaves the garment of unreason and despair; that our ideals are not mere wishes, with no surety of fulfilment; but that at the heart of things there is that which will make them real.

How may such a conviction be gained? How shall we get a religion? If we use the old familiar word, "God", to designate the power that makes the ideal real; the power that works toward infinite truth, goodness, and holiness; towards the time when this poor humanity, handicapped with its brute heredity, shall manifest its full glory and perfection,— then, the question is, where shall we find God? Shall we find Him in the heaven above? We know that there is no such place; that the blue vault over us is a mere illusion of the senses; that a few miles of atmosphere envelope the globe on which we live, and that beyond there opens, not heaven, but black abysses of space. Shall we seek God in nature? Science tells us that nature is a soulless machine. There is needed some other warrant than science for seeking a beneficent power back of nature. Science cannot help in the quest.

Again, shall God be sought in the Bibles of antiquity? These oracles of old are discredited by many, and at any rate, I cannot take my faith at second

hand. I cannot believe, because Moses believed. I cannot maintain that there is a divine power, because it is asserted that, in order to dispel all possible doubt of his existence, God once opened the heavens and spoke to men so that they actually heard his voice.

If then, I cannot, with the help of science, find God in nature, nor with the help of the Bible, find him in the past, where am I to look for evidence of Him? I must look where Jesus looked for God, and found Him. The wonderful thing about Jesus was his extraordinarily valuable method of discovering truth. We may not be his followers in everything, but this method we may accept. The religion which crystallized around him, and enveloped his personality, is something in many ways foreign to his own thought. The Christian religion is very different from the religious ideas of Jesus.

Now where did Jesus discover the evidence of God? What was his method? He said: "The kingdom of heaven is within you." He taught his disciples that they must have the clearness of vision to discover the spiritual presence, which though it escapes others, is close at hand. His thought was that God does not reveal Himself in stones, or trees, or heavenly constellations, so much as in the hearts of men; that, to find evidence of a divine life in the world, one must

examine the life of men. Man is the evidence of God This was his method.

With this method in mind let us again ask what is the way to a religion? In seeking an answer we may well begin by setting explicitly before our minds what for many at least, cannot be the way.

The way cannot be to prostrate our intellects at the feet of authority; to bind that Samson, the human mind, and give him over into the hands of the Philistines; to abjure our reason, to perpetrate an act of self-mutilation in that noble part which distinguishes us from the brutes. We cannot, as some eminent persons in the nineteenth century have done, cross over the bridge of scepticism, back into the stronghold of orthodoxy. Whatever religion we adopt must be consistent with the truths with which we have been endowed at the hands of science. It may be ultra-scientific — indeed, it must pass beyond the teachings of science; but it may not be anti-scientific. Whatever religious convictions we adopt, must be in accord with what is roughly called the modern view of life. When we ask for a religion, we ask for one that shall be consistent with the new view of the Bible, and of the creeds, as of their human origin; with the conception of an unchangeable order of nature, not subject to miraculous interference; with the new aspirations of our age, and responsive to the new

social need. We dare not give up one iota of what the human intellect has won, in order to purchase, by a craven compromise with the past, the peace of the lotus-eater.

On the other hand, we need to be equally warned against expecting too much from the intellect, against the supposition that by the mere use of the reason we can get a religion. One cannot get a religion by merely trying to think out the problems of the universe. That is the mistake of many, especially of young men, troubled about the problems of life. They suppose that by mere thinking and reading they can obtain a solution. One may study all the idealistic systems of philosophy from Plato down, following the subtle, daring, and often brilliant arguments by which these thinkers attempted to prove the existence of the divine in the universe; and, after reading all their books and mastering all their arguments, be no nearer to a religion. In the same manner, one might go through all the text-books of science—that science which I have just said we may not contradict — with a view to finding in the scroll of Nature the marks of design, the revelation of the divine, and, at the end of the search, be no nearer to religion than at the outset. It is a mistake to approach the subject of religion from the point of view of the intellect.

All really religious persons will agree that religion is primarily a matter of experience. One must get a certain kind of experience; then philosophic thinking will be of the utmost use in explicating what is implied in that experience; but the experience must come first. Imagine a person who has never seen the sunlight out of doors, who has been shut up all his life in in a room dimly lighted by a feeble lamp, and who has been instructed by some professor in the laws of reflection, according to which light is thrown back from the myriad objects of nature; of refraction by which the strong shaft of light is broken into the beauty of the prismatic colours. Could such a person have any adequate conception of light? He might talk wisely about it — more so than others perhaps — with the help of his diagrams and formulas. But, not having seen the light, not having rejoiced in it, he would not know what light is. And so a person who has never tasted water might obtain from a chemist a certain intellectual understanding of it, might learn what elements enter into it, and in what proportions. But he would not know what water is, as the traveller knows who has journeyed far, and who, parched with thirst, finds the cool spring, and kneels at its brim, and drinks. You cannot know what light is unless you see it, nor water unless you taste it; you must have experience of them to know

them. So, too, you must have experience of religion, in order to know it. But this experience is not at all a mystical thing. It is not reserved for the initiated and elect. It is accessible to every one who chooses to have it. I wish to consider not any particular religious system, but the material of which all religious systems must be built, the experience which must antedate and prepare the way for any genuine religion whatsoever. The distinction between fact and theory must be kept in mind. There are external facts which are recognized as facts, before we can trace them back to their causes, or deduce from them their law and inferences. So there are certain facts of the inner life which must be grasped, before we can successfully go back to their metaphysical or doctrinal presuppositions, or deduce from them their corollaries. The *conditio sine qua non* of religion, the indispensable prerequisite of it, is to get possession of these facts. Let us consider what they are.

The main fact of all is that Spirit exists. I use this word in default of a better. I do not mean that ghosts exist, nor yet one universal world-ghost. I understand by "spirit" that which is not material, and in so far is unlike a chair, or a house, or a stone. The first and main fact to grasp is that something non-material really exists. The great scientific thinkers have long since given up the materialistic hypothesis

of the universe. It lingers only among the semi-educated. But it is one thing to declare, as a purely intellectual judgment, that materialism is not well founded, and another thing to find in one's own experience the fact that there is spirit. Some go so far as to say that there is spirit in everything; that in the crystal there is, as it were, a spirit petrified, in the flower a spirit dreaming, in the animal a spirit just starting into waking consciousness. That may be so, and it may not. How can we tell? We do not know the crystal, or the flower, or the animal from within. There is only one object in nature which we know on its inner side, and that is what we call Self. The first and main fact to lay hold of is, that something non-material exists in ourselves. How shall we ascertain this? By experience. And by what sort of experience? By a kind of experience that is possible to the simplest and humblest. This ever is the mark of religion, that it does not address itself merely to the highly gifted, and cultivated; but, also, to the simple and humble. And of the sort of experience of which I am going to speak, the fundamental truths are accessible to every one.

By what sort of experience, then, shall we ascertain that spirit exists? On the whole, by searching, painful experience. Pain is unavoidable, if we wish to achieve supreme results. The rose, Religion, grows

upon a bush that is barbed with thorns; and one must not be afraid to have his fingers lacerated by the thorns, if he would pluck that rose. For instance, a person who endures great bodily suffering with fortitude, the martyr on the rack, or the victim of incurable disease on his painful couch — another kind of rack — will find that there is something in him which physical agony cannot overcome, cannot even penetrate to; something not of the senses, which all the assaults of the senses are powerless to vanquish. I do not mean that every victim of chronic ailments has this experience. On the contrary, many are completely prostrated by their suffering — lie low upon the ground, as it were, and moan and wail in helpless misery. But those who have the strength to make an effort may have this experience. The spiritual part in man must be elicited, and it manifests itself only in those who make the effort. Epictetus said: When the pain is in my limb, well, it is in my limb. It does not reach me, my veriest self, the spiritual part of me. When it is in my head or in my heart, it is in the head or in the heart. It does not reach me. What he found, others have also found; and every one may discover it, if he chooses to put forth effort. This experience is within reach of the simplest and of the humblest.

I am not here endeavouring to explain the existence of suffering in the world, nor to solve the

problem of evil. I do not see that it can be solved. Alphonse XII of Castile is credited with the audacious remark that, if he had been present at the creation, he could have given a point or two to the Creator, and shown him how he might have improved upon his performance. Why there should be so much wretchedness in the world; why there should be cancer and consumption and Bright's disease; why human beings should be tortured as they are, I do not know. I shudder at the presumption implied in those who pretend to explain. But I say that evil existing, the world being such as it is, we can win from evil, if we choose, an inestimable good, namely, this conviction that there is in us a power not of the senses, the conviction that spirit exists, and exists in us.

And surely it is an unspeakable compensation to be freed from the tyranny of the senses, to be led back to the fountain of being, to the higher sources in which our strength resides. One may say, that, in a world ideally conceivable, we might have obtained this precious conviction without needing to undergo the ordeal of pain. To which the reply is, that in a world ideally conceivable, this might be quite true; but in the world as it is, the ultimate reasons for the ordering of which we cannot understand, we have ample cause to be thankful that we can turn suffering to such far-reaching ac-

count; that we can distil from the bitter root this divine elixir; that by manfully bearing the pains of the senses, inexplicable though they be, we can gain the certainty that a power not born of the senses — holy, availing, victorious even in defeat — exists and works in us. It is this effect of pain that accounts for the serenity and peace of many patient sufferers, a peace and serenity which surround their beds of misery as with a kind of halo.

It is related of St. Sebald, who dwelt at Nuremberg, and for whom Peter Vischer built the loveliest of shrines, that one day in the dead of winter he came to the hut of a cartwright, where he was wont to stop in going his rounds among the poor, and that he found the man and his family nearly perishing with cold. There was no wood left in the house, and the bitter frost had penetrated the room, so that the icicles hung in long rows from the rafters. St. Sebald said to the man: "Take these icicles and put them upon the hearth and use them for fuel." The man did so, and fire blazed up, and he and his family were saved. What a childlike, transparent legend is this, expressive of the truth that the very ills which seem calculated to destroy us, the miseries and heart-aches and pains, may, if we use them rightly, become the means of animating us with a new warmth, filling us with unlooked for cheer.

And this is true of the moral pains, as well as of the physical. Guilt, too, if we face it, confess it without reserve, reveals the fact that there remains in our nature a part untouched by guilt, a power of resilience that can slough off the guilt, as the serpent sloughs off its skin; that we can triumph over the evil that we have done, as well as over the evil that we are obliged to undergo; that there is in us a fount of inexhaustible rejuvenation.

But this recognition in us of something not sense-derived, is not all that experience teaches. We discover also in our inward experience, if we attend to it, a sufficient clue to what spirit is,—at least as to the ways in which it manifests itself. It manifests itself not only negatively, by resisting the onset of the senses, defying them to do their worst, "bearing it out even to the crack of doom"; but it shows itself, also, in positive ways. When we speak of matter, we mean something inert, passive. And when we speak of force, in any strict signification of the term, we mean merely that which causes the movement of matter, which transfers matter from place to place. And there is this that is peculiar and characteristic of matter: that every material thing is distinct from every other, that no two material things can ever be identically the same; because the very definition of a material thing implies that it must

occupy a certain place, and no two things can occupy the same place. But of spirit, the very opposite is characteristic; the same spiritual life may be in you and in another. Therein, in my opinion, the nature of spirit is revealed; that two may be, in the spiritual sense, one; may participate in the same being, supplementing each other, each necessary to the wholeness or true existence of the other; nay, that not only two, but many beings may be thus united, as in the family, the nation, humanity, and in all spiritual unities. The very idea of spirit is that of unity expressing itself in plurality, and of endless differences fused together in an all-embracing unity.

If it is asked whether anything so abstract as this conception, this subtlety of metaphysics, can be found in experience, and in the experience of the simplest and humblest, I answer confidently: not indeed in its abstract form, but in its concrete equivalent. In a perfectly practical way, this idea that our life is, at bottom, identical with the life of others may be found in the experience even of the simplest and humblest. He who genuinely loves another realizes this truth, and knows that oneness of life may subsist between two persons who yet maintain their separate identity, that two may remain two, and yet be one. Nor is this a mere metaphor of speech, a pleasant poetical conceit, not to be taken

in a literal sense. We cannot admit, in so serious a discussion as this, metaphors and conceits that hide the facts. How then does one who intensely cares for another come to realize this undivided oneness, despite of and mastering the separateness? He realizes it by finding that the joy and happiness of the one he loves are really his own joy and happiness; that when evil threatens he would rather avert it from the other than from himself, rather intercept the stroke of calamity himself than let it fall upon the beloved head. The popular expression for being in love is "losing one's heart to another." The heart is a vital organ. One may crush a finger or shatter a leg so that it must be cut off. But the injury need not be fatal. One can live on without a finger and without a limb. But any injury done to the heart is mortal. To lose one's heart to another means that thereafter one is vulnerable in that other. Thereafter one's whole existence may be quickened and brightened, or darkened and desolated, by what happens to him or her; so closely are the fortunes and interests of the two beings intertwined.

We might compare the human soul to a circle having for its centre the indestructible sense of selfhood, from which centre radii go forth to every point of the circumference; and the relation of two souls in love, to that of two concentric circles each centred where

the other is. Yet the comparison is faulty, for each of these circles both includes and is included in the other, and no relation in space can adequately represent a spiritual relation of this kind.

The spiritual meaning of love transfigures the passion, transforms the fleeting fancy into a constant and growing attachment, the passing romance into a story without end, whose interest never flags. The unity of life is the keynote of love; the actual and ever increasing blending of two into one lends to love its noble beauty, its divine significance.

The fact, however, that there is a spiritual power in us, namely, a power which so unifies our life with that of others, that these others come to be regarded as other selves — this fact comes home to us even more forcibly in sorrow than in joy, is thrown into clearest relief on a background of pain. For instance, in the case of the love of a parent for an unworthy son. Your boy is a part of you,— not merely physically, but spiritually as well. The tie of blood often seems like a mere accident, a trick of nature. The boy perhaps resembles some one else far more than you. And yet, he is a part of you. Over his faults you agonize almost as if you yourself had committed them. At least, you feel that you somehow bear the burden; that you are disgraced and put to shame. And yet, from the spiritual point of view, you cannot

cut him off. He is your other self. Much as you may abhor his qualities, you will labour over him, seek with endless patience to win him back, bear the burden of his misdeeds, because you and he are somehow identified in your consciousness. And the more you thus identify yourself with him, the more you let the misery of that other self pierce you, the more will you reap, at least, a spiritual gain. You will obtain spiritual insight through this moral suffering. You will realize that you and another are indissolubly connected.

It is said to be wrong that there should be such vicarious suffering as I have described, that one person should do evil and another suffer. But such vicarious suffering is the rule of the spiritual world. The parents of whom I speak know that they must suffer vicariously. Every one who loves another, knows that when that other becomes guilt-stricken, he must suffer vicariously; as when one whom we love is stricken with cholera or small-pox, we may not desert him, but will risk even our life in the attempt to save him. In the New Testament we read the story of the Prodigal Son, who acted so ungratefully toward his father, demanded his share of the estate before his father was dead, went away into a far country, wasted his substance in riotous living, and, at last, when reduced to the lowest level of penury

and degradation, bethought himself of his father's house and said: "I will go to my father and say to him: 'Father, I am no longer worthy to be thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants.'" And when his father saw him, he fell on his neck and wept with joy, and said: "Bring forth the best robe, and put a ring upon his finger, and shoes upon his feet, and let us be merry. For this, my son, was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found."

I have often thought, in reading this touching story, that one more touching still might be told — of the prodigal son who does not return, and of the father who waits and waits in vain, and yet does not cease waiting and yearning.

And again the painful love which we bear toward enemies — strangers who have done us a wrong — teaches the same truth. In their case, there is not even the tie of consanguinity to suggest a physical explanation. There is no physical connection whatever. Simply on the ground that they are fellow-beings, we recognize that they are other selves; that the degradation of humanity in them, of which their wrong-doing is evidence, concerns us — not as objects of their maleficence, but in so far as we, knowing better than others the evil of their state, are especially called upon to redeem them, to call into activity their latent spiritual life, which is the same spiritual life

that is in us. And it is on this account, that what is called the forgiveness of enemies, or, better, the redemption of enemies, has become a test of true religiousness. And one who has so disciplined himself as to undertake this difficult duty; who does not hate his enemy because of the injury received at his hands, but unfeignedly compassionates him because of the moral evil to which he has fallen a prey — such a man understands in a practical way the idea of spirit, of the unity of life with life. He is religious, whether he expresses his religion in definite doctrines or not; he has seen the light; he has tasted the water; he has found, in his own experience, the fact on which all religious systems are built.

And there are other inward experiences which lead to the same fundamental spiritual truth, the truth that our spirit is indissolubly connected with all spirit whatsoever. Two additional experiences of this sort I should like briefly to mention. When we work for great objects which lie in the remote future, the benefits of which we hope will some day accrue to humanity at large, we are sustained in our efforts, whether we be conscious of the thought or not, by the feeling that time makes no difference, so far as the achievement of those ends is concerned; and that it does not matter who the particular person may be who is to reap the advantage, whether it be ourselves

or some one who will live ages hence. What we labour for, is to upbuild the kingdom of the spirit. And we conceive of ourselves as somehow identical in being with those who are to come after us; for it is in the nature of spirit that its separate members, dispersed though they be in space and time, are still one at the centre. For all these rays of light that enter for a season into separate human bodies, may be regarded as emanations from one luminary, in it united. So we may say, concerning those who shall come after us, and reap the benefit of our labours, that we shall attain to increasing perfection in them. And the more we meet with obstacles and difficulties in our efforts to promote the world's betterment—and every earnest effort is sure to meet with such obstacles; the more painful the struggle is—and it must be painful if it is to lead to lasting results; the more clearly, as a benign compensation, will shine forth in us the truth that we are one in spirit with those who are remote from us in space and time.

Finally, there is the experience of the decline of our powers and faculties in old age, usually so humiliating to old people. The time must come to each of us when the blood shall run sluggishly in the veins, the form be bent, the movements slow, the eyes dim, and the keen blade of thought shall lose its edge. And yet, in just this period of life, we sometimes see a

beautiful spectacle,— aged men who insist on dying in harness; who though perfectly aware that what they can do is pitifully little, yet insist on doing that little, and take a kind of glory in doing it, despite the fact that it is little — nay, because it is little. Why do they rejoice in taxing the remnant of their strength to achieve results the value of which is almost inappreciable? And why does their conduct seem beautiful? Because of that which is implied in it, whether they themselves are fully conscious of the implication or not; namely that the power which works through us toward the development of this, as yet, unfinished world, is sufficient unto its ends. The least that we can do is worth doing, because it is backed by that infinite spiritual force which proceeds, through the instrumentality of our efforts and beyond our utmost efforts, toward its goal. The greatest we can accomplish is really little; but in the glow of achievement we are not apt to remember this. We are more apt to be full of self-importance. It is in the moment of weakness that we realize, through contrast, the strength of the power in whose bosom we lie, whose very humble organs and ministers we are. It is then that we come to understand that, isolated from it, we should be nothing; at one with it, identified with it, we participate in its eternal nature, in its resistless course.

Thus it is that our experience in bearing pain may yield the consciousness that there is a spiritual power in us. Our experience in taking upon ourselves the burden of the faults of others, may teach us that we are one with others. Our experience in working for future generations, teaches us that this unity is unaffected by remoteness of space and time. Our experience in persisting to labour despite weakness and poverty of achievement, may bring home the truth that we are one with the universal spirit, which is sufficient to those ends which are, also, our ends.

The religion that shall satisfy, must be a religion of progress, of evolution, of development, understood, not in the scientific, but in the moral sense. To the question: How can one get religion? the answer is, "through experience." We must find in our own inner life the facts which are capable of being interpreted in terms of a religion, the foundations upon which the superstructure of a helpful religion can be built. This is true with regard to any religion whatsoever, and it is true with regard to a religion of progress. We must be progressive ourselves, if we are to have faith in progress. We must be constantly developing, in order to have faith in unbounded further development. And, especially, we must be progressing in a moral direction. This, in a general way, will be conceded by almost everybody.

But I wish to call attention to a special condition that must be fulfilled, in order that we may be really progressive. That special condition is that we shall acquire the habit of counting the mile-stones on our way, of comparing the moral status we have at present attained, with that which was ours, say five or ten years ago; that we shall take account of our development, note our net gains and losses. Only those who fulfil this duty of comparison, frequently reviewing their life as a whole, with a view to appraising the results, can be really progressive.

Are we getting on intellectually? Is our mind becoming richer, our power of thought more strenuous, or more feeble as the years go by? Are we more capable, or less capable of mental concentration, of getting the meat out of solid books? Are we more disposed to feed on the chaff of literature? No one can make intellectual progress who does not carefully watch himself in these particulars, and try to recover lost ground, if he be lapsing. The same truth applies to that moral progress in which we are more especially interested. Do we possess more fortitude, or less, in encountering unavoidable pain? Are we in better or worse control of our passions, of our tempers? Alas, that many of us, as we grow older become more irascible, a trial and burden to our daily associates! Are we more broadly charitable in our judgment of others, in

our conduct toward others; more ready to make allowance for their faults, to bear with their shortcomings? Are we more, or less, devoted to the large public ends of humanity? Has our idealism been a mere ebullition of optimistic youth, or does it grow wiser and saner with the years, burning with a steadier glow? Are we learning resignation, renunciation, and trust? It is by the honest reply given to these questions that we must decide whether we are progressing or retrograding. And, if the latter, let us at least face the fact. Let us pass through the ordeal of self-confession first, and then, — courage! No one is committed to evil unless he is willing to be. No one is lost unless he desires to be. From the detestable thralldom of evil, the worst of evil-doers can free himself, if he will, even at the last moment.

The religion of progress can be a real religion only for those who progress. If we move forward and upward, we shall have faith in an upward movement, without limit; we shall have the trust of which the poet speaks, "that somehow good shall be the final goal of ill."

CHAPTER TWO

CHANGES IN THE CONCEPTION OF GOD

IN treating a distinctly religious subject such a that of the present chapter, it is not inexpedien to first point out the fact, that when I conside such themes I express my private views, an commit no one to them but myself. The members o the Ethical Society are bound by nothing but th acceptance of certain elementary moral truths, an are united in the endeavour to add to these, believin that truth is progressive and may be increased in th world, and that there is a duty to try to increase it Members of an ethical society properly seek to sus tain one another in an attempt better to realize i daily living the principles which are accepted by all On great moral questions they are united; in matter of religious opinion they are entirely free to differ.

What I shall have to say upon a matter of relig ious opinion may not, then, be construed as a creed to which the Ethical Society and fellowship shall b

committed, but must be regarded as my personal opinion. Yet, I deem it highly important that one should speak upon religious subjects, and submit his thought to others, to be accepted or rejected in whole or in part as may to them seem wise. And especially is it important to speak upon the idea of God, which, although still precious to many, seems to be held in an increasingly vague and indefinite way, and to be fading away into the region of impalpable analogies and nebulous sentiments.

I, for one, feel that indefiniteness is intolerable to a robust mind. If I have a thought I want to grasp it firmly. I want to see an idea in its distinct outlines, and hold it clearly or not at all. Blurred images; faint, vague, impalpable, haunting things in the mind, cannot at all help us.

It is not only among the so-called liberals that this mistiness is coming over the idea of God; but it will be found in quarters where, perhaps, it is least expected. For instance, at the bi-centennial celebration of Yale University, there were two very striking illustrations of this increasing vagueness and indefiniteness. Yale, the college of Jonathan Edwards, is situated in the State of the blue laws. It has been the stronghold and citadel of orthodoxy. And at the two hundredth anniversary celebration, the principal poem that was read, contained a passage

in which God was spoken of as "the spirit of the interstellar void." Surely this savours of pantheism. The analogy seems to be to the ether that fills the interstellar space, God being a kind of spiritual ether filling the abysses. What can be more indefinite than such a conception? Jonathan Edwards doubtless would have turned in his grave if he could have heard that poem read. There was also a passage in the beautiful address of President Hadley, in which he said: "Ours be the reverence of those who gather silence from the stars above and from the graves beneath." A sublime sentiment, but think of its implication; the reverence of awe-struck silence, as in the presence of a mystery too deep to fathom, too vast to frame into speech. And yet silence may mean excess of richness, an overflowing wealth, or it may mean utter vacuity. The great thinkers may be silent because their thought is too vast for them to express; but, depend upon it, if silence becomes the rule in the world with respect to an idea, then that idea will soon utterly perish.

Is there anything distinct to be said on this subject? In order to lead up to my fundamental thought I would relate an incident which occurred during one of my travels on the Continent. Visiting the City of Cologne, I rose betimes one morning, in order once more to see the cathedral before taking my departure.

