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THE FAITH OF THE MILLIONS

A SELECTION OF PAST ESSAYS

SECOND SERIES

BY

GEORGE TYRRELL, S.J.

1901

"AND SEEING THE MULTITUDES HE WAS MOVED WITH
COMPASSION ON THEM, FOR THEY WERE HARASSED AND
SCATTERED AS SHEEP HAVING NO SHEPHERD."
(Matthew ix. 36.)

Nil Obstat:
J. GERARD, S.J.
CENS. THEOL. DEPUTATUS.

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XIII.

JULIANA OF NORWICH.

"One of the most remarkable books of the middle ages," writes Father Dalgairns, [1] "is the hitherto almost unknown work, titled, *Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love made to a Devout Servant of God, called Mother Juliana, an Anchoress of Norwich*" How "one of the most remarkable books" should be "hitherto almost unknown," may be explained partly by the fact to which the same writer draws attention, namely, that Mother Juliana lived and wrote at the time when a certain mystical movement was about to bifurcate and pursue its course of development, one branch within the Church on Catholic lines, the other outside the Church along lines whose actual issue was Wycliffism and other kindred forms of heterodoxy, and whose logical outcome was pantheism. Hence, between the language of these pseudo-mystics and that of the recluse of Norwich, "there is sometimes a coincidence … which might deceive the unwary." It is almost necessarily a feature of every heresy to begin by using the language of orthodoxy in a strained and non-natural sense, and only gradually to develop a distinctive terminology of its own; but, as often as not, certain ambiguous expressions, formerly taken in an orthodox sense, are abandoned by the faithful on account of their ambiguity and are then appropriated to the expression of heterodoxy, so that eventually by force of usage the heretical meaning comes to be the principal and natural meaning, and any other interpretation to seem violent and non-natural. "The few coincidences," continues Father Dalgairns, "between Mother Juliana and Wycliffe are among the many proofs that the same speculative view often means different things in different systems. Both St. Augustine, Calvin, and Mahomet, believe in predestination, yet an Augustinian is something utterly different from a Scotch Cameronian or a Mahometan.... The idea which runs through the whole of Mother Juliana is the very contradictory of Wycliffe's Pantheistic Necessitarianism." Yet on account of the mere similarity of expression we can well understand how in the course of time some of Mother Juliana's utterances came to be more ill-sounding to faithful ears in proportion as they came to be more exclusively appropriated by the unorthodox. It is hard to be as vigilant when danger is remote as when it is near at hand; and until heresy has actually wrested them to its purpose it is morally impossible that the words of ecclesiastical and religious writers should be so delicately balanced as to avoid all ambiguities and inaccuracies. Still less have we a right to look for such exactitude in the words of an anchoress who, if not wholly uneducated in our sense of the word, yet on her own confession "could no letter," i.e., as we should say, was no scholar, and certainly made no pretence to any skill in technical theology. But however much some of her expressions may jar with the later developments of Catholic theology, it must be remembered, as has been said, that they were current coin in her day, common to orthodox and unorthodox; and that though their restoration is by no means desirable, yet they are still susceptive of a "benignant" interpretation. "I pray Almighty God," says Mother Juliana in concluding, "that this book come not but into the hands of those that will be His faithful lovers, and that will submit them to the faith of Holy Church." [2] And indeed such can receive no possible harm from its perusal, beyond a little temporary perplexity to be dispelled by inquiry; and this only in the case of those who are sufficiently instructed and reflective to perceive the discord in question. The rest are well used in their reading to take what is familiar and to leave what is strange, so that they will find in her pages much to ponder, and but a little to pass over.