It was a chill and misty morning. The lower part of the huge edifice, the nave with its buttresses, the heavy western towers, the mighty platform on which it all rests, stood out distinctly, formidable and forbidding; but the spires with their pinnacles rising from window to window, from story to story, and becoming ever airier, lighter and more graceful as they rose, — those spires, which the evening before had given us such a sense of progression as from height to height towards some transcendent highest, were now completely blotted out. The crawling, circling fog had shrouded them. I entered, and within, too, there was chill and gloom; the few worshippers, scattered here and there, seemed to be lost in the vast interior. I seated myself on one of the wooden benches, and presently my attention was attracted to a woman of the peasant class, kneeling a few feet from me. She seemed to be in trouble, and was praying distinctly enough for me to hear. She was talking to a saint, to a being who was not there, as far as I could see; nevertheless, she was talking to him earnestly, praying for help, as a poor man might go to some more fortunate brother and ask for material assistance; or as a sick person might go to a doctor and ask for relief; or as one might go to a friend and ask for counsel and comfort. I knew that that saint had been dead hundreds of years, and that his bones had

long since mouldered into dust. And as I meditated on this, I happened to turn my head, and I saw a really beautiful sight. The rose window above the entrance of the cathedral was catching the first morning rays that were penetrating the fog. All afire with ruby red and amethyst and sapphire and gold, it seemed like a rose of light cut out of the solid blackness. I wondered whether this peasant woman's faith was not, for her, like that window, a kind of rose of light, cut out of the solid dark of her lowly destiny, and letting in what seemed rays of unimaginable splendour, from some transcendent source beyond. And yet, I asked myself, how is it possible? Surely this being to whom she addresses herself is but a product of her imagination. And as I meditated on this, the place wherein I sat was forgotten, and a throng of visions came upon me. I saw, in my mind's eye, other imaginary beings who had been appealed to in the same way that this peasant woman was appealing to her saint. I thought of all the gods and goddesses, the endless legions of them, that have been worshipped on earth. I thought of the great gods of Egypt: Ra, Osiris, Isis, Horus, and their train. I thought of the Gods of Babylon: Marduk, Bel, Ishtar, and the rest, — names once powerful to conjure with, and which yet sound strange in our ears, which many have never heard. I thought of Indra, Varuna,

Agni, Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, worshipped among the Hindoos; of Ahura Mazda, and Ahriman, — worshipped of the Persians; of Zeus and the Olympians, among the Greeks; and of endless legions of gods, worshipped on the continents of Asia, Africa, America; a catalogue so long that it would take hours merely to recite it: gods, product of the imagination like that saint, who yet have been worshipped, to whom men have bowed the knee, and stretched forth their arms in adoration, crying to them in their distress for aid and comfort.

If one sees a person talking in an empty room to somebody who is not there, the natural conclusion is that he is crazy. Have all these millions of beings who have been talking to beings not really present been out of their head; and are we the first of humankind to be sane? Is that itself a sane thought to entertain? And again, is it not right to say "by their fruits shall ye know them?" Suppose that you had the power not only of eliminating religion for all future time, but that you could abolish it retrospectively from human history! Would you do it? Could you wish that this worship of imaginary beings had never existed? Think what you would obliterate from the past. Certainly the fairest and noblest buildings ever raised on earth, were built in honour of these Nabus and Mardukes and Ammons

and Vishnus and the rest, — beings, the product of the imagination, that were not and are not and never will be. There are, for instance, the great mountain houses of Babylon, temples in the plains of the Euphrates called mountain houses, because they were fashioned after the manner of mountains, since it was believed that a god should dwell on a mountain. These mighty types of architecture with their seven stages rising heavenward, their shrines encrusted with gems and gold, their gates covered with bronze, their winged portals and colossal bulls and lions, would never have been. The Egyptian temples, that of Karnac, for instance, would never have been. One is almost tempted to envy those who have seen it; for even from the mere description of it, what an effect of grandeur does it produce, with its avenues of sphinxes, its obelisks and, above all, its Hypostyle hall, with a forest of columns, some of them said to be seventy feet high and twelve feet in diameter, and beyond these columns, what was once the adytum, where in silence and darkness dwelt the gods! Again, there would never have been the marvellous rock-temples of India, sculptured out of the enduring rock. Nor would the Parthenon, the wonder of the world, nor the fairest and sublimest specimens of sculpture and painting have ever existed.

But apart from art, what comfort, what help have men derived from these beliefs! What rivers of joy, sometimes wild and turbid, but often deep and pure and serene, have flowed from the well of religion! There must be some proportion between cause and effect; the cause is apparently a purely imaginary conception, a fancy, mistaken for a fact; and the effects are these magnificent manifestations of beauty and art, of comfort and joy to man, and above all, the conviction that this falsehood is truer than any other truth. Is this reasonable? Can we understand how a falsehood could produce the conviction, not only that it is true, but that it is truer than any other kind of truth? Is the human race mad, or is there another and more satisfactory explanation? Was the peasant woman in the cathedral after all not so entirely deluded in talking to a being who was not present? Was the rose window of her faith somewhat more than a mere idle phantasmagoria of a childish brain?

Let us turn from the past, and ask why it is that some of the wisest men still believe in the existence of a God, of whom they have had no direct experience? and, while in every other case they demand verification, in this case they believe in a being whose existence they admit they cannot verify. Why do they abandon the scientific standard of verification? What

is there that leads great and wise men, of the noblest character, to accept this belief?

There are three motives, the emotional, the intellectual, and the moral. The first is the feeling of wonder at the order and beauty of nature. This feeling is admitted to be one of the prime factors of religion. It is the feeling which expresses itself in the words of the psalmist: "The heavens declare the glory of God," and in modern times, in that marvellously beautiful poem by Coleridge, the "Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni," in which he apostrophizes in turn, the mountain itself, the rivers that flow down its sides, the glaciers and the avalanches.

"Who sunk thy sunless pillars deep in earth?
Who made thee beauteous as the gates of
Heaven beneath the keen full moon?
God! Let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!"

Many men have tasted the deeper experiences of life, the supreme joy, and pains, disappointments and bereavements. But the deepest experiences of life have been missed, if we have never been thrilled by the emotions which come from the thought of that vaster

life of which ours is a part, if we have never allowed our minds to travel beyond the boundaries of time and space, beyond the limits of earthly life and this planet on which we dwell, facing the thought of that eternity which encircles our little existence as the restless waves encircle some islet in the sea. It is wonder, evoked by the thought of the vastness, order, and beauty of the world, that has led men to the idea of God.

I should pity myself, and pity those who are associated with me, if the Ethical Movement were a cause of leading men away from this wonder.

The second motive is the intellectual, that striving for unity which is characteristic of all thinking. Modern science seeks to reduce everything to unity, to interpret all the forces of nature as modes of motion. But the phenomena of consciousness, of sentience, of thinking, cannot be explained in terms of matter and motion. Must there not be some supreme unity which underlies both the material and the spiritual, and unites the two; some focus outside of experience, in which are collected all the rays of being, and from which these rays stream forth? The search for this unity is the intellectual motive. It is curious that Kant, the redoubtable destroyer of the proofs of Theism, in the very same chapter in which he puts forth his destructive conclusions — in a passage which, by its fire

and feeling, contrasts strangely with its cold setting in ratiocination — asserts that the inadequacy of the proofs will never rob men of their belief in God. He destroys the proofs, but he asserts in the same breath the indestructibility of the belief. For he says that the mind of man, when troubled by these philosophic doubts, is like a person in a dream; and that a single glance at the wonder and beauty of the world will rouse man from the dream of doubt, and cause the mind to lift itself up from greatness to greatness, unto the thought of a supreme greatest; from the condition to that which conditions it, as far as the thought of the absolute and unconditioned. This thought of a supreme unity is one from which we cannot escape.

But the moral factor is more potent than the emotional or the intellectual. A great fight is being fought in the world, at least in the human part of it. Good and evil are pitted against each other. Men feel themselves under the sternest obligation, to throw their weight on the side of the good, to help it to prevail. We are but at the cock-crow of civilization, in the moral sense; the private life of men, their family life, their life in cities and States, the dealings of nations with one another, are still covered with the deep shadow of moral obliquity and error; and it will take ages of struggle before even a palpable approximation toward the moral ideal will be realized. If the fight is so hard, and the victory

so distant, what courage can we have to go on with it, unless we believe that somehow, in the nature of things, a tendency exists favourable to ultimate victory? Does not the very fact of obligation argue that such a tendency exists, and that a Being exists — call it by whatsoever name — to which that tendency is due? Can there be a rigorous obligation — and the moral obligation is such — to achieve that which is unattainable? Can the demand for a justice, higher than has ever yet been seen, be a deception? On the other hand, if the demand for justice is realizable, then, in the nature of things, there must be provision that it shall be realized; then there must be, as it has been expressed, "a Power that makes for righteousness."

But what profit do these arguments yield, so far as any definite idea of God is concerned? The order and beauty of nature suggest ineluctably the idea of a being from whom this order and beauty is derived. But can we form any conception of the kind of being capable of governing these tremendous forces, of overlooking this interminable wilderness of worlds, of marking out the pathways of the uncounted myriads of stars that sink into and emerge from the abysses of space? Can the analogy of human intelligence give the least clue to the nature of such a being — of the human intelligence which is baffled and confounded whenever it seeks to grapple with the prob-

lem of origins and ends? Is there not a difference, not only of degree but of kind, between a finite mind and what is called an infinite mind? When one uses the phrase "infinite mind," can he make others understand, can he understand himself, except in a purely negative sense (as the not-finite), what he means by the terms?

It is said that striving after unity forces upon the mind the idea of a supreme unity. Unquestionably; but what conception can be formed of a being at once the author of matter and of mind? Is such a being material? Then how could he beget mind? Is he purely spiritual? Then how could inert matter ever be derived from him? How can the same cause have for its effects, stones, and earth, and exquisite feelings like love, and thoughts? The idea of unity cannot be escaped. There may, perhaps there must, be some supreme unity. But can the mind form the slightest notion of a focal unity beyond experience, gathering up all the rays of being within itself?

Even of the Power that makes for righteousness, can more be said than that it tends to back up moral efforts, and to crown them? Can that Power be described in terms borrowed from human morality? Can one say that it is "good?" Seeing that the world is full of evil, as well as of good; that the cry of pain and suffering has gone up since the human

race began, and must continue; that the world is full of moral evil, of black iniquity and wrong,— how can one assert that the author of this world is "good," in the human sense? What may be said, and what I, for one, fervently say, is that matter exists in order that it may be subjected to spirit, that evil exists to be transmuted into good, and that as truly as moral aspirations are not mere mockery, so truly there must, in the nature of things, be provision that they shall be realized. Here the wish is not father to the thought, but the duty of seeking moral perfection, begets the belief that perfection can be achieved. And because we are parts of a larger whole, thwarted or assisted by causes lying outside of ourselves, we are justified in postulating a Power outside of ourselves which co-operates in the attainment of moral ends.

So, I believe that there is a higher Being, an ultimate, divine Reality in things. This Being is not like a man, is not He, or She or It, did not make the world, as a carpenter makes a table, or as an architect builds a house. In the attempt to describe this Being, language faints, imagination grows dizzy, thought is paralysed. On moral grounds, and in the last analysis on moral grounds only, I assume the existence of such a Being. All that I can say, by way of description, is that there really exists that which corresponds to the moral ideal,

that there is a Power back of the effort toward righteousness, which gives effect to it, beyond our finite power.

But let us return to the woman in the cathedral, who worshipped the saint as if he were present; and to the thronging multitude of worshippers who have stretched forth their arms in adoration to the endless legion of the gods. We can now explain the surpassing belief of the worshipper, in his god. That god was never the real God, but stood as a representative of something real. There never was such a being as Bel, Osiris, Ahura Mazda, or Jupiter. And yet, the practical Roman people believed in Jupiter, and the great Scipio stood every morning before the statue of Jupiter and paid his devotions there, before he proceeded to the business of the day. Jupiter and all the host of gods were but creations of the imagination. But, in varying degrees, they symbolized something real. These gods served as fire-tongs, with which men sought to take hold of the glowing coal of the idea of the Eternal, which would otherwise have wholly eluded their grasp. They were like fragile vessels in which men sought to catch the everflowing wine of the form-defying Infinite; seeking if, perchance, they might thus obtain a few drops with which to quench their thirst. They were metaphors, not consciously known as such, to be taken not literally, but figuratively. For while a metaphor is

purely imaginative, yet it represents a reality. As men have sometimes been metaphorically described as animals, as great chiefs have been called the lion or the eagle of the tribe; so the Ultimate Reality in things has been described as if it were a man, and has been invested with human name and form.

The conception of God in the minds of the great majority of the worshippers of to-day is incomparably higher and nobler than any that have preceded it. Most of the grosser elements which debased the objects of religious worship in former days, have been eliminated; and the ethical attributes have been accentuated. But it is, none the less, a metaphor. I cannot believe that such a Being is actually enthroned above the clouds. The figure of Jehovah, like that of the rest, is a product of the imagination. He does not really exist; but he stands, and in a higher degree than any that preceded him, for what is real.

Some time ago, a young girl, in whose mental and moral development I am interested, put to me the question: "What do you believe about God?" In rapidly collecting my thoughts to answer her, I became aware that there were two impressions which, out of concern for the truth, I felt bound to convey to her. First, that there is a higher Power, that beyond the things we wot of there is, not night and emptiness, but light and excess of fulness. Second, that

this higher Power is not a man, nor like a man in form, but that the images of the gods are tokens and signs, valuable not in themselves, but in what they feebly hint. These two statements mark my position.

Atheism is the denial of a higher Power. But the existence of a higher Power I affirm.

Agnosticism contends that the only certainty is scientific certainty, based on truth verifiable in experience. My contention is that there is another kind of certainty, namely moral certainty, based, not on truth verifiable in experience, but on truth necessarily inferred from moral experience. Agnosticism neither affirms nor denies the existence of an ultimate higher Power. I hold myself warranted in affirming that there is such a Power, though I profess to know as little as the agnostic what the nature of that Power, considered in itself, may be. The assertion that there is such a Power is plainly a step beyond Agnosticism. I take this step on the ground that all that is best in me urges me to work for a state of moral perfection in the world, and on the ground that the attainment of this goal is not dependent on human effort alone, but may be hindered or helped by Nature. If, then, I believe in the ultimate attainment of the moral end, I am forced to assume that there is provision in Nature looking to the achievement of that end.

Theism, as held hitherto, is the assertion that its man-like image not only symbolizes, but is that higher Power; that the sign is identical with the thing signified.

Can we pass to a position beyond Atheism, Agnosticism, and the prevailing Theism? Can we *hold apart the sign and the thing signified*? Can we, as we look through a glass darkly, remember the defects of the medium through which we gaze? In the stage of civilization which we have reached, we ought to be able to make this distinction, which our predecessors did not make. We too, indeed, must have our sign, or we shall lapse into silence. We must continue to fashion our conception of Divinity after our own images, but we ought to be able henceforth to remember what a religious symbol is, and what purpose it subserves. We ought to be able to hold fast this fundamental distinction between that ultimate Being, which we may believe to be really existent, and the creations of our imagination which are not really existent, but valuable only because of what they suggest. The flag of our country is sacred to us because of the patriotic ideas which it suggests, and not because we believe that any particular sanctity attaches to the mere bunting. The ring, which is bestowed by the hand of love, is precious because of what it suggests, not because we believe that the little fillet of gold contains or em-

bodies love. The religious symbols are likewise precious chiefly because of what they suggest.

But, finally, is the Theistic image of an individualized, masculine Being, the kind of symbol we can use? Does it correspond to our highest and best ideals? The Theistic conception is that of a King. "King of Kings," Jehovah is called. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, that the King of Glory may enter. Who is the King of Glory? Jehovah of Hosts." This conception arose in monarchial countries, among nations who regarded the sovereign power of the State as incorporated in a single individual. In democratic countries sovereignty is believed to reside in the whole people. It is impersonal, lodged everywhere, expressing itself temporarily in certain instruments, such as Presidents, Governors, and the like; but not permanently resident in them. Those who regard the sovereignty of the State as embodied in a single man may well conceive of the sovereignty of the world as embodied in a masculine Divinity. But in democratic countries — and all countries are becoming increasingly democratic — the Theistic conception, so far as it is that of a King, will more and more become obsolete. Surely it would be an anomaly for men who, in the realm of politics, regard king worship as a thing of the past, to preserve king worship in religion. When I listen to the magnificent chorus, in the Ora-

torio, rendering the lines from the Psalms: "Who is the King of Glory?" etc., the swing of the music and the pomp of a martial procession which it suggests, stir the senses and excite the fancy. But all this suggestion of royal pomp, of a central figure awaited by expectant multitudes, of a King of Kings coming and entering his gates, does not touch my religious feelings in the least. It is not by such a metaphor that I can represent to myself the "Power that makes for righteousness." I am not now discussing whether the particular image of God as King is true, whether there actually is such a Being enthroned in heaven, but whether, admitting that the image of God as King is a metaphor, this particular kind of metaphor can any longer serve our purpose. For the reasons mentioned I do not think it can.

But far more important is the conception of God as Heavenly Father. Is not this a beautiful, tender and consoling image? Can it ever become obsolete? Royalty we may remit to the limbo of ancient institutions. According to Emerson, God himself said: "I am tired of Kings." But in the case of fatherhood the same is not true. The relation of a father to his children is holy, and an enduring type of sacred relationships. Shall we, then, continue to think of a benignant and omnipotent Spirit bending down toward us from on high, whose face, indeed, may sometimes be veiled,

but the light of whose love is never extinguished or diminished; to whom we can ever come as children saying: "Father, protect us; Father, deliver us; Father, forgive us our trespasses." If we can still use such language, we are not really separated from the old tradition; but, with whatever change of accent or interpretation, the Theistic conception of the past is still ours. If we cannot use such terms, we have passed into an entirely new region of thought and feeling, and it will be well for us to look about and see where we stand.

It is customary for those who introduce radical and innovating ideas to say that they do not wish to deprive any one of the faith which he possesses; and I may repeat the same sentiment. It is my earnest hope and aspiration to be, not one of those who destroy, but one of those who build up. At the same time, I feel perfectly free to present the reasons upon which I rest my own position. If any one continues to hold the old faith he will be the better off, he will hold it all the more securely, if, having measured the full force of the reasons that may be adduced against it, he can still consistently adhere to it and maintain it. If any one does not hold the old faith, it is all the more necessary that he should analyse the reasons that justify his attitude, and thus be enabled to reach a positive and constructive position of his own.

I confess that, for my own part, as I look out into the wide world, I am not conscious of any such superintending, parental love directed toward me. As a child, I may have held that view; but it has faded away — through no fault of mine. Indeed, I have come to think it wrong to expect that the affairs of the universe should be managed with a view to promoting my particular individual welfare. There are many causes which have combined to produce this change. One of the most obvious and influential is the idea of the inexorable operation of the laws of Nature, which science has inculcated. In former times, when there was drought and famine in the land, men loaded the altars of the gods with gifts intended to placate their anger and to induce them to send the wished-for rain. To-day in famine-stricken India, what is it that the wisest rulers of the country are intent upon? They are studying how to supply on a stupendous scale artificial irrigation, how to increase the facilities of transportation, how to uplift the ignorant peasantry by education, so that they may be able to employ more effective methods of agriculture. In former times when the plague passed over Europe, mowing down its millions, the churches were thronged with multitudes of worshippers who besieged the Almighty to withdraw the fearful scourge. To-day when an invasion of the cholera threatens a country, the

Kochs and Pasteurs are busy in their laboratories, seeking to discover the germs of the disease, and rigorous sanitation is everywhere applied to deprive those germs of the congenial soil in which they flourish. This is a commonplace of modern thinking, and I need not enlarge upon it.

The conception of a Heavenly Father, interfering with the operations of Nature arose when the teachings of natural science were unknown. These teachings have been fruitful of substantial results. The progress of mankind had been kept back for centuries by the disposition to expect, of the love and kindness of Providence, the benefits which, if obtainable at all, must be obtained by human effort. The progress of mankind has been incalculably advanced by the appeal to self-help, by the conviction that "the gods help them who help themselves," which, after all, is synonymous with saying that if we are to be saved we must save one another. True, there are situations, and those the most distressing, where the vanity of human help becomes apparent, when our boasted science fails, when the physician can do no more, and the object of our love seems drifting inevitably away, beyond our reach, on the ebbing tide. At such times, will prayer to the Heavenly Father help? I do not mean help in the sense of bracing us to sustain the shock, but in the sense of avert-

ing the impending fate? Sometimes, after fervent prayer, there is recovery. But will any one, who has grasped the meaning of natural law affirm that the recovery is the consequence of the prayer? The human body is a delicate and intricate mechanism, and there are many complex causes which affect the turn of disease one way or the other. But even if these causes are out of sight and incalculable, can we therefore doubt that they have operated, and that they have been as inexorably determined in their operation as is the fall of a stone in response to gravitation? An ancient sceptic once visited a temple by the sea, in which were inscribed the names of those sailors who had been saved from shipwreck in answer to prayers. Some one said to him: "If you look at this list of names, are you not convinced that prayer is availing?" He replied: "Show me first the list of those who have prayed just as hard and who have not been saved."

But the notion of a supplementary physical helper, who steps in when the physician fails, or when the crops fail, does not in the least exhaust the idea of Fatherhood; and it would, of course, be unjust to convey the impression that it did. The idea of Fatherhood implies moral superiority. The Father in Heaven is not like some good-natured, kindly, affectionate, and weak human parent. In him it has been sought to

incarnate the ideal of righteousness. The Seraphim, when they sing their praise, greet him as the Thrice Holy. The moral laws are his commands. He sternly exacts implicit obedience to them. He forgives, indeed, his children when they contritely confess their faults. But he also relentlessly chastises those whom he loves, for their own good. His love is the kind of love that shows itself precisely in such chastisement. In the picture of such a Father, there are elements of sublimity, and of the greatest moral beauty. One cannot overrate the educative effect which it has had upon the human race. But the Divine Father after all is patterned on the analogy of the human father. He is but an enlarged, aggrandized, and sublimated copy of the human father.

And now I would call attention to the fact that the attitude towards fathers has changed in modern times; that the attributes ascribed and the veneration accorded them is different from what it was in the past, and that the assumed relative perfection of earthly fathers may no longer serve as an analogy for the absolute perfection of the Heavenly Father, because earthly fathers are no longer regarded as even relatively perfect. There was a time when a father was looked upon as a sort of demi-god on earth, whose outline it was comparatively easy to enlarge into that of a veritable Deity. The father, the patriarch, was the head of the

family, of the clan. He ruled it with an absolute sway. He was the law-giver, priest, and judge. His authority none ventured to dispute. A very young child still looks upon its father in much the same way. To a young child the father still represents the sum total of all perfections. No question troubles his mind, but he will go to his father confidently expecting a satisfying answer. His father knows everything, and can do everything. His father is better than all other men. But as he grows older he learns that this is a mistake. Very deep and tender remains the relationship. The measureless debt of gratitude for innumerable benefits remains forever unimpaired. The care bestowed at a time when life was like a feeble flame, liable to be blown out by any wind of chance, the mental, the moral training, and the self-effacing affection which went with these,— how can they ever be repaid? The son or daughter who could forget these things would deserve to be spewed out of Nature as a monstrosity. Nevertheless, and without the least abatement of these claims, the father has ceased in modern times to be the type of even relative perfection. Intellectually the son often outstrips the parent, or, if not, he enters into a different vocation from that of his father, and he cannot look up to the father as a master and exemplar in his own field of work. The old relations are much more nearly maintained where the son follows the same

career as the father, and where the reverence which belongs to the intellectual superior is conjoined with that which is due to the parent. But this is rarely the case. And from the moral point of view, too, the full-grown man, however delicately he may approach the subject, even in his own mind, cannot fail to perceive the defects of his parent. However charitably, however lovingly he may judge, judge he will and must. The best parents themselves desire nothing so ardently as that their children should surpass them in moral excellence, as well as in mental achievements.

Thus as the idea of natural law entered in, to exclude the notion of an extraneous, interfering Providence, a helper in time of sickness and distress, so the idea of evolution, of the progressive enlargement and development of human faculties from generation to generation, enters in to prevent regarding the parent in the same light in which he was regarded by the founders of Monotheism, before the principle of development was recognized. The parent can no longer be considered as the stationary image of superlative excellence; but rather as the channel through which has come down to us the life of the past, to be in us continued and enriched; the good qualities bettered, if possible, the infirmities corrected. The fact that we owe to our parents the possibility of reaching out toward further improvement, deepens the obligation

toward them; in attempting to rise higher than they did, it is upon their shoulders that we stand. But this does not alter the moral fact that the best piety we can show toward them is to attempt to transcend them. But how can the father, whose attainments we are, if possible, to surpass, be any longer the adequate symbol of the infinite moral Ideal, in its unsurpassable completeness? How, indeed, can any individual being, no matter how idealized, be to us the type of perfection? The greatest human beings are but facets of the jewel — Humanity. The whole beauty and excellence of the jewel does not shine forth from any one of these faces. There is one type of moral excellence in Socrates, another in Buddha, still another — sublimer than these, and yet only one out of many possible ones — in Jesus. The sum of moral excellence is not embodied in any one member of the race, however rarely gifted and exceptional: in the infinite plenitude of spirits alone we must look for its manifestation.

What, then, is to be our attitude toward current Theism? In his book, "Reflections of a Russian Statesman," the Procurator of the Holy Synod quotes the following parable from the celebrated Persian teacher Djelalledin: "Once Moses, while wandering in the wilderness, came upon a shepherd who was praying fervently to God. This was the shepherd's prayer: 'How shall I know where to find

thee, and how to be thy servant? How I should wish to put on thy sandals, to comb thy hair, to wash thy garments, to kiss thy feet, to care for thy dwelling, to give thee milk from my herd.' Moses, when he heard the words of the shepherd, was angered and reproached him: 'Thou blasphemest. What dost thou mean, unbeliever?' The heart of the shepherd was saddened, because he could not conceive of a being without bodily form and corporeal needs. He was overcome by despair and ceased to serve the Lord. But God spake to Moses and said: 'Why hast thou driven away from me my servant? What to thee is evil to another is good. To thee it is poison; to another it is sweet honey.'" The author employs this parable to impress on the educated classes of Russia the duty of supporting and conforming to the orthodox faith. He seems to forget that his parable is two-edged, that, if the poet has said: "What to thee is poison, to him is sweet honey," he also implied that what to him is sweet honey to thee is poison; the kind of poison which, like opium, may serve, at first, as an anodyne of pain, but later on produces lassitude and finally spiritual death.

I urge that the question for us is not whether we shall respect what is sweet honey to others. That goes without saying. We have to ask ourselves whether for us certain ideas and conceptions, be-

cause they are not intrinsically, fundamentally true to our inmost thinking, would be poison; at best, anodynes and opiates. The one thing I care for, is increasing definiteness in religious thinking, clear and clean-cut ideas. It is time that we put away from us this mush of religious sentiment, and ceased to be content with vague and blurred outlines of thought on the greatest of all subjects, while we demand distinctness in every other. The cleaning up of one's ideas is as important, as a matter of ethical sanitation, as the cleaning up of the house in which we dwell is a part of external sanitation. Whether others accept my conclusions or not is immaterial. I am seeking to stimulate a demand for greater definiteness in thinking on these subjects. Do you really believe in a Heavenly Father? Does that conception influence you? There are thousands of people who say they believe in it, and yet are not profoundly influenced by it. They have only a stupid way of repeating, parrot-like, what other people believe, or what they believe in part, and disbelieve in part. They believe at one moment, and disbelieve in other moments. I suggest that we ask: Does this particular metaphor of the Heavenly Father indicate to me the thing signified? You and I ought to look out upon this world, upon our destiny, upon man's destiny, just as if there were no tradition upon the subject at all, no

sacred authorities to which we are expected to conform, and which serve as a kind of screen between us and things as they are. We ought to look about in this world as if we were the first men that ever lived, as if we were "sons and not grandsons of Nature," to use Leonardo da Vinci's words; and ask ourselves: What is true to us? What are our needs to-day? And what is it that can satisfy our needs?

As to Theism, I would distinguish between the form and the content. The form I cannot use at all. Neither can I use certain ideas of which it has been the vehicle. Certain other ideas I am anxious to recast, to take out of the form in which they have been contained, because I realize that I must continue to use them, that, with respect to them, there is community between myself and the Theist. The ideas that are true to me, are, in the first place, that there is a Supreme Righteousness, though I have ceased to think of that Supreme Righteousness as a King or Special Providence. Then the idea, so invaluable to the wronged and the oppressed, that justice is somehow going to work itself out in the world. I do not see how we can do without that idea. I do not see how Dreyfus could have done without it. It was the one grand, sublime thought that supported him during those five horrible years on Devil's Island. If you read his letters you will find constant reference

to the "cry of his soul," the cry for justice, the belief that justice would somehow come uppermost. And then, there is the idea, so invaluable to the afflicted, to those in trouble, that there is a purpose working itself out in the world, and that the tears that are shed and the blood that flows, and all the sufferings, and black misery is but the price paid for the accomplishment of a measureless good. We human beings can bear any amount of pain if we are able to see purpose in it, if we can convince ourselves that it is not sheer cruelty; but that it will serve a supreme end, even though we know not how.

These three ideas, the idea of righteousness, the idea that justice will gain the ascendant, and that there is a sublime purpose in things — three aspects of one idea — these I would not give up. I do not see how any courageous attitude toward life is possible unless one, either avowedly or surreptitiously, retains them.

There are some who say that these ideas are very precious, but that, as I have put them, they do not compare in warmth with the feeling which a man has who can say: "My Father;" who, in the loneliness of his life, can go to his Heavenly Father; who can put his hand trustfully, like a child, into the hand of this Higher Being, knowing that he will be led; and who, in time of trouble, can, in imagination, lay his head

upon the breast of that Father and be comforted. Emerson says that the idea of God is dear, because it fills the loneliness of space. Is it not also dear, and much more dear, because it fills the loneliness of the inner life?

I admit, without hesitation, that the position which I have stated is devoid of this charm and warmth. We lose something in departing from the old Theism. There never has been a forward movement in the world, that has not been attended by loss. And so there is loss in this instance, but there is also gain. Our experience in passing out of the old way of believing is much the same as that which we undergo when we lose our earthly parents. Perhaps some of you have had the good fortune to retain an aged father in life while you yourselves were already well along in middle age. If so, you have enjoyed a great privilege. There remained to you one most loving friend to whom you could always go, no matter how feeble he might be, and unbosom yourself, sure that you would be sympathetically understood. In his quiet room, which the din and bustle of the world reached only from afar, as the booming of the surge reaches a land-locked bay, you would ever find a haven of peace. The hours spent there remain unforgetable. The father dies, and there is a gap which it seems nothing can ever fill. There is a home-sickness which it seems

nothing can ever assuage. But, if you are a man, you will feel that the time has come when you must play the part of a man, that it is proper you should no longer lean upon another, but let others lean upon you; no longer put burdens upon another, but permit others to put their burdens upon you. As St. Paul said: "When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but now that I have become a man I have put away childish things."

And this is precisely the change which is demanded in the religion of the present day. Life is a fight. We must take our part in it,— the man's part. We must get rid of the notion that the affairs of the universe are managed with a view to securing our private benefit; that Fate, or the Power that overrules Fate, is disposed to coddle us. Childlike we must ever be in the sense of humility, but not childlike in the sense of leaning. As in the State we have learned that the common good may not be sacrificed to the individual good, but that the individual shall seek his highest good in promoting the general good; so, in respect to that larger country, the world, we must not even ask that its affairs shall be so managed that we may never be sick, never be hurt, never be grieved; but, despite the bruises, and the heartaches, and the setbacks, we must seek our highest

good in promoting the largest, the all-inclusive good. This is always within our power. If we keep fast hold of this aim we shall never feel orphaned or forlorn.

In the far-off beginnings of things, what was there? A dark, weltering chaos; perhaps, "the Spirit of God brooding over the abyss;" or a vast nebulous mass filling the spaces now occupied by the celestial bodies. Even the latter alternative, at once forces the question: How came matter to be? That it existed in a state of extreme tenuity, surely does not make the problem of its existing any less difficult. And how came this nebulous mass to be set in motion? Who was the prime mover? What determined him to put forth the initial impulse that set the worlds a-spinning? Who or what was the first Cause, and what or who determined that Cause to put into action the causal principle which, in some inconceivable way, had remained dormant and ineffective during the eternity which elapsed before the world came into existence?

To these questions there is no answer. The problem of origins is insoluble. The scientific hypothesis no more solves it — no more pretends to solve it — than does the naïve cosmogony of Genesis. And here we come upon one capital difference which, I think, is to distinguish religion in the future from religion

as it has been in the past. Hitherto, religion has concerned itself largely, if not chiefly, with the beginnings; in the future religion must concern itself with the end. In the past, religion has set up at the threshold of the universe the image of a Creator, a Maker, an Architect. It has sought to answer the question, How did things come to be? Religion must turn to the question: What is to be the outcome of it all? This question elicits our profound, enthusiastic interest; for upon the outcome we may have some influence.

An immediate advantage arises, it seems to me, from this *volte face* in religion. The drama of existence is relieved of the imputation of bootlessness otherwise attaching to it. Jesus taught his disciples to pray: "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven;" and in many of the ancient Hebrew prayers, of which the "Lord's Prayer" is an example, may be found practically the same petition. Deep and significant as is the purport of this prayer, I could not, even as a boy, forbear asking, with whatever wild feeling of possible sacrilege: If the divine will is already fulfilled in all the wide heavens, why is it not on this little earth? Nay, more, if the sum total of moral perfection already existed from everlasting in God, what could have been the object of launching the world into being? There was perfection at the

start, then unaccountably imperfection crept in; there was unblemished holiness at first, then unaccountable loss of it; and now, perhaps, there is a slow, gradual return to it. But why all this endless effort and pain merely to climb back to a point which had already been reached at the outset? According to this view, there is no real gain in all the "groaning and travailing," there is and can be nothing new under the sun. One cannot shake off the sense of the profitlessness of it all. But from dreary speculations of this kind, we are set free the moment we frankly and completely give up the question of origins as beyond our comprehension. There must, indeed, be an Ultimate Being from which the effort toward perfection comes, and which, on moral grounds, we are bound to believe will support and crown that effort with fulfillment. But how, in the nature of Ultimate Being, the contradictions to which reference has just been made can be reconciled, no man can know.

What, then, can be known? Where can I set foot on solid ground? I know that in the world in which I live, and must act, there is conflict; and that I must take my part in it. There is progress, too, from dust to crystal, to growing plant, to life in creeping things, in bird, in beast, and in men, who are the heaven-aspiring tops that tower above the forest of existence.

There is matter to be subjected to mind, there are passions to be tamed, appetites to be bridled, cupidities to be curbed, a just and harmonious social order to be created. The mystics are wont to speak fantastically of a dark background in God; of a strain of evil in his being; of an obscure, thus far intractable element, which he has not yet been able to overcome, but which he is labouring to transmute. Whatever may be the case with God, we know that there is this obscure, intractable element in the world, and in ourselves. And we know that we are here to fulfil the divine function of overcoming the intractable element, of transfiguring evil into good, chaos into order. And to do so, we must accomplish the *volte face* in religion, of which I have spoken, cease dwelling on and endeavouring to explain inexplicable origins, and turn our faces forward to the end which, by our action we can affect. Like the Hebrew of old, who, fleeing the burning city, was told that he must not look back, but forward, if he would escape being turned into stone, so we, fleeing the city of our childhood's faith, which is blazing up in a great conflagration behind us, must look forward, fixing our attention upon the goal that lies ahead, never looking backward, lest we lose courage and strength.

A second change which I would mention is that man, not some one excellent man, but man in gen-

eral, humanity, is sure to loom up larger than ever before, as the object about which the religious imagination will play; that humanity shall be taken closer into our heart; that human beings will mean more than heretofore as the media through which the divine life expresses itself. We can no more, like Moses, approach the burning bush, and come in direct contact with the Divine Life. We can only experience the light and warmth of the Divine Life as it radiates from other human spirits into our own. And the new attitude toward humanity will bring us into new relations with our fellow beings of a threefold kind; namely, toward contemporaries, toward ancestors, and toward posterity. We shall learn to see and know the human beings with whom we come in contact from a new point of view, regarding them as masks behind which Divinity lurks, as revealers of hidden spiritual possibilities. We shall attribute a certain greatness and sacredness to them; and the cheapness that now often marks our estimate of those with whom we are familiar, vulgarizing human intercourse, will disappear.

The new attitude toward humanity will change our relations to our ancestry and to our posterity; leading us to revive in ourselves, spiritually, the men and women who formerly lived on the earth, and to engender, spiritually, those that are to inhabit it after

us; to project our influence backward over the dead, so as in a manner to resuscitate them, and forward, so as to determine the life of the unborn. We are ducts through which the life of humanity flows; it is our mission to purify the stream as it passes through us. We can help to sweeten it as it flows through us, or add new impurities to its current. Each one inherits from his parents, and often from more remote ancestors, certain faults and weaknesses, certain predispositions toward evil, as well as nobler and more excellent traits. It is the essence of true piety toward our progenitors, to endeavour to overcome the evil which they have transmitted to us, to expiate their faults by our sufferings and struggles, to purify them in ourselves; and on the other hand, to enhance every good influence which we have received from them, and bring to full fruition every good seed which they have implanted in us. In this way we can spiritually resuscitate our ancestors, perpetuate all that in them was spiritual, excellent, and of enduring worth. In like manner we can spiritually engender our posterity, by so shaping their environment, preparing the soil in which they must grow, that the better, the more human qualities shall in them have a fairer chance to develop than the same qualities have yet had, in the history of the race. Especially is it important to constantly bear in mind how heavy

is the burden which, by our mental indolence and weakness of will, by our folly and guilt, we impose upon our descendants.

It is sometimes said that the conception of a Heavenly Father is indispensable to support the sense of moral accountability. Remove the dread of divine chastisement and what meaning, it is asked, will any longer attach to the word "responsible"? Responsible to whom? Accountable to whom? Unless man imagines a Heavenly Judge, before whose tribunal he shall render an account of his errors, and blunders, his faults, and misdeeds, and who will inevitably chastise him for his trangressions, what deterrent from wrong action remains? But in any event we are responsible to our posterity. Every mistake will make it harder for those who come after us to find the right way; every uncleanness with which we become tainted will, like an infection, be communicated to our children, and our children's children; every base ingredient which we allow to enter into our life, will pass on into theirs, who have not deserved at our hands the misery and pain with which the presence of such ingredients shall afflict them. The attitude which I have indicated may be described as a religion of humanity, not in the sense of setting up humanity as an object of worship, but in the sense of gradually deifying human life, bringing it nearer to the

divine ideals; not in the sense of the adoration of humanity, but of the slow and gradual transformation of it.

A last point remains to be considered, and this leads back to a question previously suggested. Humanity, as we know it, is ever imperfect. We need some larger outlook, to have set before us an ideal of perfection, toward which our labours may be directed. What shall be this ideal of perfection? Seeing that a metaphor, a symbol, is necessary, what religious symbol may be employed? I have said that we cannot conceive of the moral ideal as incorporated in a Father; nay that we cannot conceive of that ideal as embodied in any individual whatsoever. The moral ideal escapes the bounds of individuality. The elements which it includes are too manifold to be represented by a single individual, no matter how sublimely idealized. *The moral ideal is a social ideal.* It includes types of excellence which we cannot think of as existing together in the same person; the excellence of man and of woman, of the aged and of the young, the special types of moral excellence which are peculiar to the different vocations. It can be represented only by a vast and differentiated society. It is the ideal, not of one Infinite Being, but of an infinitude of beings, of a world of spirits, comprising all rational existence that ever has been, is, or will be, on earth or in the distant stars and suns. It is the ideal of a spiritual whole, each

member of which expresses uniquely some aspect of the life of the whole, is sustained by the whole, and sustains it, and is indispensable to it. The moral ideal is that of a multiple God; of a commonwealth of spirits, not of one spirit who, as sovereign, stands apart and aloof, and to whom the rest are subject. Just as sovereignty in the State is no longer incarnated in a single individual, but is disseminated through and permeates the whole people; so the sovereignty of the universe can not be lodged in an individual Spirit, but must be disseminated through the entire world of spirit. The Theistic conception is monarchical, the conception here indicated is democratic; viewing the sovereignty of the world as embodied not in one Infinite Being, but in an infinitude of beings, in the process of organizing into an ever-increasing unity.

Is not this thought too abstract, too vague, to serve the purpose of religion? Abstract it certainly is, when put forth in this isolated fashion; but so is the Theistic conception of God abstract and metaphysical to the last degree, when stated in the same fashion. The conception of a Being, omnipotent, omniscient and good, in a sense transcending all human goodness — what possible notion can one form of such a Being or of his omnipotence, omniscience, and goodness? Nevertheless, the Theistic idea of God did not remain abstract, or vague; but somehow became a power of life

and energy in human hearts and human history, and attracted to itself reverence, worship, and love. How was this transformation brought about? A purely abstract conception, fit only for philosophers to deal with, was changed into the living God, by being associated with or superimposed upon the concrete image of a man; or rather, an individual was glorified, idealized and sublimated, by being endowed with attributes of omnipotence, omniscience and goodness; the finite individual was raised in thought to the degree of infinity. In like manner the abstract idea of a multiple God will achieve power, strength, and convincingness by being associated with and superimposed upon human society. The difference between the Theistic idea and the idea here described is, that the former represents man, the individual, raised to the degree of infinity; the latter, humanity, or human society, in its organized relations, idealized and glorified, and raised to the degree of infinity.

Human society made spiritually perfect is the sign or symbol in religion, which, I think, will serve our purpose; and the vision of a spiritual millennium may take the place for us of the man-like image above the clouds. There must, indeed, exist an Ultimate Being to make possible the perfect society; but of this Ultimate Being we can know nothing except that to it, as cause, we ascribe, as its sublime effect, the spiritual

perfection to which we look forward. I lay the greatest stress on the word "spiritual" in this connection. The millennium towards which I would point is not of the materialistic kind. It does not consist in better houses or food for the poor, in the superabundance of earthly goods and earthly joys, nor even in the unstinted appeasement of the desire for knowledge. It consists rather in the attainment of a state of social being, in which all the relations of human beings toward one another shall be spiritualized. And by a spiritual relation, I understand one in which each member of an organic group shall so influence other members, who are in co-relation with him, as to actualize the spiritual possibilities that are latent in them; and this in such a way that they in turn shall react upon him in like fashion — life smiting upon life, with a view to eliciting the hidden riches of life. That the relations of men and women in marriage shall be established upon this basis, that the relations of the social classes to one another, and of nation to nation shall be spiritualized in this manner is our hope, our aim, the outlook which cheers, inspires, and consoles. The conception of a perfect society is human and therefore provisional. The perfect society is not itself the thing signified; but it is the *Sign;* it is the glass through which, however darkly, we see the eternal and divine reality beyond it.

CHAPTER THREE

TEACHINGS OF JESUS IN THE MODERN WORLD

IT is an ancient and very natural custom to set aside certain days for the commemoration of the great men of the past, who deserve honour at the hands of posterity, on account of special services which they have rendered. Thus we in this country have days for the commemoration of Washington and of Lincoln. In like manner, if the time shall ever come when the supernatural view of the career of the great Gallilean shall have wholly passed away, there will still, nay, all the more be felt, the need of setting aside a certain day or days in order to recall in a special way what he was and what he achieved as a human benefactor. Those with whom this view already prevails, may well take advantage of Easter day for the purpose of such commemoration.

I trust that what I wish to say may not give offence to the sensibilities of even the most orthodox believer,

for, according to the doctrine of the Church, while it is affirmed that Jesus was "very God of very God", yet, it is no less emphatically stated that he was also man. Therefore, on his human side, the only side we here are concerned with, he must be explained and understood according to the laws of human nature, like any other man of exceptional genius. To commemorate is to try to explain and understand. It is not for the sake of the great men who have gone from us that we celebrate them. If they have ceased to be, our praises cannot reach them. If they abide in life indestructible, our poor human tribute must pass before them like a vapour. It is not for their sake, but for our own, that we commemorate them; in order that, by learning to appreciate them, we may preserve and assimilate what in them was truest and finest. The duty of preserving the best which the past has brought forth is of incalculable importance; and one way of discharging that duty is to try to understand the great teachers of the past, returning ever and again to the study of their careers, and thus perpetuating their influence.

If we find ourselves face to face with a man of genius, there are two points it is well to remember. The one is that we cannot understand him unless we see him in the light of his heredity, his environment; unless we recognize the debt which he owes to his

contemporaries and his predecessors. We cannot understand Shakspere, for instance, unless we have made a study of Elizabethan England, and of the streams of influence which poured in upon him from his surroundings, and unless we realize the extent to which previous writers, such as Marlowe, Chaucer, and others, had paved the way for him. If Shakspere had lived in Russia in the sixteenth century, or in Germany, or in France, it is inconceivable that he could have become what he was. A man of genius is not independent of his environment, of his people, of his forerunners. The second point which we ought to remember is that heredity and environment do not suffice to explain genius; that a genius is never the mere product of contemporaneous or antecedent conditions, but that he adds something of his own, something unique. This something, also, we must grasp if we would at all understand him. Both these points of view apply to Jesus. Suppose that he had been born nineteen hundred years ago in Greece, or in Rome, or in Alexandria, or among the barbarous tribes that roamed at that time through the Teutonic forests. In that case it is inconceivable that he should have been the Jesus of whom we know. He was the child of his people. He must have owed much, more than we can well recount in detail, to his Jewish mother. He was the successor of Isaiah, Micah,

Jeremiah, and Daniel. He stood on the shoulders of these, his predecessors. He followed along the line of the development which they had begun, and carried it farther. What he taught presupposed that which they had taught before he appeared. From the point of view of Christian theology, Jesus, the Christ, was the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. According to this view, the patriarchs and the prophets, with clairvoyant vision, foresaw Jesus, pointed to him, opened the gate through which he might pass, as the dawn opens the gate for the day. This view has been shattered by the critical study of the Bible. It has been shown that the Old Testament seers did not have Jesus in mind; at least, that passages which have been interpreted in this way bear another and far more probable construction. And yet, in a very real sense, it is nevertheless true that the patriarchs and the prophets of the Old Testament were the forerunners of Jesus. They laid the foundations on which he erected his superstructure. They watered the roots of the tree on which, in due time, his teachings appeared as fruit. Not that I believe with the orthodox that he was the fulfilment of prophecy, in the sense that he solved every moral problem; that he answered, even by implication, every moral question; that in him was revealed the absolute fulness of truth, to which hereafter nothing requires to be added,—no, but simply in

the sense that what he taught presupposes the teachings of his predecessors. It may be asked, whether there has arisen since his day any one that can at all be compared with him? I reply that, in my estimation, there has not, if the accounts of his life are to be trusted. Yet, in like manner, for centuries after the death of Moses the opinion prevailed that no one of those who had lived since his time was at all comparable to Moses, and the inference was that there never again could be any one like him. Nevertheless, there came one who was greater than Moses. So, too, there has not been a poet since the days of Dante as great as he was; and yet, there may come one as great or greater. The human race rises, at rare intervals, to the production of some supreme type of excellence. Now and again, in the course of centuries, the wave culminates. Then there is apt to follow a period of apparent decline, which may last for ages. But why give over the hope that there will come another, even perchance, a higher culmination? What ground is there for asserting that the treasure of divine possibilities is spent, or that the fount of revelation is sealed?

But, without entering further into this thought, as I have here another purpose in mind, I would briefly state what it was that Jesus shared with his spiritual ancestors among the Jews, and what he added of his

own. He shared with his predecessors the profound conviction that only the moral element in the universe is fit to be regarded as divine; that the supreme power in things is holy — that is, moral. "Holy shall ye be, for I, the Eternal One, am holy." "And what does the Lord require of thee, but to do justice and love mercy?" This was the distinctive contribution of the Hebrews to religious history — the seating of righteousness on the throne of the world. This was the distinctive feature that marked off the Hebrew religion from the Pantheism of the Hindoos, from the intellectual and æsthetic doctrines of the Greeks, and from the worship of force that prevailed on the lower levels of religion. And this view Jesus wholly adopted and shared. If he had not done so, his own peculiar teachings would have been impossible. He shared with his predecessors the belief that the externals of worship, the feasts and the fasts, and the pomp of ceremonial cults, is immeasurably less valueable than purity and uprightness. What he said in this respect was but the reiteration and amplification of what others had said before him. He was imbued, like his predecessors, with the conviction that the day will come when what is best will prevail; when might will no longer be regarded as right, but right shall be clothed with the attributes of might. He did not, however, share with his predecessors the belief that the

ultimate sanction of right is to be found in the laws, or the public conscience of an elect community. He taught rather that in the soul of the individual there is erected a tribunal which has final jurisdiction in matters of right and wrong; that the whole world as it then existed might perish; that the heavens and the earth might pass away, and still this higher element, present and cogent in a few individuals, might form the foundation of a new order. It was thus by transferring the centre of moral gravity from the life of a people, to the inner nature and life of individuals, that Jesus broke with the past, and made it possible for his followers to spread their religion beyond the pale of the Jewish community, and to embrace in it the Greek as well as the Hebrew. And, by this means, he was able to guard in a more effectual manner against the fatal error of supposing that the outward correctness of actions is a guarantee of the moral worthiness of the agent. For, since the springs of right and wrong are to be found in the individual soul, it is the intention rather than the act that counts, the motive rather than the deed that determines the worthiness of the doer.