It is, however, not only to these occasional obscurities and ambiguities that we are to ascribe the comparative oblivion into which so remarkable a book has fallen; but also to the fact that its noteworthiness is perhaps more evident and relative to us than to our forefathers. It cannot but startle us to find doubts that we hastily look upon as peculiarly "modern," set forth in their full strength and wrestled with and overthrown by an unlettered recluse of the fourteenth century. In some sense they are the doubts of all time, with perhaps just that peculiar complexion which they assume in the light of Christianity. Yet, owing to the modern spread of education, or rather to the indiscriminate divulgation of ideas, these problems are now the possession of the man in the street, whereas in former days they

were exclusively the property of minds capable—not indeed of answering the unanswerable, but at least of knowing their own limitations and of seeing why such problems must always exist as long as man is man. Dark as the age of Mother Juliana was as regards the light of positive knowledge and information; yet the light of wisdom burned at least as clearly and steadily then as now; and it is by that light alone that the shades of unbelief can be dispelled. Of course, wisdom without knowledge must starve or prey on its own vitals, and this was the intellectual danger of the middle ages; but knowledge without wisdom is so much food undigested and indigestible, and this is the evil of our own day, when to be passably well-informed so taxes our time and energy as to leave us no leisure for assimilating the knowledge with which we have stuffed ourselves.

We must not, however, think of Mother Juliana as shut up within four walls of a cell, evolving all her ideas straight from her own inner consciousness without any reference to experience. Such a barren contemplation, tending to mental paralysis, belongs to Oriental pessimism, whose aim is the extinction of life, mental and physical, and reabsorption into that void whence, it is said, misfortune has brought us forth to troublous consciousness. The Christian contemplative knows no ascent to God but by the ladder of creatures; he goes to the book of Nature and of human life, and to the book of Revelation, and turns and ponders their pages, line by line and word by word, and so feeds and fills the otherwise thin and shadowy conception of God in his own soul, and ever pours new oil upon the flame of Divine love. Father Daigairns writes: "Juliana is a recluse very different from the creatures of the imagination of writers on comparative morals. So far from being cut off from sympathy with her kind, her mind is tenderly and delicately alive to every change in the spiritual atmosphere of England…. The four walls of her narrow home seem to be rent and torn asunder, and not only England but Christendom appears before her view;" and he is at pains to show how both anchorites and anchoresses were much-sought after by all in trouble, temporal or spiritual, and how abundant were their opportunities of becoming acquainted with human life and its burdens, and of more than compensating, through the confidences of others, whatever defect their minds might suffer through lack of personal experience. Even still, how many a priest or nun whose experience had else been narrowed to the petty domestic interests of a small family, is, in virtue of his or her vocation, put in touch with a far larger world, or with a far more important aspect of the world, than many who mingle with its every-day trivialities, and is thus made a partaker in some sense of the deeper life and experience of society and of the Universal Church! The anchoress "did a great deal more than pray. The very dangers against which the author of her rule [3] warns her, are a proof that she had many visitors. He warns her against becoming a 'babbling' or 'gossiping' anchoress, a variety evidently well-known; a recluse whose cell was the depository of all the news from the neighbourhood at a time when newspapers did not exist." Such abuses throw light upon the legitimate use of the anchoress's position in the mediæval community.

And so, though Mother Juliana "could no letter," though she knew next to nothing of the rather worthless physical science of those times, and hardly more of philosophy or technical theology, yet she knew no little of that busy, sad, and sinful human life going on round her, not only at Norwich, but in England, and even in Europe; and rich with this knowledge, to which all other lore is subordinate and for whose sake alone it is valuable, she betook herself to prayer and meditation, and brought all this experience into relation with God, and drew from it an ever clearer understanding of Him and of His dealings with the souls that His Love has created and redeemed.

It is not then so wonderful that this wise and holy woman should have faced the problems presented by the apparent discord between the truths of faith and the facts of human life—a discord which is felt in every age by the observant and thoughtful, but which in our age is a commonplace on the lips of even the most superficial. But an age takes its tone from the many who are the children of the past, rather than from the few who are the parents of the future. Mother Juliana's book could hardly have been in any sense "popular" until these days of ours, in which the particular disease of mind to which it ministers has become epidemic.

If then these suggestions to some extent furnish an explanation of the oblivion into which the revelations of Mother Juliana have fallen, they also justify the following attempt to draw attention to them once more, and to give some sort of analysis of their contents; more especially as we have reason to believe that they are about to be re-edited by a competent scholar and made accessible to the general public, which they have not been since the comparative extinction of Richardson's edition of 1877. Little is known of Mother Juliana's history outside what is implied in her revelations; nor is it our purpose at present to go aside in search of biographical details that will be of interest only after their subject has become interesting. Suffice it here to say that she was thirty at the time of her revelations, which she tells us was in 1373. Hence she was born in 1343, and is said to have been a centenarian, in which case she must have died about 1443. She probably belonged to the Benedictine nuns at Carrow, near Norwich, and being called to a still stricter life, retired to a hermitage close by the Church of St. Julian at Norwich. The details she gives about her own sick-room exclude the idea of that stricter "reclusion" which is popularly spoken of as "walling-up"—not of course in the mythical sense.