Among certain of the more shallow free-thinkers it has been the custom to speak of Jesus as an excellent moralist, the author of certain ethical sayings, such as the golden rule, for which, though they have

become commonplace, he deserves to be held in high esteem. But to speak of Jesus as an excellent moralist is to do scant justice to his depth, his spiritual wealth, his real greatness, to the "virtue that went out from him." For, by "moralist" we commonly understand one who makes wise moral observations on life and events, not one who by his own life becomes a transcendent force in the life of others. And to speak of Jesus as the author of ethical sayings which have become commonplace, is to miss the revolutionary meaning with which those sayings are charged. Indeed, there are salient points in his teachings which, so far from being commonplace, have not yet been accepted by the world, even in theory, — salient points with which certain of the strongest tendencies in modern civilization are directly in conflict. I propose to single out a few of these great ethical ideas of Jesus, and to show how little obsolete they are, how living the issues which they raise.

The first of these ideas — to put it in homely phrase — is that it is wrong in principle and disappointing, so far as the result goes, to fight the devil with fire; to try to defeat an evil-doer by using his own weapons; meeting fraud with fraud and violence with violence. It is possible that Jesus would have us go to extreme lengths in the matter of non-

resistance, and would prohibit the use of force, even to prevent the manifestation of evil. If such was his intention, we may not be able to go with him wholly; but, at least, we can retain as most precious the thought that, even when force is used, we are not to descend in the methods we employ to the level of the baseness against which we contend. An extreme instance of the method which Jesus would have condemned became the subject of inquiry in the British Parliament, when, after the capture of Khartoum by General Kitchener, the English destroyed the tomb of the Mahdi, broke open the sepulchre, and cast his remains into the Nile. There is something unspeakably horrible in the desecration of a tomb. We think of the grave as the abode of peace, as a sure refuge which the hate of the living cannot reach. "Let them rave; thou art quiet in thy grave." We think that strife, enmity, bitterness, should not be pushed beyond the limits of terrestrial life; that, when a man has escaped through the door of death, he should be left at rest; that it is inhuman in the last degree to wreak vengeance on a dead foe who can no longer defend himself. The facts were not denied. The explanation offered was that the measure was indispensable to prevent the tomb from continuing to be a place of pilgrimage. But, were there not other ways of dealing with this difficulty? I have no doubt that the Sirdar

produced a profound effect on the dervishes, thos semi-savage fanatics; that they thoroughly understoo his act, because they might have acted in the same way He fought the devil with fire. He stamped indelibly on their minds the completeness of his victory, by means of the outrage he inflicted on the memory of their idolized prophet. But even the ancient Greeks held it inadmissible to practice inhumanity from any calculation of the effect likely to be produced upon the conquered. And this, plainly, for two reasons. First, because we owe it to ourselves that we should not become brutes in dealing with the brutal; and then because, in the long run, the higher civilization can be introduced only by those who exhibit the marks of a higher civilization. If we lower ourselves to the level of those against whom we contend, we may indeed coerce them into submission, but we shall never convey to them glimpses of any better way of living than their own. We shall not lift them out of the slough in which they are sunk by plunging into the same slough ourselves. And the conduct of the English in the desecration of their enemy's grave is not the only instance of the sort in recent times. I am very far indeed from accusing Englishmen generally of inhumanity. I know very well that when the English have obtained possession of colonies they have tried to rule them in the spirit of justice. But as to the

manner in which they gain possession, that is another story, and in places a very dark story. I refer to this matter because I wish to show how little the ethical message of Jesus is commonplace, what urgent reason there is for those who style themselves Christians to ponder the instructions of the Master. We, too, in America have reason to ponder this teaching, and particularly when every newspaper brings us the sickening news of violence that is being inflicted at our command upon a people whose fault is that they love liberty as we love it, that they are brave enough to defend their land against the aggression of foreigners. That they do not agree with President McKinley in the proposition that, the consent of the governed is unnecessary to the rightfulness of government. From a newspaper extract of a report by F. A. Blake, in charge of the Red Cross work in Manila, I quote the following:

"I never saw such execution in my life, and hope never to see such sights as met me on all sides as our little corps passed over the field dressing the wounded — legs and arms nearly demolished, total decapitation, horrible wounds in chests and abdomens, showing the determination of our soldiers to kill every native in sight. I counted seventy-nine dead natives in one small field, and learn that on the other side of the river their bodies were stacked

up for breastworks." He goes on to say: "This rush is putting the fear of God in the natives, and I think when Aguinaldo's headquarters are attacked they will cry 'enough,' and surrender."

Thus then we seek to put "the fear of God" into the natives at the point of the bayonet, and excuse ourselves for the bloody work on the plea of the benefits which we intend to confer afterwards. We, too, are sending our message of brotherly love from the mouth of cannon to a people who, relatively to us, are defenceless, and, in the guise of shot and shrapnel, are trying to scatter the glad tidings of a higher civilization. Oh, let us consider the awful hypocrisy of our attitude as a nation! If the name of Christ does not avail, then let us, in the name of Jesus, recall a Christian people to a teacher whose words they have forgotten — nay, which it would seem they had never learned.

As a second capital point, I mention the doctrine that every human being, in virtue of his equality as a moral being, is invested, as we should nowadays put it, with certain inalienable rights. And here, again, an exceedingly strong tendency is asserting itself at the present time, quite at variance with Jesus' ideas, and which, in my opinion, needs to be corrected and made to conform to Jesus' views. The Darwinian theory has led many people to believe that progress is

to be achieved, not by gradually making fit the unfit, but by the destruction of the unfit, the fit surviving. And this view serves to give a quasi-scientific colouring and reinforcement to a prejudice which has ever been deeply rooted, and which was expressed by Aristotle in the statement that the slave has the end of his being in his master, and not in himself; that it is proper for the many to toil and serve, and live and perish in darkness, in order that life may be bright and rich and full of significance for the few. This view, corroborated by arguments drawn from Darwinism, whether rightly or wrongly understood it matters not, asserts itself forcibly at the present time. Only the other day I was inexpressibly shocked to learn that one of the foremost political leaders in the United States, a man in eminent position, and one whose personal honour is stainless, had expressed himself in conversation substantially to this effect: "I cannot abide those who prate about the sacredness of every human life. The lives of some men are sacred because they are lived on a high plane. [He referred especially to Anglo-Saxon men.] But there are other beings that wear the human form whom I should not hesitate to shoot down, to establish the supremacy of the gifted." Against this monstrous aberration, this view that the progress of the fit is to be bought by the effacement of the unfit; that

only those human lives are sacred which are actually lived on a high plane, the teaching of Jesus rises in eternal protest. He teaches, on the contrary, that it is not what a man actually reveals himself to be, but his possibilities, that render him sacred. It is not the science which a man has acquired, nor his artistic sensibility, but it is the conscience within the man, even though it be a dormant conscience, that invests him with a certain high worth, which it is the worst kind of blasphemy to deny.

The two doctrines just enumerated are obvious enough in their wide significance, and their importance is illustrated in the dealings of nation with nation, as well as in the private relations that subsist between individuals. But there are two other doctrines upon which I must at least touch, that belong chiefly to the latter sphere. The one is the doctrine of love; the other, that of regeneration. The doctrine of love is of immense present value as a means of setting right especially the disturbed relations between the sexes, and the distorted views that are spreading concerning those relations. In this direction the teaching of Jesus is again clearly of present value. The word "love" has often a merely sentimental meaning. I do not believe that Jesus used it in this sense. He says: "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." How can love be com-

manded? This is a stone against which many stumble. Is not love free? The spirit bloweth where it listeth. And is not love such a spirit? Can it be subjected to laws of obligation? Can any one induce in himself the feeling of love, no matter how much he may try to do so, in obedience to a command from a source however revered? Invincible is the power of charm. That grace, sweetness, beauty, or strength, manliness, heroic qualities shall produce love, is as natural as that rivers run into the sea, or that metal rushes to the lodestone. That we shall love what is lovely, it would be preposterous to make the subject of a command. We are urged to do so by every impulse of our being. "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye shall love one another", can therefore only mean that we shall love also that which is unlovely. Is that possible? Take the point of view of Christian theology. The doctrines, when taken literally, are unacceptable to the reason of many. But if these doctrines may not be believed literally, they may yet be taken symbolically, and they then appear in a totally different light, as the metaphorical setting forth of deep moral truths. Take the point of view of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. An Infinite Being, clothed with unspeakable perfections, inhabiting immeasurable bliss, out of love to man adopts human nature. How could he have conquered the aversion which a

perfect being must feel toward poor human nature, with all its stains, and pitiful weaknesses, and the vileness of sin that often adheres to it? This is the theme that for ages has excited the passionate admiration and gratitude of those who were brought up under the influence of Christian ideas. That a woman, an angel of light and purity, should not disdain to take the hand of a fallen sister, should not shrink from her touch as if it were pollution, seems marvellous enough. But that a God, clothed with unspeakable perfections, inhabiting eternal bliss, should not shrink from contact with man — nay, should not shrink from identifying himself with man so far as to become himself human — this seems to transcend belief. And the thought that lies wrapped up in this symbol is plainly this, that it is possible to love the unlovely; that love is the child of duty; that it can be created in ourselves despite whatsoever natural repugnance we may feel; that we can love wherever we can hope to redeem. And we can always hope to do that, because the power to redeem depends not on the other, but upon ourselves. If we are fine enough, there is no being so degraded that he can resist our influence. If our influence does not avail, it is because we are not yet fine enough; because the divine element in us does not yet shine forth clearly enough. Our duty, then, is to take ourselves in hand, and in proportion

as we ourselves develop, our influence over others will become more and more availing. This is the answer of Jesus, as I understand him, to the modern heresy that where love ceases marriages should cease. "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another" — a commandment which means that when the sentimental love ceases we can engender in ourselves another and a better kind of love, the spiritual love, which is the offspring of an earnest desire to help another. The answer to the proposition that, if love ceases, marriage should cease, is that the hypothesis, "if love ceases," is inadmissible; for it need not and should not cease. The sentimental attachment, indeed, may vanish. That, it is not in our power, by the exercise of will, to detain. But the higher and better kind of love, the spiritual love, it is in our power to create in ourselves and ever again to recreate. The desire to uplift the other is the safeguard of that love.

And this brings me to the doctrine of the new birth, which is, after all, the most characteristic of Jesus' teachings. Was there ever a more consoling, a more inspiring message uttered since the human race began? "Come unto me," he says, "ye that are heavy laden and I will give you rest." It is a message of hope and cheer, of unconquerable idealism, based, we may be sure, on the experience of

the higher life in himself. In effect he says that in things of the spirit there is no such word as fail; that, however low a human being may sink, it is always possible for him to rise again. There is this invincible power of renewal, of being born again, of beginning at any moment the new and the better life. Are you weighed down by care, and sorrow, and trouble, on account of some dear one, a son, a daughter, whom all efforts to reach have thus far failed, who seems gliding beyond your power to check, along the downward slope? Do not give up, do not cease your exertions! There is an invincible power of renewal which may reward your efforts in the end. There is an inextinguishable spark of goodness glowing still beneath the embers. Go on, still go on, seek to fan it into a new flame. Is it your own errors and shortcomings that depress you? Have you proved recreant to yourself in some great crisis? Are you a slave to detestable habits from which it seems that you cannot free yourself? Are the forces of evil too mighty for you? Have you tried to mount the steep and difficult path, and slipped back again and again? Still go on trying. There is an invincible power of renewal in you, which, in the end, will reward your efforts. And this doctrine, too, is in contrast with the opinion now widely held, that the character of man is fixed unalterably from the beginning;

that his acts are but links in a series, determined before he was born, and beyond his power to change. There is no more deadening thought than that of Determinism, understood in this sense. The teachings of Jesus emancipate us from this blight upon the will.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RELIGION OF DUTY

AT a time which for many persons is one of great spiritual loneliness, a time when head and heart are at variance, the heart asking for comforts which the head refuses to sanction; when to many who will not buy peace at the expense of intellectual integrity, the world assumes a bleak and forbidding aspect, because the divinities that once populated it are vanishing, — at such a time the star of duty rises in our firmament, and a voice from the very depths declares: "Nothing essential is lost! For whether or not there be a God of the kind that once was believed in, whether or not there be an hereafter, one supreme opportunity remains. You can refuse in this life of yours to be base, you can follow the leadings of what you are sure is your higher nature."

There is an impression in many minds, that ethical culture means a suppression of the religious

instinct, a deliberate shutting up of one's self within the human world; a suppression of the questions as to destiny, the meaning and purpose of things, man's fate and future outlook; a stoicism and abnegation with respect to religion, as if the aim were to furnish consolation for the absence of religion, and not to replace religion. It can be made evident, I think, that religion is possible on the basis of ethics, and I propose to outline, for the sake of those who are interested in this line of thought, what may be the most important, most earnestly and profoundly interesting elements of such a religion.

First, then, duty may become a religion. I do not say that it must become a religion. A man may pursue the path of duty, looking neither to the right nor to the left, neither above nor beneath, simply intent upon duty and nothing else. But duty may become a religion, if one remembers *the cosmic significance of the moral law*. A moral or immoral act primarily concerns yourself and your fellowmen. This is the obvious side of it; and there are many who restrict themselves to that side, and say that morality merely concerns men and their relations to one another. But a moral or immoral act has also a wider significance, in as much as it is related to the law, the tendency that obtains throughout the universe. One may look upon the instinct of the bees, as concerned only with

the life of the bee. The bee, with its instinct for hiving honey, according to this narrow conception is a creature living merely for its species. On the other hand, a broader view discovers in such instincts, a phase of that broader instinctive life which runs through the entire animal world. So, in a much wider sense, a moral act, while it obviously and palpably concerns only one's self and one's fellowmen, is yet at the same time an illustration of a universal law in things. The moral law is the highest expression of the same law that binds together in their orbits the celestial worlds. Morality is in essence a law for regulating the attractions and overcoming the repulsions between one human being and others. The deepest fact about the human spirit is, that each spirit longs to come out of its isolation, and to join itself to the whole world of spirit; and though each of us differs from the rest, and though we maintain our differences, yet, despite them, we seek to relate ourselves to one another in a higher unity.

It is doing scant justice to morality to attempt to explain it by taking it out of its cosmic connection, and seeing it as only a narrow provincial law, a household ordinance, that concerns the race of men alone. There is a great upward tendency in things, which expresses itself in human terms as the moral tendency. The ancient Persians metaphorically and

beautifully said that there are two principles at war with each other, the good and the evil; and that between them man holds the balance, and that it is the mission of his life, to throw his force in with the good principle, and thus help on the victory. Wordsworth says of Duty,

"Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong."

What he means is, that the laws of nature which keep the stars in their orbits, are an expression on a lower plane of the same law which in the human world is called moral.

The conception of duty then becomes religion, when we remember the cosmic aspect of duty; when we say to ourselves every time we perform a moral or immoral act, that we are either helping on or thwarting a world-wide tendency; aiding or checking a something vaster than ourselves, which seeks realization in the world.

A second consideration is that duty becomes religion, when it is recognized as a law not to be explained in terms of sensible experience, so that it might be thoroughly grasped by the understanding, or its use fully seen. We are to realize that in a moral command there is an element of sublimity, of awfulness. Men try to get rid of that *awfulness*. Yet, the thunders of Sinai are not mere myth and legend. The furies that pursue the sinner are not idle fables. Hell, with its

bottomless pit, is not a mere dream. These are fanciful representations of something real. They represent the terrors with which the moral law is invested, as evinced in the pangs of remorse, that seize the guilty wretch,— the self-condemnation, the sense of worthlessness, the wish to efface himself, so that he may no longer defile the sunlight; the sense of alienation, of estrangement from all that is good and bright. Can one explain away these phenomena of the inner life?

Religion is that which brings man into touch with the infinite: this is its mission. If we put aside the materialistic explanations of morality, and see the majesty, the inexplicable augustness of it, we shall find that in the moral life itself, in the moral experience itself, we possess religion. Religion is at the core of it, for religion is the connection of man's life with the absolute, and the moral law is an absolute law.

In this easy-going age, we love the flowery walks, we seek to escape the sternness in things, we invent all sorts of facile explanations to diminish the exacting rigour of conscience. We like to think that this absoluteness of the moral command is of a piece with the theology which we have ceased to believe. But the obligation imposed by the moral law is an unconditional obligation. The rigour, and on the other

hand the divine sublimity of it, are of its very essence. Those who speak contemptuously of "mere morality", in contrast with religion, have in mind the outside of morality and ignore its inner depths and heights.

One of the objections urged against this view is that moral opinions are variable; that what is esteemed right in one age, is deemed wrong in another. But while opinions concerning what is right and wrong vary, there has never yet been found a race of men who do not realize that something is right and something else wrong, and who do not feel mystically, mightily, inexplicably bound to do the right and to shun the wrong.

Again, it is said that morality is a set of rules devised for purposes of social utility. As if any one could prove, for instance, the social utility of our having emancipated the negro slaves! The problems that have arisen since their liberation are many and complex; what the outcome will be no one can foresee, and they themselves in many cases have not been rendered happier by the change that has taken place in their condition? Yet if we had to face the issue again we should meet it in the same way. No matter what the consequences, it was just and right that the fetters should have been broken.

Again, there are those who say that morality is a set of rules having for their object the preservation

and enrichment of the life of the human species,—that is the evolutionary view. But I fail to see how any one can take this ground with confidence, if he bears in mind that all life on this planet may become extinct, and the human species may perish long before a truly satisfying life shall be attained. At present each generation consoles itself for its shortcomings in happiness and perfection by looking forward to its successors. But the life of the human species is likely to be cut off before the final climax is attained.

As against this scientific, evolutionary view, I hold what I would call the moral evolutionary view. This asserts that the moral law is a law of our nature, and, in so far, of the universal nature. It is prefigured in our minds. We follow it, although we cannot foresee the consequences. We leave the issues to be worked out by powers mightier than we, whose ways we wot not of. According to the moral evolutionary view we follow the leadings of a tendency of which we are the channels, of an upward drift in things, of an impulse toward world perfection.

I sometimes think of the moral impulse and of the moral law within us as of a hand laid upon us. In the early period of the Middle Ages, when the artists still observed a certain reticence in portraying religious conceptions, they did not dare to represent God in human form; they simply represented God by a hand.

In the same fashion, I like to think of the moral law as of a hand: the face we do not see, but the hand we feel. It is laid upon our shoulders, heavy as Atlas' load, an iron weight when we would resist, but gentle and soft like a benediction when we yield. Let us interrogate our consciousness, and seek to form a more just estimate of this most marvellous of all phenomena, which we call conscience.

The moral law practically shows its supersensible and supereminent origin, by the energy with which it sets itself against our inclinations, our most ardent passions and interests. Often it puts its veto upon the things we most crave to do; and somehow, even if we are not strong enough to obey, we cannot escape recognizing the justice of the veto. A man and woman, for instance, are caught and tangled in a maze of illicit, passionate love. Their souls cry out for each other. It is a storm of feeling that vents itself in them. But the moral law sets its canon against adultery, — against adultery in thought, quite aside from adultery in deed. Can we account for the moral command by the thought of utility? Is this experience of dread, sovereign, unescapable powers within us, explained by social utility? "Keep the marriage bond? Why should we keep it? Why should we concern ourselves with social utility!" say these two souls who have but one life to live, and who cry out for happiness.

It is curious to observe how the word, duty, is being depreciated under the influence of inadequate conception of morality. Even poets, like Lowell, must bear their share of the blame, inasmuch as they give currency to the idea that duty is not the greatest thing on earth, but that love is something greater. Duty and love cannot be separated; and it is easy to show that real love has duty for its foundation, and cannot exist without it. The highest love is simply the feeling which is awakened in those minds in which duty is operative; it is the translation into feeling of that which we call duty, when applied to the will. Lowell's popular poem, "The Vision of Sir Launfal," conveys this false impression.

> *"He gives nothing but worthless gold,*
> *Who gives from a sense of duty."*

A man who in scorn tosses a piece of gold to a beggar, is said by the poet to be acting from a sense of duty. But what he here calls the sense of duty is simply unthinking habit, and with this scornful duty the poet contrasts love; but when we examine what he means by love, we find that it is the very thing that is implied in duty. Duty is that which would bridge over the repulsions between spirit and spirit, which would teach us that another life is our other self, and help us to see, under the ugly, repellent mask, the better

nature. Without duty there can be no love. How can I love the leper, who is marked with ulcers and running sores? You tell me I must love him; but how can I do so? Tell me rather to obey duty, to think of him as of a being like myself, as myself in that miserable form, and an infinite pity for him will well up in my heart, and I can then love him for what duty has helped me to see.

Husband and wife have become estranged. Incompatibilities, repulsions, have taken the place of the first attraction. Tell them that they shall love each other. But they will answer that the very cause of their estrangement is that they cannot love each other; that love is dead; and therefore, they demand to be released from each other's hateful society. Rather say: "Your first love then is dead. Now do your duty! Duty tells you to see behind the repulsions, behind these perversities and incompatibilities, a being with whose welfare you have solemnly charged yourself, toward whom you have assumed the task of developing and bringing to light the better nature that exists, though it may be hidden and dormant. Do your duty! That is all that is asked of you." And the consequence will be, that in time there will spring up what may be called the second love between husband and wife, which is purer and better, since it is the effect of spiritual care, since we grow tender toward those for whom we care, no

matter how repellant the task of caring for them may be at first.

Duty, I have said, shows its supereminent origin by the energy with which it sets itself against our inclinations. But this is shown, also, by the tragedies in which duty involes us, the suffering which it bids us accept for ourselves, and in particular for those who are dear to us. And in this connection, I wish to say that there seems to me to be no better touchstone of the nature of our morality than the problem of suicide. And I ask your permission to say a few words about the ethics of suicide, both for the sake of the subject itself, and in illustration of and in connection with my main contention.

There is an alarming tendency at present to relax the attitude towards suicide. There has been a startling increase in the number of suicides. I am firmly convinced that the law against suicide can become effective only when we realize the infiniteness of the command: Thou shalt not kill, either another or thyself! There are, indeed, many cases in which the act of suicide is performed during a period of aberration, in which the disease, so to speak, and not the man himself has acted. In other cases, where we cannot be sure of that, we are justified, at least, in giving to the unfortunate the benefit of the doubt; and even in those cases where there is no such uncertainty, who

of us can realize the intensity of the pressure to which the suicide may have been subjected? Who of us can guarantee that we, if we had been subjected to the same pressure, should have resisted better? Who are we, indeed, that we should judge? Let us cast the mantle of charity over him who has done this deed. Let us not refuse, as some do, to speak the word of solace over his bier, or to inter his poor remains in consecrated ground. There is a great difference between the judgments we pass upon others, and the judgments we impose upon ourselves. Charitable we should be to others, strict to ourselves; strict, unbending, before the act, when in moments of calm contemplation we can weigh the rights and wrongs. And the view we take before the act, in moments of calm contemplation, will stand us in good stead, when temptation assails us, and the seductive voice whispers in our ear, that we might obtain surcease from all our sorrows in the cool and silent grave.

One of the causes of suicide is despondency, due to business reverses. In the statistics of ten thousand cases, published in the *Medical Record*, if I remember correctly, the majority were due to despondency caused by business reverses. In other cases it is chronic sickness, or the fear of such sickness. In still other cases it is the fear of disgrace, in consequence of the commission of crime; or it is grief, and the like.

And what are the motives upon which we may count as deterrents? Shakspere's motive, in the soliloquy of Hamlet, the fear that in fleeing from the ills we know, we may be passing on to still greater ills, is probably but little effective to-day. The terror of the unknown hardly holds men back. Schopenhauer offers a mystical argument. He says that suicide does not extinguish the desire for life, and that this will create new births, and leave the root of existence unextirpated. But that is a reason which would appeal only to mystical pessimists like himself. The theologian says, that God gave life, and God alone can take it. But this is cogent only with persons who possess a vivid realization of God, as an individual with whom they are in communion.

The really strongest motive upon which we rely in modern times is the social motive. A man must stay upon earth in order to be of use. The progress, the very existence of humanity depends on co-operation. All are bound to help one another. We have received innumerable benefits from others, and we are bound to stay and help things on, as long as we can. It is cowardly to desert. But unfortunately this excellent motive is interpreted in such materialistic and inadequate fashion that it fails us utterly in those cases where we need the deterrent most. To be of use, as commonly understood, is to work for our family, to

support and educate our children; to help promote the material progress of the community; to help along political reform, and the like. That is what people mean when they say we must stay in the world in order to be of use.