With these brief indications sufficient to satisfy the craving of our imagination for particulars of time and place, let us turn to her own account of the circumstances of her visions, as well as of their nature. She tells us that in her life previous to 1373, she had, at some time or other, demanded three favours from God; first, a sensible appreciation of Christ's Passion in such sort as to share the grace of Mary Magdalene and others who were eye-witnesses thereof: "therefore I desired a bodily sight wherein I might have more knowledge of the bodily pain of our Saviour." And the motive of this desire was that she might "afterwards because of that showing have the more true mind of the Passion of Christ." Her aim was a deeper practical intelligence, and not the gratification of mere emotional curiosity.

This grace she plainly recognizes as extraordinary; for she says: "Other sight or showing of God asked I none, till when the soul was departed from the body." Her second request was likewise for an extraordinary grace; namely, for a bodily sickness which she and others might believe to be mortal; in which she should receive the last sacraments, and experience all the bodily pains, and all the spiritual temptations incident to the separation of soul and body. And the motive of this request was that she might be "purged by the mercy of God, and afterwards live more to the worship of God because of that sickness." In other words, she desired the grace of what we might call a "trial-death," that so she might better meet the real death when it came. Further, she adds, "this sickness I desired in my youth, that I might have it when I was thirty years old." And "these two desires were with a condition" (namely, if God should so will), "for methought this was not the common use of prayer." But the third request she proffers boldly "without any condition," since it was necessarily God's desire to grant it and to be sued for it; namely, the grace of a three-fold wound: the wound of true sorrow for sin; the wound of "kind compassion" with Christ's sufferings; and the wound of "wilful belonging to God," that is, of self-devotion.

She is careful to tell us that while she ever continued to urge the unconditional third request, the two first passed completely out of her head in the course of years, until she was reminded of them by their simultaneous and remarkable fulfilment. "For when I was thirty years old and a half, God sent me a bodily sickness in which I lay three days and three nights; and on the fourth night I took all my rites of Holy Church, and weened not to have lived till day. And after this I lay two days and two nights, and on the third night I weened oftentimes to have passed, and so weened they that were with me.... And I understood in my reason, and by the feeling of my pains that I should die, and I assented fully with all the will of my heart, to be at God's will. Thus I endured till day, and by then, was my body dead to all feeling from the midst down." She is then raised up in a sitting position for greater ease, and her curate is sent for, as the end is supposed to be near. On arrival, he finds her speechless and with her eyes fixed upwards towards heaven, "where I trusted to come by the mercy of God." He places the crucifix before her, and bids her bend her eyes upon it. "I assented to set my eyes in the face of the crucifix if I could; and so I did; for methought I could endure longer to look straight in front of me than right up"—a touch that shows the previous upturning of the eyes to have been voluntary and not cataleptic. At this moment we seem to pass into the region of the abnormal: "After this my sight began to fail; it waxed as dark about me in the chamber as if it had been night, save in the image of the cross, wherein I beheld a common light, and I wist not how. And all that was beside the cross was ugly and fearful to me, as it had been much occupied with fiends." Then the upper part of her body becomes insensible, and the only pain left is that of weakness and breathlessness. Suddenly she is totally eased and apparently quite cured, which, however, she regards as a momentary miraculous relief, but not as a deliverance from death. In this breathing space it suddenly occurs to her to beg for the second of those three wounds which were the matter of her unconditional third request; namely, for a deepened sense and sympathetic understanding of Christ's Passion. "But in this I never desired any bodily sight, or any manner of showing from God; but such compassion as I thought that a kind soul might have with our Lord Jesus." In a word, the remembrance of her two conditional and extraordinary requests of bygone years was not in her mind at the time. "And in this, suddenly I saw the red blood trickling down from under the garland;"—and so she passes from objective to subjective vision;[4] and the first fifteen revelations follow, as she tells us later, one after another in unbroken succession, lasting in all some few hours.