But, in the most trying situations, this argument entirely deserts us. The chronic invalid may say: I would cheerfully be of use to my family and the community, I desire nothing better; but how can I be? I cannot lift a hand. Instead of being of use, I am a burden to my friends and relatives, a drain upon their time and strength, a millstone about their necks. If I could die, they would, with all their tender care for me, experience a sense of relief. Why, then, should I not be permitted to do with my own hand what would be regarded as a blessing if Nature did it? Or, again, take the case of a bank official, who heretofore has been respected and honoured. He has a lovely home; his wife and daughters move in the best society and are received everywhere with welcome. But the man has succumbed to temptation; has embezzled trust funds; has committed crime. It is the night before the discovery; the crime can be no longer concealed; it will be published to all the world in the morning newspapers. The question is, shall he not make an end? Shall he condemn his innocent wife and daughters to drag out with him the weary weeks of a public trial, shar-

ing his infamy? If he were to bear the penalties alone, he might be willing to face them; but why should he inflict this suffering upon those he loves? This is the dialect in which the morality of the age speaks. Immorality means inflicting suffering; morality consists in bestowing happiness. But the infinite morality speaks in quite another language; it bids us accept pain for others as well as for ourselves.

It says to the chronic invalid: "If you bear your sufferings patiently and heroically, it is worth while for you to be a drag and drain on the time and strength of your dearest ones. You are giving them even more than they give you; you are putting a light into their life, which many years will not darken." How often have we stood wonderingly at the bedside of such sufferers, feeling a tender gratitude, which words could not express, for what they were giving us. Pain is the price which man must pay for progress of any kind. Without pain, there is no advance, no discoveries, no new inventions, no progress in learning, and no greatness in art. Without toil and travail as of childbirth nothing great can come to life. Above all, moral progress is dependent upon the ability to endure pain. He who endures it firmly is, by his example, a benefactor; and even if he suffers lonely and unmarked, in his own person the race advances. The criminal should have considered the sufferings of his wife and daughter before

he committed the act; and now that it is irrevocable, he must witness the pain he has inflicted as a part of his expiation, his regeneration. And as for the wife and daughters, it is a means of purification and exaltation for them, that they shall bear with him, walk through the valley of humiliation with him, suffering vicariously for the guilt that is not theirs, but his.

It is one of the mysteries of life that the innocent shall suffer; that the parent must suffer for the misdeeds of his erring child; the wife for her husband's guilt. This is one of the deep mysteries to which the doctrine of utility, race preservation, and the rest fail to do justice. Man is made perfect through suffering! This is the precious lesson contained in the Christ story, which will remain a heritage of the human race long after the doctrines which are connected with that story shall have passed away. And this thought of man made perfect through suffering, was known even to the pagan world. Sophocles expressed it in poetry; and in the plastic arts it was embodied in one of the most famous pieces of antique sculpture, the Laocöon group.

Years ago while visiting the Vatican galleries, I became separated from the rest of my party; and, wandering through the court of the Belvedere, found myself suddenly and unexpectedly alone before the Laocöon. I had known the story from childhood,

from the reading of Virgil; and time and again I had seen reproductions of this celebrated piece of sculpture. But now I realized that I had never seen it, nor anything like it. Laocōon is of the Promethean type. He is a man who defied the gods and brought upon himself their anger, first by contracting a marriage against their will, and later by revealing a cruel treachery which the gods had sanctioned. For this he is punished. Two horrid serpents, types of all that is evil in the world, seize him at the altar. They wind their scaly coils around him and his two sons, one serpent fixing its poisonous fangs into the thigh of the father, the other fatally wounding the breast of the younger son, while the older son is caught within the coils. What concentrated anguish, and yet what moderation! What torture, and yet what nobleness! This to me is the pagan Christ. This is the man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, as the pagan man could see him; the man made perfect in suffering. I do not, indeed, place the two types on a par. There is a depth of tragedy in the Christian, which is lacking in the pagan thought; but, on the other hand, there is one element in the pagan type which is absent in the Christian. Christ suffers alone on his cross. Laocōon, the man, is caught in the coils of the serpents, of the suffering inflicted by fate, *together with his two sons;* and the agony experienced by him on his own account

is reduplicated by the sufferings which he realizes in his children.

We should be less than Christian, aye less than pagan, did we lose the lesson of these types. In these days, however, we reject the sternness of morality; we desires its sweetness rather. But we cannot have the sweetness unless we have the sternness first. Morality has become sentimental, secular. The strictness of principle is going out of it. Hence it happens that in a crisis, when the moral forces alone can save one, they prove impotent; and the powers of evil sweep over the life of cities as of individuals, because the vital quality is eaten out of our morality.

The religion of duty has a difficult task in such an age. But it has a mission. It has a message, and this is its message:

The moral law is not a convenience; nor a convention; it is not imposed in order that we may achieve happiness for ourselves or others. The moral law comes out of the infinite depths and heights. There is a voice that speaks in us out of the ultimate reality of things. It is not subject to us; but we are subject to it, and to it we must bend our pride. True, it is the expression of our own highest nature, which, so far, is consonant with the universal nature; but there is also a lower nature in us, and this we must subjugate to that higher leading.

The first essential, then, of religion is that, discountenancing superficial and inadequate attempts to explain morality, man should build up in himself a realization of it as of an infinite, absolute, majestic, august and holy law; in order that, when the issues of right and wrong are before him, he may realize the necessity of obedience, and the *awful* wrong of transgression; that he may train himself at least to try to do the right as far as he is able. No one can do it wholly, but all are able, at least, to try to do it, not because it is pleasant, nor even because they love to do it; but because they *ought* to do it, and because they recognize the sovereignty of that ought.

It was written of old that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom". I would say, not fear, since fear is an ignoble thing, but reverence and awe in the presence of the moral law is the beginning of true religion.

CHAPTER FIVE

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT BASED ON THE RELIGION OF DUTY

IT sometimes seems difficult to muster courage to express a thought which one feels the world is, as yet, little prepared to receive. Some such mood is upon me, as I undertake the present discussion.

New Standards of Conduct Based on the Religion of Duty seems a daring title, and one that is easily open to misconstruction. I do not intend to suggest that there is to be a new moral code, a morality the like of which has never been before. To propose such a thing, would be the undertaking of a madman. It would be like trying to invent a new logic, differing from the principles of reasoning which have been in use among mankind hitherto; for as long as men have existed, morality has existed.

Nor does my topic imply any failure to prize the old standards, from which we have drawn our suste-

nance, and from which we must continue to draw our sustenance. I yield to no one in my reverence for the Bible, old and new. There is a certain finish about old things. The poetry of Homer is the despair of modern would-be imitators; the paintings of the old masters remain unapproached, despite the craft and technique of the modern artists. And yet the new poet has a right to sing; he must do so to express himself and his age, though his song be less perfect; and the new painter must paint, to express himself and his age. So the moral teacher must reach out toward new standards, to express himself and his age. And there is a difference between those who value perfection and finish, and those who value truth, even though it be combined with crudeness. The crudeness will, I fear, for a long time to come, be unavoidable.

My title does, however, imply divergence from those who say that the old ethics are sufficient. One is sometimes asked: Would you improve upon the Sermon on the Mount? Have you a new ethics finer than that? Have you a rule that surpasses the Golden Rule? The sole cause of moral backwardness, it is claimed, is that these superlative ethical principles have not been lived up to; and the only need is that men should practice them. The expositors of the Jewish religion on their side make the same claim,

and the two claims conflict somewhat. With great insistence we hear it said in Jewish pulpits, that the Sermon on the Mount is not needed since the ethics of Isaiah are sufficient; that if people would live up to the ethics of the Hebrew prophets, the world would get along very well, indeed. From the Jewish point of view, the innovation of Christian ethics was not necessary.

Virtue is a single gem, although it has many facets. From the facet presented by Isaiah might be inferred the whole system of virtue. Every virtue hangs together with every other. If one concentrates attention on any single point in the moral system, and follows out its relations, one can deduce from it the whole system. The ethics of the Sermon on the Mount may be deduced from Isaiah and Hosea. It is there implicitly. In every religious or moral system certain deductions from the fundamental principle are made, and certain others are not made. Certain facets of the jewel are turned to the light, and others are kept out of sight; certain aspects of the moral life are emphasized and others are ignored. But the question is not what is implicit, but what is explicit. Moral progress consists in making explicit what before was only implicit. It is no deduction from the value of the Sermon on the Mount, to say that all its truth was implicit in Isaiah. Implicit it might have

remained until the end of days, buried and unknown, but for its explication in the teachings of Jesus.

The same thought applies to-day. Hebrew righteousness emphasizes morality, justice, and mercy, chiefly within the lines of a chosen race. The Sermon on the Mount chiefly emphasizes personal duty, above all, personal purity. It does not at all emphasize certain other kinds of duty, such as patriotic, civic duty. Certain aspects of morality have been brought prominently forward, in the Buddhist type, in the Hebrew type, in the Christian type; and certain others have been kept in the background. And what I mean by new standards, is emphasis on those aspects of morality which are very important for us, but which have not been made explicit in older ethical systems.

Manifest deficiencies appear in the Christian type. The dealings of the Christian nations with China afford an appalling illustration. Christianity has been a powerful influence in the personal life of men, but it has failed equally to control the commercial and political life.

If then the Christian Church has powerfully affected the personal life, and if the political and commercial life of mankind on the whole has not been regenerated by the teachings of the churches, we are

constrained to ask whether this may not be due to some defect in the Christian ideal itself.

It cannot be said that ethical ideas are powerless. In the moral world, ideas are most powerful. And if we find that the personal life of men is elevated, and that if they do not conform to their ideals, at least they strive after them, while in the political and commercial spheres, not even an attempt is made to apply moral ideals; must we not infer that somehow the ideal itself does not adequately include those spheres?

Christianity, if we go back to its fundamental documents, is clearly anti-worldly in its attitude. It seems to me this at bottom is the cause of its practical failures. The world cannot be subdued by a power which turns its back upon it, nor transformed by a religion which condemns the world. The problem to-day is how to transform the world. The attitude of Christianity is the attitude of withdrawal and condemnation. By Christianity I do not mean Christians. What is called the Christian thought of to-day, is a complexus into which enter many elements, of Renaissance origin, of Greek origin, of scientific origin; and in this complexus very often the Christian element is by no means the predominant one. I am speaking of the Christian element as such when I say that it is other-worldly, in the sense of being anti-worldly. It seeks to exalt men by wooing them away from the

world. "The world, the flesh, and the devil!" is the trinity of evils. Does not this juxtaposition indicate the attitude of Christian thought toward the world?

In the first epistle of James there is a remarkable definition of religion. The sacred books do not abound in definitions, but here is a definition of religion. Pure religion is to visit the orphan and the widow in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted of the world. This phrase is often quoted by those who do not fully realize its implication, namely, that the world is, as it were, a turbid, slimy flood, through which we must pass, to reach the other side.

Opposed to the other-worldliness which turns its back upon the world, there is at present a frankly worldly attitude. The spirit of sheer secularism is growing, the spirit which says: Fling your sails to the breeze and catch every wind that blows across the dancing waves of life. Smite every string on the harp of pleasure. Stretch it to the breaking point. Drink the cup to the lees! Live fully, richly, live for power, for delight; live for the joy of strife! This is the thought of vast multitudes. This tide of worldliness which the soul of Christianity loathes, is daily rising higher.

Opposed to this other-worldliness on the one hand, and to worldliness on the other, what is to be the ethical ideal? Neither to flee the world nor to surrender to it, but to look upon it as the weaver looks upon his

threads, rejecting some, and selecting others, in order to weave the pattern which he has in mind. We are to look upon the world of facts as the foundation on which to rear the superstructure of a moral world. We are not to suppress the senses, nor to live the life of the senses. We are not to believe that pure religion consists in keeping unspotted of the world, but in working out the spots that are in the world, in removing the blemishes in things.

The world has oscillated between the two extremes. There have been periods of great worldliness, followed by reactions to the opposite side, each extreme provoking the other. The worldliness we complain of to-day is in part the effect of the extreme other-worldliness formerly characteristic of the Church. And again, the surrender to the lower instincts of human nature, will breed revulsion and attempts to seek in most abstract spirituality, the recovery of self-respect. The view which regards the world as a foundation upon which to rear the superstructure of moral perfection, and which is thus friendly to the world without surrendering to it, leads to certain practical conclusions, a few of which I may here point out.

In the first place, there is in the new moral type, an emphasis on intellectual veracity, which has not been attained by Christianity. Scholars exemplify in-

tellectual veracity by painstaking accuracy, by never stating as a fact what has not been verified as such, by never ascribing an opinion to an author of which it is uncertain whether it really is that author's opinion. This painstaking literary veracity was quite unknown in former times. In the Bible, we find a number of books ascribed to authors who did not write them. The Higher Criticism has discovered that many books of the Bible are falsely attributed to men who had no hand in writing them. The books of Moses, for instance, in large part, were not written by Moses. A great part of the book of Isaiah was not written by Isaiah. Around the canonical literature, moreover, there arose an abundance of apocryphical books, ascribed to men of ancient fame, in order to lend increased authority. This illustrates that the modern literary conscientiousness was lacking even among many who were concerned in originating the sacred literature.

But above all, veracity is illustrated in the physical sciences. Scientific veracity is *par excellence* the virtue of the scientific inquirer. The most careful observations, the utmost scrupulosity in the matter of experiments is demanded of him. He must repeat them again and again to make sure, he must cast aside pitilessly the investigations of weeks, months, and often years, the moment a flaw is discovered in them. And upon

what is this scientific veracity based? It is based on respect for facts. This respect is consistent with the altered view which we are taking of the world. The world is the order of facts. Christianity turns its back upon the world, minimizes and depreciates it. Scientific veracity is the fruit of the belief that facts can furnish truth. Christianity holds that the unassisted reason of man is incapable of arriving at truth. Christianity believes that the human mind is like a tree, which is capable of blossoming, but not of bearing fruit, unless the quickening influence of revelation produces a miraculous change; in other words, that the world of fact is not capable of giving us truth. The world of fact, morally and intellectually, is minimized or disowned. The new attitude of science would have been impossible without a new attitude toward the world of fact.

I do not intend to imply that Christianity is deficient in respect for veracity. It has greatly fostered and encouraged certain kinds of veracity; for instance, that kind which is exhibited in fidelity to one's belief, as is witnessed by the host of Christian martyrs, who have gone to their death rather than deviate a hair's breadth from their conviction. Christianity has also made for what is called social truthfulness, urging men to refrain from a lie which hurts, or defrauds a fellow-being, and it has warred against what may be called the falsehood of impurity, which spoils and

taints the inner life. But the veracity of the intellect is a gift which we have received from another source, and which we must incorporate into our own moral life. And, if I may be pardoned the digression, I wish here to add that, it seems to me, science itself cannot justify its own type of veracity. For, if we ask, why this painful accuracy in reporting facts, what shall be the answer of science? Is it because the utilization of Nature's laws depends on such accuracy? But this does not explain the severe sense of obligation in accurately reporting facts. Or is it, perchance, merely intellectual curiosity, or the desire for intellectual self-pleasing that moves us? The ethical idea is needed to justify science in its own field, and the ethical point of view is, that the world of fact becomes sacred, as soon as we realize that we must know the facts in order to transform them, that we must have a solid foundation in order to build upon it the superstructure of moral perfection. In the last analysis, science finds its justification in ethics, and cannot stand upon its own feet, without that alliance.

But the great deficiency is, as I have said, that while Christianity covers the field of personal ethics and has proved most powerful therein, it somehow has failed to exercise its influence upon the economic and political affairs of men. And to this aspect of things let us now give our attention.

What we need, in order to overcome political baseness, is to bring home the thought that the State does not exist for the benefit, either of one citizen, or of a party, or a certain clique among the citizens; nor does it exist for the benefit of all the citizens; but the State and citizens alike exist for, and are the servants of, a great evolutionary ideal. The State does not exist for the good of everybody. Everybody and the State together exist for the sake of an ideal which uses men. Just as the artist seeks to incorporate his vision of the beautiful in marble, not for his gain, nor for his fame, but in order that beauty may be; so the State and the citizens exist in order that justice, a system of right relations may be; not because justice and right will produce happiness — happiness being the end, and justice the means — but in order that justice and right relations may be.

How far in our politics are we from any such conception as that! New ethical formulas applied to politics we need. The duties of the personal life, or of relations between man and man singly, are immeasurably valuable; but we need also, and need urgently, ethical formulas that will cover the public life. There is a kind of morality that is justly called political, that applies to groups and not to individuals. And the group morality cannot be satisfactorily deduced from individual morality.

Next in regard to industrial and commercial life we must combat the heresy that men are in business, as the phrase is, to make money. As we need an ethical formula for the elevation of the political life, so we need a new formulation of the ethical purpose of labour, in order to redeem industrialism and commercialism from their mischievous and debasing effects.

Can Christianity furnish this formula? I go back to the original books, to the fountain-head. We must look to the source of a religion, if we wish to understand its possible outcome. Now in the Christian documents, I find that there is a certain unfriendliness to labour. In Genesis, labour is represented as a curse. In the New Testament, the lilies of the field, "which toil not neither do they spin," are held up as examples. Not working for the morrow, but letting to-morrow take care of itself is commended! This view found consistent expression in monasteries and convents. During the Middle Ages, when Christianity was at the height of its influence, the world was full of men and women who tried to live out this idea. But the majority cannot do this. They must dig and delve and swing the scythe, and lift the hammer. It follows that under the reign of the Christian ideal, the world is necessarily torn in twain. The ideal is in the cloisters, and the life of labour is shorn of idealism; it is not and cannot be spiritualized; it is base, and cannot be exalted.

God is a Spirit, we read, and we should worship him in spirit and truth. But man also is a spiritual being, and if we wish to understand him, in truth, we must understand him on his spiritual side, and nothing that a spiritual being does or proposes to himself should be done without direct regard to his higher nature. The higher nature should always be in view. We must eat, we must produce, and dig and delve and swing the scythe, and lift the hammer; and if money be the token of products, then we must earn money. But so does the physician earn his fee, and yet the end and aim of the true physician is not the fee which he earns. That is incidental; something else is the essential aim. Is it altogether vain to ask on moral grounds that the ideal in business shall be the same as that in the medical profession? For commerce, too, renders a service. Industry and commerce are great civilizers, great humanizers; they have intimate contact with religion, are connected with, and related to, the highest interests of human life; and the time must come when these services shall be foremost in the minds of those who labour, when they shall think of themselves as essentially the renderers of services, and when the pecuniary return will be for them, too, as incidental as it is for the physician.

Every material act is an opportunity for the exemplification of our spiritual nature. We must eat, but

we do not eat as the beasts do; we make even the taking of food the occasion of social fellowship and fine intercourse; our family table is a family altar.

We must apply the same thought to the life of labour. The common saying is that man has a soul. I should like to amend this by saying that we come into the world with the possibility of a soul, and that the aim of life is to convert this into an actuality. The whole aim and purpose of a man's life, as I look upon it, is to become an individual, a personality, to acquire distinctive selfhood. The work we do, whether it be as a merchant, or as a mechanic, or in what are called the higher vocations, is the means of developing in us distinctive selfhood. This is my ethical formula; this is the kind of litany of labour that I would like to chant. The glory and dignity of our daily task lies in the fact that it may build up in us distinctive selfhood. The daily task, to which we give constant attention, is the means of enabling us to master some little field of knowledge, to reach down to bedrock, to gain a footing in reality. The artisan, the sailor, the factory operative, as well as the priest and the statesman, find in the things they do daily, the occasion of coming in touch with reality, and of importing the solidity of reality into their inner world. And no one can deal with real things in a thorough-going way without somehow dealing with them in a unique way,

Every one looks upon the world from a different angle, and if only he be thorough-going, he will develop distinctiveness; his self will become different from that of others, though they be engaged in similar tasks. The tasks we do, our business, whatever it be, with the problems which it propounds and the thought we must expend upon it, has the retroactive effect of making us efficient, making us individualized. In the workshop the soul is born; the daily task is the anvil on which one must beat out his selfhood.

We are prone to look at the external results, but what really matters is the kind of men we are becoming while we are at work. Even a philanthropist may lose more than he gains if, as sometimes occurs, he resorts to improper methods, in order to compass the good end. Such a man inevitably deteriorates, no matter how good the end he pursues, nor how valuable may seem the service which he renders. It is not the house the architect builds that is most important, it is what the architect himself becomes while he is building it. And yet the two go together; for the house will show the manner of man that built it.

Just as when we sit down to our meal, the eating of the meal is the proximate object, but the finer return is the love and the geniality and the fellowship; so in following the material ends of life, the proximate end is the making of money or the winning of bread, but

the real end is the reaction upon the mind and character, the real profit is what we gain in inner worth, and the real loss is what we lose there. The things deemed primary are secondary, and the things usually regarded as secondary, are really the primary ones.

Man is a spirit, not a material being merely. Can any man, then, afford to do his daily task, to spend nine or ten hours every day, the greater part of life, in a merely material service? The great need is to redeem that material service, to show that there is a spiritual side to it, that work has for its net result, the man one becomes while doing it.

I have this thought in mind as I look out upon the labour movement. The labour movement will not be really great until aims higher than the material aims shall come into the foreground. Not greater wealth for all should be the principal object, but the establishment of conditions such as shall make it possible for the labourer to gain the spiritual fruits of his labour. The greater wealth, and the greater leisure are implied in such conditions, but they should not be exalted in the consciousness of men to a place that does not belong to them. The glory of life is in the work we do. The ideal of a just society is that of a society so organized that each man's work shall yield him its highest results in terms of mental and moral development.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ETHICAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS OTHERS

TWO views of life at present divide the field between them — the one affirming that self-perfection, harmonious development of all one's powers and faculties is the true end, and this is known under the general designation of individualism; the other declaring that the bestowing of happiness upon others is the highest end. The one says that to be as perfect as possible, full-orbed in all one's powers, is the best thing in life; the other that the best thing in life is to give joy to others. Both these views are partial and unsatisfactory. I shall subject each to a brief, critical examination, in order to pave the way for the presentation of a third view which, as I believe, includes and transcends them both.

The doctrine of harmonious development seems to me an iridescent dream, one that has arisen again and again along the path of human history, beguil-

ing the elect, or those who think themselves so. It is not only an idle but a hurtful dream. The doctrine of harmonious development, at first sight, seems identical with that of moral perfection. On this account it is all the more important to pay attention to the decisive points of difference. Two rivers near their source, on the summit of a divide, are sometimes separated by a space so small as to seem negligible. For a time they may even wander side by side; but presently they branch off in opposite directions, and the one may empty perhaps into the Mississippi, the other into the Pacific. In like manner, conceptions of life, which, to a superficial view, seem so close together as almost to be indistinguishable, may yet, in their issues, be as wide apart as the East is from the West. Moral perfection is a distant goal, an end which we in this life may not expect to attain, but toward which we should strive. The pursuit of the harmonious development of one's nature is an attempt to achieve a kind of earthly perfection, to live here and now a glorious, festive, godlike existence. This is a vain undertaking, and the attempt to carry it through leads to the worst blunders and failures. We must be content to live more or less broken lives, willing to relinquish the unities and harmonies of our existence in order ever and again to clear the way for higher unities and harmonies to which we shall not here attain, of which

we can enjoy only the faint prevision. We must be content to be torn and wounded in the fight, happy if we can carry in our breasts the conviction of an ultimate victory for the side on which we fight. The one doctrine says: Shape your course in such a way as to secure harmony and perfection in a far-off, ideal state. The other says: Seek to achieve at least a relative perfection here and now.

My principal objection to the latter view is that self-development as an aim, leads to preoccupation with self, and inevitably to a grosser or more refined selfishness. The fruits of individualism have always been of this kind. Think, for instance, of Goethe; of the superlative greatness of this man in many directions, and on the other hand of his colossal egotism. He certainly was an extraordinary being, endowed with an insatiable appetite for knowledge, moved, like his own Faust, by the titanic aspiration to wring from the universe its secret, eager to explore every branch of science, every department of practical activity; above all, eager to win from other human beings every assistance they could render the task upon which he had set his heart, that of shaping his nature into Olympian beauty and proportions. And note how merciless he was in using others for this purpose of self-development — in his dealings, for instance, with Charlotte von Stein. Note how

relentlessly he kept at a distance whatever threatened to interfere with the development of his faculties, how cold and indifferent he was to the interests of his country, at the time when it was engaged in a life and death struggle with France. Intellectual idealism of the highest sort he possessed, and æsthetic idealism of the most splendid type. How much is there that we may learn from him! But moral idealism was lacking. And it is the idea of self-development as the supreme aim, with the emphasis ever on self, which accounts for this moral taint, this taint of egotism. The defects of this ideal are nowhere more strikingly illustrated than in Goethe's career.

Against this conception of the harmonious development of self as the end, another criticism is that it involves a false view of human capacity, — as if all men were capable of doing all things; a false view of human equality, — as if all men were capable of holding their own in the fierce struggle for existence, and if they fail are themselves to blame for not having exerted their natural powers. But the principal criticism is that the idea of self-development, by concentrating thought upon self, makes men selfish; even where, in the idea of self-realization, the social duties are included; even where it is recognized that good citizenship, the performance of the family duties and charity to the poor are necessary factors in the unfold-

ing of the larger, fuller self, nevertheless, because it is the realization of the self that is kept in the foreground, as the object for the sake of which the duties are performed, the performance of them is necessarily vitiated. There is taken from them the savour of pure disinterestedness, which makes them fine. Imagine, for instance, a man who, in the very act of succoring a needy family, is conscious that he performs this action in order to develop in himself social sympathies, saying to himself: "My nature is not perfect unless I also develop sympathy." Would not the essence of benevolence be destroyed in him, by his clinging to the thought of self in the act of charity? The beneficence of his act could not, indeed, be disputed, for beneficence means the doing of good; but his benevolence would be open to serious question, since benevolence means wishing well to others, not wishing well to one's self while doing good to others. The ideal of self-development is partial and unsatisfactory, because it leads to egotism.

Shall then the ideal of altruism be adopted in its stead? Shall it be said that the best thing in life is to give joy to others, to confer as much happiness as possible on as many as possible of our fellow beings? The first ideal is essentially of the intellect, the second is essentially of the feelings. But we are bound to ask whether it is possible, to any adequate extent, to secure

happiness for others, even for those whom we love best. Is it possible to avert from them the calamity, the pain of bereavement, or to save them from the sufferings caused by cruel and lingering disease? If happiness were the end to strive for, then in all such cases — and they occur frequently enough — we should have to confess that life is a miserable failure.

And while in the cases just mentioned pain is unavoidable, there are others in which it is preventable, yet where we would not prevent it; cases in which it is possible for some one whom we love to choose between two paths, the one easy, the other difficult; and yet, so far from desiring his joy, we hang with breathless expectation upon his decision, hoping that he will choose the hard path, and seek to encourage him to do so, by every means at our command. A merchant foreseeing impending bankruptcy reveals his situation to his wife. Shall she counsel him to divert to his own uses a part of what he no longer really possesses, though it be still in his keeping, or shall she urge him to give up all, even to the last penny? Shall she advise him with a view to his ease, or to his honour? A minister of religion finding himself in the anomalous position of representing a faith the essential tenets of which he no longer believes, comes to a friend for counsel. Shall the friend in question consult the honour, or the ease of his friend? Will any one

pretend that, to follow the line of conscience in all one's actions is certain to conduce to happiness? Is it happiness to break up one's career in middle life? Is it happiness to disappoint one's well-wishers, and to shock the sensibilities of one's friends? Is it happiness to find one's self turned adrift in the world? When new labour-saving devices are introduced in the sphere of industry, there are always numbers of workmen who, being unadapted to the use of the new machines, are deprived of employment and are thus sacrificed. In like manner, when a new idea in religion arises, a similar fate is apt to overtake those who are adapted to the old, but too far advanced in life to fit themselves to the new way of thinking. And yet, the friend of the clergyman in such a situation, will not hesitate, if he be a true friend, to advise him to pursue the path of honour, and not that of ease.

I have seen many paintings of the Madonna, some of them representing merely pretty women, with shallow and insipid faces, not madonnas at all; others, lovely and beautiful women, with all the sweetness as of happy mothers crooning over their babes, but lacking the depth of the conception that is implied in the idea of the Madonna. Only, now and then, one of the great masters, who has sounded the mysteries of the human heart, has succeeded in creating a genuine madonna type. In what

does that type consist? What is it that has filled the hearts of mankind with the shuddering sense of awe and adoration in the presence of that ideal figure? It is the thought of a mother who loves her beautiful child with all the intensity possible to a mother's heart, and who foresees that this beautiful boy, the darling of her soul, will one day be "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" that these little feet shall one day press the steeps of Calvary; that these fair limbs one day shall be broken on the lonely cross; that on this clear brow shall one day gather the bloody sweat of Gethsemane; that from these gentle lips shall one day break the cry of desolation: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani — My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and who nevertheless, despite the torture involved for him and her, consents to it all, wills that he shall save others, though himself he cannot save. It is the strength of a love devoted to the working-out of a highest destiny, inconsistent with joy, inseparable from boundless suffering, that is embodied in the ideal picture of Mary. It is this that has made her the Mater Dolorosa, the Mother of Pain; and also the Mater Gloriosa, the glorified and transfigured type of the most exalted motherhood. To give joy to others is an inestimable privilege. Let us assiduously take advantage of that privilege as often as possible. But often it is not

possible to avert pain, even if we would; and often we ought not to wish to do so, if we could. We ought, rather, frequently to encourage those dear to us to accept the pain, for their own highest good.

These two positions, then, I must reject. What would I propose in their stead? Neither the self, taken singly, nor others regarded as separate existences, can be the object; but something higher than either, over-arching both — the unfolding of that common spiritual life which is in others as it is in us. That is the true good of self which includes the good of others. That is the genuine good of others which includes the good of self. Reference to both must be present in one and the same act. And this is practicable, since living consists in influencing others, and to develop one's own life means to extend and make more penetrating one's influence upon others. Spiritual life cannot be defined otherwise than as that something in one being which provokes into activity what before was only potential in another being. As the vast interstellar spaces, despite the light of myriads of suns and stars, are as dark as primeval night, and as the light becomes light only when it radiates upon an object, so life is life only when it smites on other life. It is not correct to speak, as we commonly do, of our life as one thing, and of the influence of our life as another thing. Our life consists in our influence. We

live to the extent that we affect others. We live in our radiations. This is my central thought in this discussion. In it lies the reconciliation of the two doctrines that have divided the field between them, both of which I regard as inadequate; the doctrine of working for the development of self, and that of working for the development of others. We exist as spiritual selves only in so far as we influence others. We develop, broaden and deepen our spiritual life by making more comprehensive, more profound, and more stimulating our influence upon others.

This thought might be illustrated in many ways. It is true that we might perform the lowest of our physical functions as solitary beings. If only a single man existed on earth, he might still eat and drink and sleep. But that solitary creature could not think, nor perceive beauty, nor perform a moral act. He could not avail himself of human speech. To use language is to utter sounds which are understood by others. The most carefully articulated sounds, the most mellifluous speech, would be mere gibberish if it were not understood. Thus an utterly foreign language, like the Turkish or Chinese, when spoken in the presence of those who do not understand it, provokes laughter, and seems like the talk of a madman.

Again, to think truly is to think thoughts which awaken a responsive echo in other minds. The most

evident propositions, such as that two and two make four, would not appear certain were it not that, the moment they are stated, all rational persons assent to them. It is this assent which makes them certain. The ear-mark of indubitable truth is the fact that it invariably awakens this response in other minds. This is true of the self-evident truths which underlie all reasoning. But the characteristic mark of new truths such as those published by Newton, Galileo, and Darwin, is the awakening effect which they have upon other thinkers. The test of their value is to be found, not so much in the problems which they solve, as in the new problems which they raise; not so much in the knowledge which they convey, as in the outlook which they open upon new lines of inquiry. Thinking is a social act. The best thinker is he who stirs into active exercise the latent originality of other thinkers; and the validity of a thought lies in its fruitfulness. Every royal thought that has arisen in the world has become the ancestor of a long dynasty of kingly thoughts. So, too, the works of great artists are great in proportion to their productivity. The supreme artists are seers, seeing visions of the beautiful. And the grandeur of their influence is to be measured not by the brood of mere imitators whom they inspire, but by the degree to which they engender in others, through the impact of their originality, the

power to see in new and original ways the many-hued, many-sided image of beauty. But above all, the moral use of life, with which we are here concerned, consists in exercising each and all of our faculties with the deliberate purpose of awakening the slumbering faculties in others.

The spiritual nature is like a rich mine, the upper layers of which only have been worked. Below, in the dark, unexplored region lies the brightest, the most precious gold. The distinctions between one individual and another are like the boundaries that mark off field from field on the surface above the mine. Beneath, regardless of these external demarcations, lie the veins of gold. To bring to light that hidden gold, — not to develop self as a thing apart, not to help others as if they were separable from ourselves, but to develop the spiritual nature which is common to our fellow-beings and ourselves, that is the true aim.

We must be searchers after a new method of living. The first principle of this new method, in accordance with what has been said, is to consider of paramount importance the influence which we project into other lives. Look to your radiations. Ask yourself honestly how you are affecting the people with whom you habitually come in contact? Consider the track you are leaving behind you. We all think now and again of our influence; but we think

of it only casually. We hold apart the life we lead, and the effect of it upon others. Let us awaken to the truth that the helpfulness and profundity of our influence is the measure of our living. If you are a merchant, ask yourself how you are affecting your clerks, your subordinates. Are you training them by word and example, to right standards of mercantile honour? Are you restricting your interest in them to the particular service they render, or are you a friend to them, encouraging them to make the most of their opportunities, to be progressive, to improve their intellectual equipment, to fit themselves for places for which they are not yet fitted, but for which their natural endowments render them suitable? Every merchant, every employer, every superior should, in his dealings with subordinates, be a counsellor, teacher, friend. If he is not that, he does not truly fill his place; he defrauds both them and himself. So should the lawyer consider how he is influencing his clients, to what extent he is teaching them. The architect should ask how he is influencing, how he is training that part of the public whom he reaches. Above all, as true friends of our friends, as parents, in our relations with our children we are bound to ask to what extent our daily intercourse with them is calculated to subdue what is unworthy, and to elicit what is best in them.

The problem of living, considered from the point of view of our responsibility for the influence we exert, looms up before us with menacing aspect and threatens almost to overwhelm us by the prodigious difficulties which it presents. When we review our life, how little occasion have we, as a rule, to be content with ourselves. How many wayside flowers have we trampled upon. If we have not oppressed others, yet how often have we suppressed in them powers and capabilities, simply because they did not fit into the hard and fast frame of our opinions and predilections. How often has our course through life been like that of the locomotive that rushes across the western prairie in the dry summer, scattering sparks and cinders as it goes, intent on following remorselessly its own iron track, heedless of the conflagration which it leaves behind. But it will be said that it is difficult to influence others in the right manner. Yes, it is immeasurably difficult. But in the difficulty lies the secret of the coincidence of self-development and of the beneficent influencing of others. Because we are not fit and know that we are not, because we try and fail, being too weak, too unwise, therefore, we must endeavour to make ourselves fit; therefore we must seek out the wisdom which we have not yet; acquire the strength which is lacking, the knowledge, the patience, the perseverance. To the extent that we wish

to be of use to others, we must be continually reforming and reshaping ourselves. Thus the desire to promote the growth of others is the most effective incentive toward promoting our own growth. We must become better in order to make others better.

In order to make my meaning more palpable I would mention three points to which especial attention must be given. First, that we must put anger utterly from our hearts. He who reacts against the faults of others in an irascible way, will never produce any helpful effect on them. He will simply come into collision with them, as the pots in the fable crash against each other in the stream. Anger is due to personal susceptibility, to the circumstance that we personally have been hurt by the fault of another. But, in correcting another's fault, the fact that we have been hurt, personally, must not count at all. Unless we have sufficient self-control and humility to eliminate the personal element, we shall never succeed in winning and guiding the erring.

The second point is less commonly appreciated, hence I lay special stress upon the fact that to beneficently influence others, we must make a deliberate study of their characters. Character is always complex, and in order to affect it in one of its aspects, it is necessary to understand it as a whole. How few even try to attain such insight. We see the character, even

of our friends, in patches. We see a fault, a virtue, another fault, and then again a virtue; but we do not try to compose these lights and shadows into a single view. Yet this unitary view is indispensable. These different qualities, the good and the bad, related to one another, may be compared to the combination of letters that unlocks a safe. You may try one letter, and then another, and not succeed in opening the safe. You must know the combination, and when you know that the heaviest door will easily turn upon its hinges. So we must have the total view, the qualities in their connection and relation, in order to understand the character of our friends. And understanding is the prerequisite of influence. Character study, exalted to the rank of duty, is one of the corollaries of the point of view I am trying to present. Not every one is rich enough to have a picture gallery in his house, with portraits in it by the old masters, or by the new. But every one should have in his heart a picture-gallery in which are hung the portraits of his friends. He should be constantly busy, retouching these portraits, adding a shade here and light there as experience teaches. He should paint them lovingly, not uncharitably, grieving over every blemish, pondering earnestly whether, by some art he may not succeed in obliterating it. He should visit this gallery often, to contemplate the portraits that are hung there. The gallery is not a

mere gallery, but a studio. The owner is not a mere owner, but also a painter; and, better than any painter, he has, to some extent, the power, by faithfully studying the image, to change the original.

The elimination of the personal equation, and faithful, continuous character study, — these are two prerequisites. And the third is that, in attempting to give to others, we should also be willing to take from them. We may not set ourselves up as patrons, or superiors, even in the case of the most faulty. But we should take the humble attitude of learners, as well as teachers. For every character has its qualities as well as its defects, its strong points as well as its weak, its virtues as well as its vices. And we can never overcome the one unless we enter into and show our appreciation of the other, and use the strength we discern, as a fulcrum, at which to apply the lever of correction. Nay, as we ourselves are often lacking in the very element of strength which the other possesses, we must even put on his strength, assimilate, appropriate, make it our own, in order to help him transcend his weakness. And thus again, and in the deepest sense, we shall grow ourselves in the attempt to make others grow.

Every human being is valuable, because in all dwells the same spiritual life. Not individualism and not altruism is the satisfying doctrine. Not the good

of self, nor the good of others apart, but a higher, over-arching good, to promote which is, alike, the highest good of self and of others. Men grow and develop in proportion as they help others to grow and develop. The mission of a spiritual being is to make apparent the unapparent. The major part of the potentialities of the human-divine nature are as yet unrealized. To attempt to realize them in others is, at the same time, to unfold resources dormant in ourselves. This is the harmonizing of the opposite theories. This point of view reconciles the ever-conflicting claims of individualism and altruism.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ETHICAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS PLEASURE

SEDUCTIVE as are the attractions of pleasure, there have at all times been movements among mankind inspired by aversion from it. The siren sits by the wayside, and invites the passers-by to endless feasts, and sings her never-ceasing song; but there have always been men who deliberately turned their back upon pleasure, and sought her wan and haggard sister, pain.

Many motives have lead to this anti-pleasure attitude; but the one that interests us most is the feeling so widespread in the human race, that there is something degrading in a life of pleasure, something in it unworthy of a human being; or, at all events, that the current of pleasure is likely to sweep one along further than one intends to go, so that to lead a true life it is better not to enter the current at all. We are accustomed to associate such ideas with Christian monasticism; but these notions have not been confined to

Christian peoples. They have been very general. In Hindustan, for instance, ascetic movements are carried to a far more exaggerated degree. The ascetic is the man who seeks to escape from pleasure, who is horrified at it, and who embraces pain, subjecting himself to cruel suffering in order to make sure that this enchantress has no power over him. Thus, in a hot country like India, when the glare of the sun is almost intolerable, the ascetic will sit between four fires — one at each point of the compass — with the blazing heat of the sun streaming upon him from above. In cold countries the ascetic, thinly clad, will make his bed in snow and ice, or sleep upon cold pavements. He will scourge himself until the blood flows down his poor body. An ascetic in India boasted that he had reduced the quantity of his food to a few grains of rice a day. Asceticism means aversion to pleasure, due to fear that it will carry one too far, that even the least concession will lead to total spiritual degradation.

The monastic or anchorite type of asceticism is largely a thing of the past; but a new kind of ascetic tendency is beginning to make itself felt. And strangely enough, this new type of asceticism is based not on the fear of pleasure as an evil thing, but on an excessive evaluation of it. Pleasure is prized more than anything else, and precisely this valuation of it leads

strangely enough, to a certain abstemiousness. The key to the paradox is to be found in the democratic movement of our age. Democracy has a spiritual side to it. The spiritual effect of democracy has been to awaken in some conscientious and sensitive persons compunction as to their right to enjoy pleasure; because the great majority of men are deprived of it. Such a person, when about to lift the golden chalice to his lips, pauses; his arm is stayed; he asks himself: "Have I the right to enjoy what others lack?"

Compunctions of this sort in part, at least, explain Tolstoy, and his decision to live like a peasant with peasants. "If it is true that these people are my brothers," thinks Tolstoy, "how can I lead an exceptional life? The one thing to do, is as speedily as possible to dispossess myself of my privileges and to accommodate my way of living to theirs." The same tendency, in a form less extreme, impels the emigration we witness to-day of gently bred, cultivated men and women, from the prosperous parts of the town into "settlements," in the slums; the purpose being to elevate the life of the people, but also, to some extent at least, to share their mode of life.

Now there is need of a new way of living, and this is due to the fact that the world has changed. We cannot adopt the way of living that was satisfactory a

hundred years ago. We cannot merely consult our Bibles, or the philosophers of antiquity in order to discover how to live. The world in which we live has changed, and we must change with it. And the great forces that have brought about these changes are science and democracy, especially the latter. Democracy has made it less easy to accept privileges. As the mariner, when he crosses the line, sees new constellations flash upon his sight, new stars rise, by which he must guide himself; so we, leaving behind us the age in which authority prevailed in the realm of thought, and privilege in the realm of action, must adopt for our guidance in the world of thought, freedom; and in the world of action, true democracy. We all enjoy privileges. What right have we to them, and to the pleasures which accompany them? Some of us are rich, others are well-to-do, others live in straitened circumstances; but even those who live most narrowly are yet privileged. Why not equalize conditions and let every one strip himself of his superior privileges?

Every one will remember that wonderful August night, when, in the Assembly which controlled the destinies of France, the scions of the ancient nobility voluntarily stripped themselves of the prerogatives of their order, relinquished their titles, and resolved to share the burdens of the people. What a spectacle

was that! What an example! Shall we not emulate that example?

A new way of living means, first of all, a way that will heal our inward discord. Many people to-day feel that they are are too much enslaved to their present mode of life, too much wedded to their enjoyments and pleasures to give them up; yet they are not satisfied with themselves. They think that it would be right to do as Tolstoy does, but they have not the courage to do so; they are not strong enough. The result is discord, inner conflict. If it is right to follow Tolstoy's lead, it will be better for us to do so, at whatever cost.

But the question is: Is it right? and I, for my part, do not believe that it is, and I shall endeavour to show the reasons for my dissent. But before doing so, let me attempt to clear out of the way certain difficulties and objections. What is proposed is not the establishment of communism by law. Communism has never been a success, except in a few communities, held together by religious ties; and communistic laws, if enacted, would, in virtue of the inequalities of talents, energy and the like, very quickly reproduce the same discrepancies of fortune which they are intended to remedy. One need not be a deep student of economics to realize the truth of this statement.

There is no question of communism enacted by law. Nevertheless, if one were disposed to follow after Tolstoy, one could do so. Law requires only a minimum of right conduct; and no really moral man confines his action to what the law requires of him. Granted that communism cannot be enacted by law, why should one not voluntarily give up all that he possesses?

A wealthy man in our community has said that he considers it a disgrace for a man to die rich, and he gives away large portions of his wealth. No law compels him to do so, yet he does it. The point may be raised, how far such a man should go. He may give away millions, and yet retain so much that no appreciable inroad is made on his wealth; he may still be able to gratify his most extravagant wishes, despite the millions he gives away. I say this not in any spirit of criticism; but to raise the point how far, logically, a man should go? Might he not logically be required to go to the point which Jesus stated, when he said to the young man: "Go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor"?

The fear that by giving all to the poor they might be pauperized, and their motives of self-help be undermined, need not deter any one. There are many cases in which one can give outright with perfect safety; for instance, where a poor family is in distress

for its rent, or where deserving people who have not the necessary capital might be set up in business. A judicious gift, at such a time, would make them more and not less self-helpful. By tiding over a critical moment, one may give courage and hope, without pampering and pauperizing.

Apart from such cases, there are progressive philanthropies, the purpose of which is to train the next generation in such a way that they will be more competent for the struggle for existence. I have in mind especially schools, trade, technical, and agricultural schools. Hundreds of millions of dollars a year could profitably be spent on the schools of our land and on progressive philanthropies which are constructive, and will help to make the next generation better able to cope with the problems of life. And further, I would mention, by way of illustration, the need of a pension fund for superannuated wage-earners, male and female. Such a pension fund has been created in Germany, with the assistance of the government. In this country, no governmental agency should be asked to create such a fund; but here is a field for voluntary, private effort.

If any one feels that he ought to be a disciple of Tolstoy, or better of Jesus, and entirely dispossess himself of his fortune, he need not hesitate because communism cannot be enacted by law; he can go beyond

the law. Nor need he hesitate, for fear of pauperizing; as has just been shown.

There are two other objections to which I wish briefly to allude. One is the common fallacy that the pleasures and luxuries of the rich are beneficial to the poor, that luxury is the mother of art, and that wasteful expenditure multiplies employment. But if the public demand for art increased in proportion as the private demand fell off, society would be the gainer, not the loser. Artists would still paint, workers in metal, carvers in stone and wood would still produce their beautiful works, only they would be destined, not for the palatial mansions of the few, but for those edifices in which the life and aspirations of the community find their expression. And if wealth were more evenly distributed the increased purchasing power of the many would create employment for labour on a far larger scale than is now created by the luxurious expenditure of the rich. Moreover, the labour which to-day is spent on the manufacture of useless articles of fashion would be turned into far more useful channels.

Finally there is the conceited argument, that we have a right to our privileges because we have acquired them by merit. As to those who have inherited their wealth, this claim certainly cannot be conceded, except with serious qualifications. But even in regard to

the so-called self-made man, the argument is not sound. True, there is some element of superiority in all cases of success, though moral rectitude is often sadly wanting. But even where moral rectitude exists one must concede that merit alone would not have availed without the additional factor of opportunity.

It must also be admitted that among the multitudes in the obscurer walks of life, there probably are many persons who have the same or greater merit, intelligence, and capacity, — gifted boys, for instance, who, at thirteen or fourteen, are put into the treadmill of factory labour, whose intellectual development is thereby cut off, whose chances for advancement are taken from them, who can never be what they might have been, had they had opportunity. How many precious human gifts are thus wasted, how many germs of talent are thus crushed, and all that they contained of promise for the world lost! I do not feel, therefore, that any of us owe our superior positions simply to merit.

And yet I am not a follower of Tolstoy, although I feel the appeal of such motives as have actuated him, and I do not believe that true democracy requires us to give up our superior positions. Here is a friend who wishes to equalize his condition with that of his fellows. He asks for advice. How shall we advise him? There is not just one standard of living for the rich,

and another for the poor, so that we could exchan the one for the other; but society is really like the strat fied rocks, with many strata superimposed upon eac other. There is the standard of living of the very ric and of the rich, and then of the middle class, and the when we reach the wage-earners, there is an aristo racy of skilled artisans and mechanics who keep up certain standard of comfort; below that the middl class wage-earner, who receives perhaps, twelve or fif teen, or eighteen dollars per week, and then the day labourer, with his meagre standard of comfort; an below that the man whose employment is irregular whose family is compelled to live in very crowde quarters, often with no fixed time for meals, leadin a sort of nomadic life, yet having something they cal a home; and below them again are the homeless and shelterless people who sleep on docks or in the parks, in the summer, and in out of the way corners, some-times in the dark hallways of tenement houses in the winter.

Now, to what level shall our friend descend? If he wishes to have no advantage above any of his brothers, he must descend to the lowest level. Even if he is willing to do so, is it right for him to do so? Even as far as he himself is concerned, we experience a sudden revulsion of feeling and protest at such a suggestion. A certain standard of decent, civilized living

ought to be kept up. The human race has been progressing toward homes and shelter, cleanliness and self-respect. Where the civilized way of living has been achieved, it should not be given up; and if our friend has a wife and children depending upon him, we should regard him as a criminal, if he took them with him to the lowest level and exposed them to the contagion of overcrowded tenements.

So the mere sentiment of brotherhood is not a sufficient guide, and we must seek light in another direction, we must turn to a principle which may help us.

The object of life is activity, work. We are here to do a certain work, to do it as faithfully, as efficiently, and in as social a spirit as we may. Every one has his place. It does not matter, for the purpose of this argument, whether we more deserve to have this place than some one else. I fully believe in many cases we do not. But that makes no difference so far as our present duty is concerned. In the midst of the battle the general may honestly enough confess to himself: "I know that there are others more fit than I to command in this action." But that would not excuse him for resigning while the fight is going on, nor for failing to do his duty in conducting that army to the best of his ability. Another general ought, perhaps, to have been in command, but he himself is in command; certain great interests are intrusted to him;

to the best of his ability he must serve. So it is with all men, with the captains of industry, with the architects, with the lawyers and the physicians, with the teachers and the preachers. Others might have been, perhaps ought to have been in their places, but they actually are in command, and it is their bounden duty to fulfil the obligations and perform the functions appropriate to their places to he best of their ability. It is therefore proper, also, to take such measures as will better enable them to perform the functions and duties of their places.

Pleasure is intended to be a recreation, a cordial. We cannot do our work well if we are relaxed, heavy and dull, surely not so well as when our faculties are at their brightest, and when we go about our tasks full of cheer, freshness, and vigour. Pleasure is justified to the extent that it renders men more efficient workers.

This reverses the common ideas concerning pleasure. When we were children, we worked for the pleasure that was to come after. Work was the means, pleasure the end. Many adult persons still take the same childish view. I take the opposite view; that the main thing is the work. I have not much respect for any man who does not find his greatest satisfaction in doing his work. That is the supreme satisfaction of life. It gives zest and keenness to a man's life to feel himself efficient, doing his work well; and pleasure is

a necessary preparation for it. We need pleasure for the sake of recreating ourselves in the literal sense of the word. I do not, indeed, intend to say that the sphere of pleasure should be invaded by any conscious reference to its stimulating after effects; what I mean is, that the kinds of pleasure which are allowed and the limits within which they are allowed, should be determined by the instrumental view of pleasure.

With this idea in view, one has a means of judging of particular pleasures. Simply ask whether the particular pleasure will be recreating. Will it renew the energies of life? No one else can apply that standfor us; we alone can tell what puts us into tune. But he who applies this standard sincerely will find that it is not a rule of laxness, as might at first sight appear; on the contrary, that it is a very stern and exigent rule, since it cuts off so many of the things on which money is spent.

Let us consider what are some of the things which would be eliminated by applying this standard? In the first place, indulgence to excess in meat and drinks, because plainly the effect of indulgence is to dull the vitality, and cloud the brain. Coarse sensual pleasures will be eliminated, because they undermine the health, the mind and character. The hectic excitement of the game of chance, continued late into the night will be ruled out. That is not the kind of

pleasure that braces, that puts one in tune. Many other so-called relaxations will have to go. Indeed, I think that of all things we are least successful in the management of our pleasures. Our work is done under extreme pressure, our activity is intense, overwrought, unduly feverish, and when we can bear the strain no longer we are apt to plunge into pleasures which are equally feverish and overwrought.

Activity is the aim of life,— a sound, beneficent activity; always tranquil, working for large ends, serenely and securely, striving not to grasp at a momentary good, but to win by fine self-expression, a finer self-expression from others.

This idea of the instrumental character of pleasure is one element in a new way of living. A new way of living can only mean taking a new view of things. We should take the view that it is not work that leads up to pleasure, but pleasure that prepares for work. The joy of life is in activity. This thought will also do away with the undue stress laid upon exquisiteness in the furnishing of our houses, in personal adornment and the like, in a word on the minor perfections of life. Emerson says that when half gods go, the gods arrive. Assuredly if the half gods do not go, if these minor perfections detain the attention, the real gods will never arrive, the greater perfections will never come into our life. Goethe said that he

could not bear to work in a room where the furniture was not of the plainest. Many a student in his garret has found that plain things are most consonant with high thinking. If we become accustomed to any exquisiteness, we become dependent on it, and cannot dispense with it; and the result will be to cultivate in us the passive side of our nature, that side on which we are receptive to impressions from without, and to weaken the more excellent active side on which all great achievement depends.

Of the simple pleasures there is a sufficient store. Such are the pleasures of music, for instance; of bright, social conversation, of which we do not make half enough; the fireside pleasures, the pleasures that come from the companionship of Nature. Every pure joy is stimulating, reinvigourating, and makes us larger, stronger souls. To decide whether a pleasure be permissible or not we need but consider whether it be pure.

I have said that true democracy does not require us to relinquish our superior positions; that our present duty is to fulfill our functions in society to the best of our ability. But my thought would not be complete if I failed to add, that it is supremely our present duty to contribute to such changes in the social order as will make the distribution of social functions more just, as will help make opportunities more equal than they

now are. My position is, that we should be keenly alive to the necessity for social change, and that yet we should not act the part of deserters in giving up our present social places.

I have said that our attitude toward pleasure should not be that of the ascetic, who regards it as an evil thing, nor yet that we should refuse pleasure on the ground that all our fellow-men cannot share it with us. We are here to do our work, and pure wholesome pleasure is a means of enabling us to do it more effectively. But the impression I leave would be incorrect, if I did not reiterate that such pleasures should be simple, while the more costly forms of enjoyment, those which we derive from noble and magnificent architecture, from the statues and paintings of great artists, and the like, we should share with the entire community.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ETHICAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS SUFFERING

IF all the poor were as well off as the middle class are to-day, the abolitions of poverty, great as would be the advantage accruing from it would not solve the problem of suffering. There is suffering of the worst kind, among the middle class and the rich. People are not happy because they are "well off." There is, for instance, the pain which is due to strained domestic relations; strained relations with brother or sister, with child or father, or worst of all with the one person in the world between whom and one's self there ought to be greatest harmony. Domestic discord is like a thorn in the flesh.

There are the pains due to wounded self-esteem. Some of the worthiest people somehow have not the ability to command the respect of others. Oliver Goldsmith is an example. Some children are the butts of their companions, and they remain the butts of their companions more or less through life. The suffering

caused by wounded self-esteem, though the occasions often seem petty, are intense. Especially acute is the suffering caused by the sense of failure, more particularly by failure toward the end of one's days. I have in mind a merchant who has for many years been steadily building up his fortune, and who suddenly, through some error in judgment perhaps, finds the whole structure falling like a house of cards. It is not only the loss that grieves, but the sense of having failed. I think of the artist who prematurely declines in the exercise of his power; of the statesman who has held conspicuous leadership, and who in the latter part of his life is forsaken and forgotten; especially of the people who are moral failures, who find that as they grow older, they lose their grip upon themselves. How strange that when we think of suffering, we should give so much prominence to the physical sufferings, when these and other like spiritual pains are productive of far more poignant unhappiness than physical suffering ever causes. Then there is the agony of affliction, of bereavement.

It is a fact that the cheery outlook is the normal one. The world is out of patience with the pessimist. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that the subject of pain possesses an irresistible attraction, despite the universal preference for joy. Among the masterpieces of literature, the subjects most frequently treated are the

sad and terrible ones. Dante's "Divinia Comedia," Milton's "Paradise Lost" Shakspere's "Lear," "Macbeth," "Othello," "Hamlet," at once come to mind. Even among the pleasure-loving, beauty-loving Greeks, their great tragedies present, under the guise of legends, the woes of man, as in the "Prometheus," and the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus; in the "Œdipus Tyrannus," and the "Antigone" of Sophocles; in the "Medea" of Euripides, — always the terrible and sad things look out upon us. If we turn to religion it is the same. In the church, the mosque, the synagogue and the temple, despite the joyous strains, there is ever the undercurrent of sin and judgment. Sin and its consequences are the burden of the most moving prayers and rituals.

Even science has much to say about the sufferings of the creatures; and history, despite the bright epochs upon which it touches, is in great part a record of wars, confusion and sorrow.

It is because pain is implicit in life, that we cannot get away from it. We are attracted to these subjects, not because we wish to succumb to the pain, but because we wish to triumph over and to liberate ourselves from it.

There have been various methods of overcoming suffering. One is that of inculcating resignation to the will of God. A divine Father has put this bitterness

into your cup. Accept it, drink it; since it comes from a loving hand. You cannot perhaps understand why one who loves you, should hurt you so; but be sure, nevertheless, that he loves you, and in resignation accept your appointed lot. There is something infinitely noble in the idea of resignation. Even the pagan Goethe, formulates the essence of his philosophy of life in the words: "Thou shalt renounce — Du sollst entsagen, sollst entsagen." Renunciation in some form we must all learn.

But what will enable one to practise this renunciation? Can it be the idea of a loving Father, the sense of being personally cared for by a Being who, in a real sense, is like a human father? Resignation can be gained in this way, only if one has the conviction not only of the existence of a God, but of God as a quasi-human being; and that conviction is fast fading away. Even in the churches, many of the teachers of religion are using language in such a way as to indicate that they have lost that conviction. The image of God must be vivid and individualized; one must have the realizing sense of a being like, though greater than, a human father, if in this way one is to learn resignation.

Another method has been the stoical, with its appeal to pride. A man shuts himself up, as it were, in the citadel of his reason, and defies fate. "I am a rational being," he says "and I will hold my head

high; I am a man, and no amount of misery shall undo me." But the weakness of stoicism is that it only helps one to put on a bold front; it does not help one internally. Stoicism helps to hide the suffering, it does not heal it. Under the corselet of pride, the wound continues to flow unstaunched.

There is, also, the method of trying to forget suffering, by immersing one's self in business, public affairs, or charity. This also does not touch the core of the matter.

What have we to offer positively in place of these? The first step in securing liberation from suffering is to school ourselves not to overestimate pain. Formerly, people were indifferent to bodily suffering; nowadays, they are very over-sensitive to it. People who are courageous enough to bear bodily pain, are helpless in the face of spiritual pain, of troubles of the mind and heart. The first step in gaining liberation from suffering, is to school ourselves not to exaggerate the evil, to resist the paralysing effect of the thought of prospective pain. You remember the myth of "The Head of Medusa." There are three Gorgon sisters; two of them represent the blackness of the abyss, the evil in nature; but Medusa represents the human woe. She was once a woman, lovely and beloved; she felt a woman's pangs; experienced a woman's bitter grief. Then she was changed into a hor-

rid monster. Serpents writhe around her head, in the eyes is a stony stare, and whoever looks at her becomes like her; the blood freezes in his veins, he is turned into stone.

Prospective pain is the Medusa. We look into its face and are petrified. The reason is, we think of the pain, and do not think beyond the pain. The first step in liberation is to think that there is a beyond to the pain, that pain can be transcended, and thereby we shall break the hypnotic spell which it exercises over us. In the face of misfortunes, the moment we realize that there will be suffering, we are apt to stop short at that thought. It seems to be the end of the world for us. The first step in liberation is to train ourselves to think: Let it come; it may be terrible; but it can be transcended. It has been remarked that no pain is as bad as we picture it. I think there are some ordeals through which we are compelled to pass that are infinitely worse than we had any idea they could be, infinitely worse than any outsider can understand. But, nevertheless, the worst anguish can be transcended.

In order to discover how this can be done, let us look more closely at the cause of spiritual suffering. If we understand the cause, we shall be in a better position to find the cure. I think that all spiritual suffering may be regarded as a partial dying; our vitality declines; our forces are at low ebb; we sink.

This is manifestly true of the suffering caused by sin. A person who sins is morally dying. "The wages of sin is death." It is true also of bereavement. In great bereavement we lose not only the dearest joy of our life, we lose also a stimulating force, an influence that put us on our mettle for the best performance, that lifted us to levels which we could not have attained otherwise. Every kind of spiritual suffering means a partial dying.

How can we be helped? By resurrecting in others; by fixing our thought upon the fact that that same life that is in us is in others, and by fanning the flame of that life in them. Two wonderful effects will presently follow. In virtue of our power to identify ourselves with others, we shall live in them, ascend with them. Though we have descended, so far as we are one with them we shall be ascending. And in virtue of our efforts to produce this stimulating effect upon them, this enhancing of their spiritual vitality, we shall presently find that we ourselves are becoming transformed, that we ourselves are experiencing a rebirth. This thought may seem over-subtle, but I hope to make it palpable by two examples. A young man employed in a bank, embezzled funds entrusted to him. His father was a man of the strictest conscientiousness, who could not bear the thought of anything dishonourable; he was proud of his family record, that

had been unblemished for generations. There had been something wrong with this boy from the outset, an alien streak in him. There had been petty lapses. The parent's mind had been full of misgivings; in his secret heart, the father sometimes harboured gloomy suspicions. Yet he would not admit them. He could not face the idea that his son could do anything wrong. What I said about living in another may be thought to be mystical; but it is the most real thing in the world. A father lives in his son. When his boy does wrong, he seems to himself to be stained, when the other is polluted; the contamination affects him. The idea that his boy could do wrong, this father could not face. When he thought of that, he looked into Medusa's face, and became petrified; the hypnotic spell came upon him, he could not think beyond the pain. One day the disclosure came. Angry recrimination and violent outbursts of reproaches and indignation followed, and then on the father's side a blank despair.

My thought is that instead of these experiences, there should have been three others. It was the father's duty to face the possibility of the son's wrongdoing, no matter what the suffering might be. It was his duty to let the stream of fire pass through him, though it might burn into his very soul. My thought is that there is a beyond to the worst pain. Never let it

hypnotize you, never let your arms sink and allow yourself to become petrified, looking at Medusa. No matter how bad it is, no matter how it may desolate or rack you, face it, and you will find that there is a beyond. The second step is not to indulge in personal recriminations. One should clear himself of all personal feeling, in order to do what is best. The third is to make an effort to regenerate the wretched son, and still to go on making the effort, though it may seem futile. And in this way resignation will come, because we gain resignation by working ourselves into line with divine tendencies. Even when our efforts fail, the momentum of the effort carries us along toward the faith that those tendencies will prevail, even beyond our effort.

My other example is that of a parent who has learned from the physician, that his child is doomed, that no medicine, science, or art, can save him. This time, it is not a wayward son, but the child of joy and promise that causes the pain. And the safety again, is for the parent to face the suffering in store for him, and moreover to realize the whole area over which the pain is sure to distribute itself, the sufferings that are in store for others, also, with whom this life is bound up. This is the most difficult part of all. A strong man can bare his own breast to receive the blow; but when he thinks of what it will mean for

others for whom he greatly cares, what in this case it will mean for the mother of the child, how her tender heart will be wrung, then once more he looks on Medusa's head, and the hypnotic spell comes upon him, and the pain turns him into stone. But the only safety is for him to realize that the pain of the mother, too, can be transcended; that even this tender mother, in as much as she is a spiritual being, can gain from pain a spiritual result; that she, too, like the race of human being in general was born to sustain such shocks if they should come, and to outlive them. We think, too, meanly of ourselves and others and especially of gentle women. We ought to think that they, too, however tender and gentle, have in them the elements of spiritual heroism. We should so act as to bring out those rarer, greater elements. We should help develop spiritual heroism, and in the effort to help them, we shall to some slight extent approximate to it ourselves.

The doctrine of activity which I am teaching seems to me to apply pre-eminently in the case of suffering. Suffering is a passive state; the cure of suffering is action.

CHAPTER NINE

THE CONSOLATIONS OF THE RELIGION OF DUTY

MUCH that passes under the name of consolation is worthless, a broken reed to lean upon, mere fiction and fairy-tale, threadbare commonplaces, as barren as the speeches with which Job's comforters mocked that great sufferer. Sometimes the consolations offered by friends are hypocritical and worse than worthless, intended to be a salve for their own consciences, rather than a solace to the one in trouble. The need of consolation is so real that one must try to deal with it in a real fashion, bringing forward nothing which it is not believed will stand the trial. And there are forms of trouble other than bereavement which call for consolation. These I propose to keep in the foreground in the present discussion. A few of them may be mentioned.

Failure calls for comfort; failure in one's career, especially if it comes at the close. There are two dan-

ger points in life: when a man sets out and when he comes home, when he leaves port and when he makes port again. Many a young person has been shipwrecked at the very outset, going down helplessly and hopelessly, a victim of dissipation, intemperance or profligacy, of wild recklessness and lack of balance. On the other hand one often sees that men who have weathered the storms on the high seas, sink as it were, in sight of port, and are unable to make the harbour. I know not which of the two situations is the more pitiful. Failure in any case is apt to create despondency; failure in business, in a profession, failure to establish right relations with the people with whom one must be in daily contact. These failures are especially aggravating when, as is often the case, one is compelled to admit that they are due to some mistake, some egregious blunder of one's own; when one is forced to acknowledge that if, at a certain juncture, one had acted with common sense and judgment, things that have turned out ill would have turned out very differently; when to the galling sense of defeat is added the sting of self-contempt.

A great sorrow is often put upon parents when a child fails to come up to their expectations, either because the child is somehow defective, or has gone astray. If one can imagine how a tree would feel, if

it could be conscious of a dead branch, I suppose that is the way a parent feels who has an unfortunate child; something is dead in one's own life, something that is a part of one; the sap is checked in one part, the sense of a withered limb is ever present.

A heavy weight is put upon persons who suffer unmerited injustice at the hands of others, and are unable to obtain justice, finding themselves in the vise of an iron fatality. The victim of "the affair," as the French call the Dreyfus case, through five years asked for justice, and the heavens seemed as brass above him. Finally he did get partial justice. But there are many cases in which there is no such outcome, in which there is no response, and the heavens remain as brass, and there is no answer to the cry. I shall speak of some of these later on.

The most serious problems, however, are not those which arise from the evil we suffer at the hands of others, no matter how heinous; but from the evil which we have ourselves been guilty of — some harm done to the man who trusted you, to the woman who believed in you, the remembrance of which, will not down. The conscience awakens late, but with intensified energy. Lapse of time makes no difference; there is no yesterday or to-morrow in the moral world; it is always the present. The thing that seemed buried out of sight starts up with accusing vividness, as if it

had just happened. Is there no spell that can a these ghosts; no balm that can cure these m wounds?

Without attempting to deal with each specific or in order, I mention these occasions for cons tion, in order to suggest the extent and variety of situations that call for it, and I shall now seek the elements of consolation which are at our co mand, and which we may regard as real and ac ally serviceable. I shall begin with those that are m obvious and at the service of the least reflecti reaching at the end the most profound and, a believe, the most availing.

In the first place, work is a help. Steeping, abs ing one's self in work, occupying the chamber the mind so fully that the ghosts cannot enter; work, not only for the sake of distraction, of get away from one's trouble, but work because the c sciousness of being still able to put forth effic energy is a great comfort. Trouble and anxiety p trate us. We feel as if we had suddenly become competent — as if all the energy and life had g out of us. To work is to live. The feeling that we still able to achieve something, and are not c demned to lie like a helpless log at the roads merely suffering, — that is a real help.

Sympathy is also a help. I do not mean the m

low feeling which vibrates in answer to the trouble of others, the mere weeping with those who weep, or that is useless; but the sympathy which involves an understanding of another's trouble. A person who is in trouble generally feels that people do not understand him. This is one of the most trying experiences connected with any bitter affliction. Affliction seems to isolate us, it is so inarticulate, so ravelled up. We do not wholly understand ourselves. If then there comes to us some one who understands us, who fathoms all the depths and complexities of our suffering, and who at the same time expects us to act in a manly spirit, the presence, the sympathy of such a friend is the greatest boon. And it is morality, not mere genial feeling, that directs us to seek this sympathetic understanding. Morality directs that we should seek to understand others, because every human being is precious; and therefore, the peculiar experiences of others are not to be ignored or set aside. We are not to wash our hands of others with some pretext, phrase or platitude, but are to try to enter into their situation that we may help them. Of course, there are people of proud nature who resist any show of sympathy, who act like a wild beast, which,when wounded, hides himself in his lair; but often in their case the shrinking is largely due to sensitiveness, to the fear of exposing themselves to the cold curiosity or indif-

ference of the world. These very proud and retiring persons are apt to be the most grateful when they meet with genuine understanding, genuine sympathy.

The third consolation which I believe to be efficacious is doing for others. There are strange antitheses in the moral world. I recall a passage of Seneca's in which he says that the true beneficiary is the man who always remembers the benefits which he has received, and the true benefactor is he who never remembers the benefits which he has bestowed. The word sorrow suggests to me a similar antithesis. One may say that the truly moral man is he who is never sorry for himself, no matter what his situation may be, but who is always sorry for others. The worst aggravation of distress and anxiety in calamity is self-pity. The weakest creatures are those who go about the world, sorry for themselves, bemoaning and bewailing their lot; the noblest types are those who, having every reason to be sorry for themselves, being burdened and handicapped with great trouble, are yet so sterling in nature that they find it in their hearts to pity the lesser sufferings of others.

Years ago at Cornell University, one of my best students was a young Russian of singularly attractive personality, to whom I became greatly attached. He was tall, handsome, and fair, the very picture of noble young manhood, with a great light of idealism shin-

ing in his blue eyes. After he had finished his studies he went back to his country, became enlisted in the revolutionary movement, was arrested and condemned to death. The last I heard of him was that as he was being led to the place of execution he was occupied entirely in an effort to uphold the weaker courage of two of his comrades, so as to help them to meet their fate with becoming fortitude. He was not concerned about himself, even in that last moment, he was concerned only that the others, who needed his help, should be strengthened so as to behave nobly.

It very rarely happens in cases of affliction or bereavement that one person alone is affected. It generally happens that a number of people are stricken by the same blow. The finest action is for the person who suffers most, to concern himself with holding up those who have less cause to falter, but who are weaker. The father of a family, who has lost his wife, has lost most; the young children have for the time lost much, but a long stretch of life is before them; they will grow up, they may look forward to happiness, while he is on the downward path. He has suffered the greater bereavement, but the children are weak and he is strong, and instead of being sorry for himself let him be sorry for them. Of those upon whom great burdens are laid, great strength is exacted.

I have before my mind's eye the picture of a woman

the victim of cancer, who was wasting away amid great torture. One day her little grandchild, playing in the room, bruised its finger. The picture is that of the woman tenderly comforting the child, seeking to woo it from its pain.

A similar thought is contained in one of the parables of Buddha, that of the young mother who lost her child and would not consent that it should be buried, claiming that there must be somewhere in the world a person capable of working a miracle and restoring her child to her. She heard of Buddha, and went to him saying: "Oh prophet, I have heard that thou art a great miracle worker. My child is dead; oh, give me back my child." And Buddha, as the legend relates, looked at her very tenderly, and after a time he said: "My daughter, I will do as thou biddest me, if thou wilt bring me a mustard-seed from a house into which death has never entered." So she went in search of the house into which death had never entered. But she found not the house into which death had never entered; and so, after a time, Buddha's meaning became clear to her. He had intended to turn her thought from her private sorrow and to make her realize the great sorrow of the world around her; to make her cease from being sorry for herself, by learning to know the griefs of others.

These methods I believe to be efficacious and real,

but we have not yet touched the heart of the problem. Work helps to fill the chambers of the mind so that nothing else can enter; but one cannot work all the time, and there are the nights, when the spectres steal in unawares. Sympathy helps, but sympathy at the most is like the Madonna and the beloved disciple at the foot of the cross. They witness the crucifixion; they feel responsively every pang, yet they do not, after all, ascend the cross. The bitterest fights must be fought out alone, despite all the sympathy. There are some struggles wherein the loneliness cannot be overcome. Every one must die alone; and there are certain grim experiences through which we must pass alone. The circle of friends is there. We feel their sympathy, but the fight is ours alone. At such moments we must have within ourselves a certain power, which I would call the power of sheer bearing, of bearing our load as Atlas bore his, just standing under it and not giving way; or a power like that of Prometheus, with the vulture gnawing at the heart, able to bear the gnawing and not to flinch.

But in order to have this power, a certain ideal of conduct is needed that shall sustain this bearing power. It cannot be the ideal of pride, because pride after a time leaves us in the lurch. Again service of others is efficacious and divine; but in order that one may have this pity for others, even for their lesser suf-

ferings, there must appear to be some reason for the suffering, some way of harmonizing and reconciling it; otherwise the logical way of acting when things are at their worst would be to take refuge in suicide.

One or two illustrations will show the nature of the problem which is to be met. Mr. Kennan, in his book on Siberia, relates the case of a certain young Doctor B —, to whom there came one day two women students who had been expelled from the medical school because of what is called in Russia "political untrustworthiness." These young women were anxious to finish their studies, and begged to be permitted to come to his office from time to time, to consult his library and to get his help in their studies. The doctor imprudently consented. As one of the young women was travelling on a forged passport, and the other had no passport at all, they arranged to come by night. These nightly visits became known to the police, suspicion was aroused, a conspiracy was scented, and suddenly the doctor was arrested, and summarily, by administrative process, sent to the Arctic region of Siberia. His young and beautiful wife was at the time expecting the birth of a child. After the baby was born, and before her strength was fully restored, she set out, following the yearning of her heart, to join her husband thousands of miles away in the Arctic regions. Not having the means to engage a private conveyance, she

asked and was granted permission to travel with the prisoners' convoy. For three months she travelled in this way, but the excessive fatigue and the incessant hardships, combined with the feeble state of her health, threatened to completely prostrate her. A pathetic incident brought her to her end. There are two towns of nearly the same name in Siberia. Her husband was a prisoner in one of these. The two towns are at a distance of three thousand miles from each other. After the wife had been travelling for months with the convoy of prisoners, she approached the town where she expected to find her husband. The last weeks had been weeks of terrible strain for her, but the thought that she would soon find refuge in her husband's arms supported her. As they neared the town, however, she learned that she had been deceived by the resemblance of the names, that three thousand miles more of journey, through the Arctic regions on reindeer sleds, remained before she could hope to reach her husband. The shock of this discovery was too great for her to bear, she became insane, and soon after died, midway between the babe which she had left behind and the husband in the far distance.

When I read this story, I tried to put myself in Doctor B —'s place, and I asked myself what kind of thoughts would be his, when he heard the news of his noble wife perishing midway on the great Siberian

road. I asked myself what sort of thoughts must be his, when he considered the little babe its mother had left behind, his own wrecked career, and the black injustice and tyranny of the Russian government, which was wholly responsible for these occurrences. And I asked myself what sort of consolation would avail in his case.

It is very easy for us to be content. On the whole, things go very well with us. We say that the world is well ordered. Yes, it is fairly well ordered for you and me; and it is easy for us in our milder troubles to have recourse to the lesser forms of consolation. But the worth of a religion is tested by the way it serves or does not serve in the most extreme need. The chain is as strong as its weakest link.

I have spoken of the help which comes from becoming absorbed in work. But there are cases reported from Russian prisons, where the work which keeps a man sane when freedom is denied, is not permitted; the unfortunate prisoner is subjected to what are called dungeon conditions; books, writing materials, bed clothes, underwear, are taken from him; he is compelled to lie upon a plank platform, sometimes upon a cold cement floor. Worst of all he may be shut up in solitary confinement in some formidable fortress, where he loses all knowledge of the outside world, and the outside world loses all knowledge of

him; friends and relatives do not know whether he is dead or alive, and to all intents and purposes he is dead. Put yourself in the place of such a man. Look at the world from his point of view.

It will be said that these are exceptional cases, and with all our heart we are thankful that they are exceptional. And yet they are so only in degree. The problem which they raise occurs, only not to the same degree, in the lives of many. There is much injustice in the world which is never rectified, many a wrong which is not redressed.

In Stephen Phillip's play, "Ulysses," the hero is condemned to go down into the depths and darkness of hell, where he beholds Sisyphus rolling his stone, and Tantalus, and all the great sufferers. The object of his descent is that he may be purified and chastened, and so return to his home. At the end of the play we see him, a shaft of sunlight upon his head, emerging into the upper air. Even though the subject is managed somewhat melodramatically, the thought is true.

And so we, too, have followed a somewhat similar descent into hell-depths. But the worst remains, and we must go a step further before we can win our way back to the light. For the worst, as I have before remarked, is not the evil which we suffer, but that which we perpetrate, the consequences of which are irremedial.

It is possible for the worst evil-doer, by an exercise of the will, to unlock the regenerative forces of his nature, and begin a new life. And how holy the new life may be, we see in Mary of Magdala, the ex-harlot who yet was deemed worthy of being the companion of Jesus. But the new life does not mean the blotting out of the old life. That cannot be done, and it were reprehensible to try to do it. Goethe said, and others after him have said: Let us have done with repentance! Let a man turn his back upon the past. Let the dead past bury its dead. Face forward! Turn over a new leaf. Make a new start. Lead a new life. Forget the old! But in any finer nature that is impossible. There are some things which we cannot, and ought not to forget. We must lead the new life; yes, but we must also live with the old life. We must live in the presence of our whole past; and in doing this, we shall find that certain consequences of our acts have entered into the world of facts, and are far beyond our power to undo. The brother of Cain could not be restored to life. The shame of the Magdalen, although now she may shrink from it in utter horror, is a part of the world of facts, known to others and to herself, and not to be cancelled.

For ourselves, too, the mistakes we have made remain; mistakes in the case of our children, which perhaps have given a twist to their characters, or

have proved a handicap in their careers; the failures of which we are guilty in regard to our friends, to whom we should have responded more fully; the failures in tenderness and patience and complete loyalty to beloved ones who dwell no longer with us, failures which we so deeply regret, which we should so like to efface, if we could only call the loved ones back from the grave and make them know how changed our feeling is. The facts are facts nevertheless and cannot be undone, and it is just the pain that comes from these facts, if we face them, that is purifying. In those who open their breasts to these severe but salutary pains, there is bred a humility, a resignation, a detachment from the lesser things of life, a mellowness of character which can be acquired in no other way.

I have, myself, known a modern Cain, a man who, in a fit of inexplicable passion — he knew not himself how he came to do it — took a human life. For nine years he was imprisoned, and then set free; but he was not set free from his memory. The blood-guiltiness of that act was upon his head, upon his conscience. The stain could no more be washed out than the perfumes of Araby could sweeten the hand of Lady Macbeth. But the strange quiet of the man, the sense in him, as of a first-hand acquaintance with the realities which lie beyond ordinary experience, awed every one who came in touch with him.

In the depths of hell's pit does a light begin to break upon us. And whither does it lead? Whither shall we turn our faces, so that we may ascend out of the region of gloom? Faintly only can I indicate it here; but I cannot leave my subject without an attempt to indicate it. I can best explain it by contrasting the thought of life which I would present, with pessimism.

Pessimism is the modern disease. Leopardi, Schopenhauer, and how many others are pessimists. The disease of pessimism grows out of a false view of life. It presupposes that man exists to be happy. Finding that the world is not so ordered as to produce happiness, pessimism condemns the world. It takes the pathetic view of life. Pathos is the feeling which arises from the contemplation of pain. Pessimism dwells only on pain and its pathos.

Over against the pathetic view, I would place the tragic view of life. The supreme consolation which I find is in the view that life is a grand tragedy. There are islands of joy, havens of pure bliss; there is the laughter of children; the effulgence of love in young, hyacinthian days, and there is the steady glow of love in after years. I take account of all this; yet I say that around this glow and brightness, enveloping it, tragedy is always present or imminent, if no other tragedy, then, the tragedy of death, which all must face.

But the tragic view is not a funereal, gloomy and melancholy view. The effect of a great tragedy is elevating, not depressing. After witnessing a tragedy on the stage, when the curtain is rung down on the fifth act, the spectator finds himself in an uplifted mood, despite all the strain that has been put upon his feelings. He is not prostrated to the ground, he is uplifted. Great music rolls through his soul. He seems to float as in some high ether, and far beneath him lie the gulfs of pity and of terror through which he has passed.

The effect of tragedy — the tragedy on the stage, which is a mirror of life — is blended of defeat and victory. Both enter in. Ruin there is, but a glory shines above the ruin. The effect of tragedy on the stage is produced by great qualities in the hero, which we admire; but which are prevented from successful manifestation by some flaw in his nature. Or the hero strives after some high ideal, carries in his breast some noble purpose. The fault is not in him, but in his surroundings. The time is not ripe for him, the people with whom he must deal are below his standard; and he fails, but in failing he sets forth in high relief the grandeur to which he has aspired, the greatness at which he aimed.

Transfer the idea of tragedy from the stage, to life itself. There are high powers at work, a great and

noble strain is trying to express itself in things and in men; but conditions are not fit or adequate, and the greatness is constantly breaking down, the nobility failing, not because it ought to fail, but because conditions are insufficient, because the finite cannot embody the infinite. Yet the failures only serve to set off the infiniteness in the tendency, the divinity in striving. Even the Russian doctor, whom I have mentioned, must set off against the injustice, oppression and tyranny which he suffered, the devotion of the loving woman who followed his footsteps for three thousand miles, to break down midway between her babe and him, upon the great Siberian road. And when he thinks that the tyranny and injustice is the outcome of the universe, he must admit that the devotion of this loving woman's heart is also a product of the universe, and that it throws its hallowed light upon the evil by which it is encompassed.

So, also, in the case of solitary confinement, amid the brutality of the Russian dungeons,— even against the darkness of that background, there shines forth the love of liberty, the indomitable desire of the human heart for truth and right, which inspired the martyrs, who in full view of such penalties, risked and endured them for the sake of the cause they loved.

In the presence of such examples, the conviction becomes overwhelming that the truth and right for

which these men suffer will not always fail. And so with regard to the evil that a man does. Evil, although a part of him, is not the essential part. There is a divine part which must be separated from the other, which exists and which will in time prevail. It is the thought of the infiniteness in the world and in man, that is set in high relief by the failures. That to me is the supreme thought.

Work helps; sympathy helps; in all the ordinary circumstances of life, not to be sorry for one's self, but to be sorry for others is the best help. But the thought that life is a grand tragedy, that over the ruins a glory shines, is to me the supreme help.

CHAPTER TEN

THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ETHICAL SOCIETIES AND THE CHURCHES

FOR nearly two thousand years the Christian Church has existed in the world fulfiling its beneficent function. No one can fail to see that the power of the Church among large numbers in many communities is to-day diminishing, or has already ceased. Can the world get on without any institution like the Church? Is there needed some equivalent of it? If some substitute is needed, then how far can an Ethical Society fulfil that need?

It is evident that there are points of likeness between an Ethical Society and the churches, and I wish first to dwell upon some of these points of likeness. There is the external fact, to begin with, that the Ethical Society assembles on Sunday morning, at the hour when the church bells ring. Nor is this a mere coincidence. At present there are many persons who no longer pay heed to the summons of these bells. The

busy professional man, for instance, is apt to bring home on Saturday night the overflow of the week's work. He looks forward to the quiet Sunday morning with anticipation, determined to clear the way for a fresh start on Monday morning. Even the merchant, and, increasingly, the workingmen in large cities, cease to think of Sunday as anything more than a day of rest. The strain of work has become so excessive that mere rest is naturally regarded as one of the greatest boons.

Then there are the claims of the home! The father of the family finds that Sunday is almost the only day in the week when he can unreservedly devote himself to his children, and what better way of spending the Sunday can there be than that?

Admitting the force of these contentions, nevertheless, the custom of meeting together in public assembly for the consideration of the most serious, the most exalted topics of human interest is too vitally precious to be lost. Rest is, indeed, important; but a change in the direction of one's attention is often better than absolute rest, and after almost the entire week has been given up to bread-winning occupations, it cannot but be felt as a liberation of the brain and heart alike, to devote a part of Sunday to the disinterested things in life, the large ideals. Nor will the children be defrauded in this way. For if the Sunday

service at all fulfils its purpose the impressions received will import a finer flavour, an atmosphere of elevation into the home, by which both parents and children will be infinitely the gainers. The Ethical Society, therefore, is like a Church in maintaining, and emphasizing the importance of maintaining the custom of public assemblies on Sunday.

The Ethical Society is like a Church in solemnizing marriage, and investing with dignity and sacred significance the last rites over the beloved dead. Those occasions in life when new ties are formed, as in marriage, and when old ties are severed, as in times of bereavement, need an *interpreter*. None is satisfied with the cold, formal words of a magistrate who expresses merely the legal side of the marriage relation; nor, on sad occasions, is any one content with the mere broken utterances of a friend. The formation of ties and the severance of ties ought to produce profound moral changes in the persons affected; and the Ethical Society, through its representatives, seeks to interpret these changes. It seeks to interpret them by drawing into view the sacredness in the human relations, the sacredness inherent in them, not borrowed or imported into them from beyond.

Again the Church has ever been the centre of good works, a reservoir from which the stream of charity has been distributed in manifold channels through-

out the social organism. The Ethical Society aims to be a Church in the same sense. For a long time it was believed that only a Church teaching a distinct creed could support charity. The Ethical Society seeks to demonstrate, and if I may be pardoned for saying so, I think it has, to a certain extent, demonstrated that this is a mistake; that a creedless Church, a Church for the unchurched, may be no less effective in the same direction.

But it may be asked why must there be Churches, or substitutes for Churches, to sustain the charities of the world? Why cannot we get on perfectly well with the secular societies, charity organizations, societies for the prevention of cruelty, and like organizations, of which there are now so many. These charitable institutions have no connection with any church. What need, then, of churches to keep up the world's charities? The answer is that these secular societies are excellent, but that we need the churches, or the substitutes for the Church, as a hearth at which the spirit of charity may be kindled, in which the motives may be engendered that shall lead men to charitable action. Otherwise these secular societies will become mechanical, and formalistic to a degree. A system of electric transportation cannot be operated without power, there must be power-houses in which the electric fluid is generated. So the Church, or the institu-

tion that takes its place, is designed to be a power-house in which the electric fluid that moves the world's charities shall be generated.

In the next place, the Church has been a school of moral idealism. The Ethical Society aims to be that and only that, and to advance upon the Church in the single-minded pursuit of moral ideals. For if we call the Church a school of moral idealism, if we recognize its high character as an agent of moral good, we cannot on the other hand forget, much as we should like to forget them, the moral evils for which the Church is accountable, the persecutions, the bitter fanaticisms, the religious wars with all the atrocities attendant on them. These are facts and cannot be ignored, however much we should like to ignore them. True, there is also another and different set of facts. The new spirit of brotherhood that Christianity brought into the world; the self-sacrifice so often displayed by Christians, especially in times of pestilence, in bringing comfort to the bedside of the sick and dying; the consecrated devotion of the missionaries, for instance, the missionaries of the island of Iona, off the western coast of Scotland, which I lately visited, who went out there into the darkness, the storm and the bleakness to carry their religion, and with it civilization, to savage tribes. It seems to me that if we wish to be fair we must be willing to see both sets of facts;

and we must furthermore recognize that, apart from exceptional examples of moral heroism, the Church has infused its moral influence into the lives of ordinary men and women, teaching them strict standards of personal rectitude and purity. I think that the chief reason why there have been those enormities to which reference has been made, is to be found in the presupposition that no one can be good, or earnestly strive for goodness, who has not previously accepted a certain formula of faith. Hence quarrels about the right belief followed; and it became inevitable that men should hate and persecute those whom they suspected of entertaining the wrong belief. The moving principle of the Church has been the desire to save men morally, to save them from sin, and it was only because rightness of belief was deemed indispensable that churchmen became persecutors. But all the more is it necessary to profit by the lessons of the past, to extract from religion this poison of dogmatism; and this leads me to the consideration of the point in which the Ethical Society differs from the Church.

We do not say that creed is unimportant. On the contrary one should try to think out his own creed. But no one should attempt to force his creed upon others. A common creed should not be the bond of fellowship. Rather should it be clearly understood that morality is independent of creeds. Not that a

creed after it has been formulated does not react on morality, but the obligation to strive after the good is inherent in man, is a part of his nature as a man; and a high and true belief is rather the outcome of the effort toward goodness than the indispensable, precedent condition of it. The Ethical Society, then, is an institution for saving men morally, for helping them to make this effort toward goodness, without having for its basis any accepted common formula or creed. The decisive importance of this deviation from the churches is obvious.

But if this be so, it will be objected, how is it possible to induce men to make the effort, there being no authority of book or creed to lean upon. The answer to that is that the method we must pursue is to put *men* in the midst of crowds. We may not rely on books, we must rely on men. Men who are themselves aflame with the desire for the good can kindle in others the same desire. What a man feels he can make others feel; what he sees he can make others see; when he supremely wills the right he can make others will it. Ethics is propagated just as art is. The artist is a man who loves the beautiful, and loves it so much that he can make others love it; who sees the beautiful and can open the eyes of others to see it. So morality is propagated.

But apart from the contagious effect of any exam-

ple, what is the authority of these personalities? Their authority is the authority of their experience. What we want is men of the world. Not, of course, in the common meaning of that phrase, for that is misleading. A man of the world is commonly understood to be one who knows human nature on its mean side, who knows the selfishness of it, and can take advantage of it, knows all the wickedness, knows to what depths man may sink when the bestial part of him comes uppermost, and when, just because he is a rational being, he is apt to become fouler in his ways than any animal. The man of the world is one who has no "illusions" left. But such a man is not a true man of the world at all, because he knows only half the world. He does not know the possibilities of goodness, the infinite delicacies of moral thought and feeling, the sublime dramas that are often enacted in the humblest lives, dramas or tragedies, that have none the less their climaxes of divine compensation. A true man of the world is a man who knows both sides. But one cannot appreciate both sides unless by experience he knows the good side. A man who knows the good can also estimate the bad, but a man who knows only the bad cannot properly estimate the good.

The personalities who are to influence society, who are to be put into the midst of crowds, the men we

want must be men who speak with the authority of experience; who know the good, and know that it is infinitely worth while, and that it is the only thing in life that is worth while; and who know this at first hand, know it not from any Bible or creed, but as the most real fact in the world, as a fact of their own truest and inmost experience.

With the help of such men, we may hope to make of an Ethical Culture Society a school of moral idealism, without any formulated creed, with no formula imposed, which may be accepted to-day and rejected to-morrow; with no intellectual fetters of any kind. Every one is free to come to the Ethical Society, provided he comes in the right spirit, realizing that his moral education is not yet finished, that he is in need of further moral development. I do not indeed agree with the orthodox Church in the statement that there is no moral health in man, that he is a being absolutely depraved. We have made some gains, we have travelled some distance on the moral road; but we need more strength, more light.

And there are two objects to which the Ethical Society is particularly consecrated. The one is to help people do the good they already know, to square their practice with the theory they already possess; and help them not merely by hortatory methods, by appeals from the pulpit and the platform; but also by

such scientific methods as modern pedagogy places at our command. I find that young men are going to perdition every day, simply because they have never been morally trained; that men and women are making a miserable mess of their lives, in marriage for instance, simply because they have never been morally disciplined. The employment of training and discipline, therefore, for adults as well as for the young, as a means of morally strengthening them, that is of enabling them to do the good they already know, is one of the objects of the Ethical Society.

But the other object is in a way even more important. It is to gain additional light as to what is right. There never was a greater mistake made than that of Matthew Arnold, when he said that the knowledge of duty is a simple matter; that every one knows what the right is, and that the only difficulty is to do the thing which we recognize as right. On the contrary, one of the greatest sources of disorder at the present time is uncertainty as to the standard, lack of a clear perception of the line of duty, absence of moral light. We need light on the great social problems of the day; we need to see far more distinctly than we do, what are the duties of employers to employees, and conversely; we need to see far more distinctly than we do, what ought of right to be the relations of the social classes, and also what ought of right to be the relations of men

and women to one another, now that women claim — and properly claim — equality of opportunity with men. And what does the higher patriotism require of the citizen, and how is patriotism to be reconciled with cosmopolitanism ? On these and a hundred other questions we need more light; and we shall never get it unless we are impressed with the importance of getting it, unless we feel so deeply the necessity of coming into right relations with others that we shall constantly make the effort to get into such relations. And through the effort we shall be taught. By groping towards a new social justice, we shall gradually find our way to it; by moving forward at any cost, we shall gradually discern more plainly the goal towards which we are moving.

The question is often raised nowadays, what is it that makes life worth living. This question, to my mind, almost argues a moral defect in those who put it. Life is worth living to him who has worth; life is worth living whether it be happy or otherwise, whether it be bright with pleasures or dark with adversity, for the purpose of adding to the moral worth of him who lives it. And we add to our moral worth in two ways; by living rightly, according to the light we already have, and by constantly seeking for new light. Yes, and I add, the latter is even the condition of the former ; and in the moral world as elsewhere, he who

does not advance retrogrades, he who does not conquer new ground loses the ground he has already covered; from him who has not the new light shall be taken away even the light he already has.

These are the tasks which the Ethical Society sets itself.* In virtue of these tasks, it is an institution as sacred to its members as any Church. Its public exercises indeed are simple, and are lacking in the charm and grace possessed by older institutions. Perhaps we may hope that in the future it will acquire a grace of its own, a seemliness in externals in which it is now deficient. But be that as it may, there is at all events a religious conception underlying the Ethical Society, a religious purpose informing it. For it seeks to help men to realize the infinite content in their finite existence, to hold up to them ideals of conduct which are competent to give power to the will and peace to the heart.

* The following extract from a Statement recently published by Dr. Adler is here subjoined, to show the relation of his religion to the aims of the Ethical Societies. No one who reads this book will fail to perceive how much the author's religion means to him, and how earnestly intent he is on propagating it; and yet the Ethical Societies, of which he was the founder, are not committed to Dr. Adler's religion, and he himself has always been most solicitous that they should not be.

We have here the singular example of a religious teacher profoundly devoted to his religious belief, eager to make converts to it, and yet insisting that it shall not become the basis of fellowship in "the Church of the unchurched", of which he is the founder. The reasons that have influenced him are indicated in the last chapter of this book, and in the following extract:

The one characteristic mark of the Ethical Society is, that a common creed is not the condition of fellowship, is not the basis of union. We are united, but by other means and by an agreement of a totally different nature.

But great stress is to be laid on the fact that we are united; we do work together in a common spirit and for definite ends. The question for any one who would pass judgment on us to consider is not whether such a thing as a religious society without a common creed is feasible; on the face of it many might be tempted to say that it is not, that such a thing never has been and never can be. But to this we simply reply that we *are* a religious society, that we bury the dead, that we consecrate the marriage bond, that we support a Sunday school, etc., and that we have done all this to the greater or less satisfaction of a considerable body of people for more than twenty-eight years. The question is not whether theoretically such societies are possible, but seeing that they exist, to understand the common spirit that animates them, the bond of union which holds them together.

What, then, is this bond of union? If you have no common creed, an inquirer may ask, have you a common philosophy, are you Spencerians, Kantians, etc.? Without expatiating on this point, we shall, it seems, have to dispose of it in the same manner as above. Some of us have no gift and no inclination for philosophical thinking, others who have the gift are encouraged to employ it and to work toward a philosophical system which shall satisfy their intellectual needs. An agreement, however, on philosophic first principles is not enforced or expected. Here again it is believed that unfettered liberty is best, and that such liberty is incompatible with exacting, as the condition of membership in an Ethical Society, assent to any philosophical form, however broad.

The basis of union is the sense of a common need, a keenly-realized desire to get away from bad ways of living, and at least to approximate toward better ways of living. We have the conviction that for the solution of the grave and tangled problems which beset us as individuals and society generally, more light is needed as well as more fervor, more light than is shed by the Old Testament or the New, more light than is furnished by any philosophical system of the past; and in the greatness of our need, we have the courage to seek such light. We have the conviction, that in matters relating to conduct, truth is found by trying; and that while a man may "err so long as he strives," yet it is by continuing to strive that he will correct his errors, and only by venturing forth in untried directions that he can discover new truth. The Ethical Culture Society, therefore, may be described as a society dedicated to moral striving.

But there is this to be added, that the common search and effort are dependent on agreement in at least one fundamental particular. We are agreed that the thing we search for is the thing which we cannot afford to do without; we are agreed that the attempt to live in right relations, to realize what is called righteousness, to approximate toward the ideal of holiness, is that which alone gives worth to human life. And it is in the name of this ideal of holiness that we exercise our religious functions. In its name we consecrate the marriage bond; the marriage relation itself is intrinsically holy, apart from any benediction or sanctification from the outside; it is this intrinsic holiness of the relation that we accentuate in the ceremony. In the name of the same ideal we bury the dead; the sacredness of human life and the eternal ends

to which it is consecrated, are the underlying text of the words we speak at the brink of the grave. By the same ideal, we seek to console the afflicted, urging them to turn their sufferings to account as means of growth and moral development. And finally, it is the same thought of the divine content possible to every human life here and now, which we seek to impress upon the young in our Sunday school and in our day schools.

And after all there is a certain definite view of life underlying the Ethical Movement. As every religion has taught a fundamental conception of life, and has gained strength by so doing, so we, too, are teaching a certain fundamental conception, the conception namely, that progress in right living is the paramount aim and end of life: that right thinking and right believing are important only as they lead to right living, and that the thinking and believing must approve themselves to be right by their fruits in conduct.

Is such an undertaking as ours likely to prove permanent, is the common spirit that now unites us likely to last, or will it be disintegrated by those differences of thought and feeling which more and more are likely to emerge in the future? That will depend on the energy with which we hold fast to the common aim. In the cognate sphere of Science, we see that devotion to truth is a sufficient bond. Theories of what is true have their day. They come and go, leave their deposit in the common stock of knowledge, and are supplanted by other more convincing theories. The thinkers and investigators of the world are pledged to no special theory, but feel themselves free to search for the greater truth beyond the utmost limits of present knowledge. So likewise in the field of moral truth, it is our hope, that men in proportion as they grow more enlightened, will learn to hold their theories and their creeds more loosely, and will none the less, nay, rather all the more be devoted to the supreme end of practical righteousness to which all theories and creeds must be kept subservient.

There are two purposes then which we have in view: To secure in the moral and religious life perfect intellectual liberty, and at the same time to secure concert in action. There shall be no shackles upon the mind, no fetters imposed in early youth which the growing man or woman may feel prevented from shaking off, no barrier set up which daring thought may not transcend. And on the other hand there shall be unity of effort, the unity that comes of an end supremely prized and loved, the unity of earnest, morally aspiring persons, engaged in the conflict with moral evil.

THE END