"I had no grief or no dis-ease," she tells us later, "as long as the fifteen showings lasted in showing. And at the end all was close, and I saw no more; and soon I felt that I should live longer." Presently all her pains, bodily and spiritual, return in full force; and the consolation of the visions seems to her as an idle dream and delusion; and she answers to the inquiries of a Religious at her bedside, that she had been raving: "And he laughed loud and drolly. And I said: 'The cross that stood before my face, methought it bled fast.'" At which the other looked so serious and awed that she became ashamed of her own incredulity. "I believed Him truly for the time that I saw Him. And so it was then my will and my meaning to do, ever without end—but, as a fool, I let it pass out of my mind. And lo! how wretched I was," &c. Then she falls asleep and has a terrifying dream of the Evil One, of which she says: "This ugly showing was made sleeping and so was none other," whence it seems that her self-consciousness was unimpaired in the other visions; that is, she was aware at the time that they were visions, and did not

confound them with reality as dreams are confounded. Then follows the sixteenth and last revelation; ending with the words: "Wit well it was no raving thou sawest to-day: but take it, and believe it, and keep thee therein, and comfort thee therewith and trust thereto, and thou shalt not be overcome." Then during the rest of the same night till about Prime next morning she is tempted against faith and trust by the Evil One, of whose nearness she is conscious; but comes out victorious after a sustained struggle. She understands from our Lord, that the series of showings is now closed; "which blessed showing the faith keepeth, ... for He left with me neither sign nor token whereby I might know it." Yet for her personally the obligation not to doubt is as of faith: "Thus am I bound to keep it in my faith; for on the same day that it was showed, what time the sight was passed, as a wretch I forsook it and openly said that I raved."

Fifteen years later she gets an inward response as to the general gist and unifying purport of the sixteen revelations. "Wit it well; love was His meaning. Who showed it thee? Love. Wherefore showed He it thee? For love."

Having thus sketched the circumstances of the revelations, we may now address ourselves to their character and substance.

There is nothing to favour and everything to disfavour the notion that Mother Juliana was an habitual visionary, or was the recipient of any other visions, than those which she beheld in her thirty-first year; and of these, she tells us herself, the whole sixteen took place within a few hours. "Now have I told you of fifteen showings, ... of which fifteen showings, the first began early in the morning about the hour of four, ... each following the other till it was noon of the day or past, ... and after this the Good Lord showed me the sixteenth revelation on the night following." Speaking of them all as one, she tells us: "And from the time it was showed I desired oftentimes to wit what was in our Lord's meaning; and fifteen years after and more I was answered in ghostly understanding, saying thus: 'What! wouldst thou wit thy Lord's meaning in this thing? Wit it well: Love was His meaning.'" But this "ghostly understanding" can hardly be pressed into implying another revelation of the evidently supernormal type.

We rather insist on this point, as indicating the habitual healthiness of Mother Juliana's soul—a quality which is also abundantly witnessed by the unity and coherence of the doctrine of her revelations, which bespeaks a mind well-knit together, and at harmony with itself. The hysterical mind is one in which large tracts of consciousness seem to get detached from the main body, and to take the control of the subject for the time being, giving rise to the phenomena rather foolishly called double or multiple "personality." This is a disease proper to the passive-minded, to those who give way to a "drifting" tendency, and habitually suffer their whole interests to be absorbed by the strongest sensation or emotion that presents itself. Such minds are generally chaotic and unorganized, as is revealed in the rambling, involved, interminably parenthetical and digressive character of their conversation. But when, as with Mother Juliana, we find unity and coherence, we may infer that there has been a life-long habit of active mental control, such as excludes the supposition of an hysterical temperament.

Perhaps the similarity of the phenomena which attend both on extraordinary psychic weakness and passivity, and on extraordinary energy and activity may excuse a confusion common enough, and which we have dwelt on elsewhere. But obviously as far as the natural consequences of a given psychic state are concerned, it is indifferent how that state is brought about. Thus, that extreme concentration of the attention, that perfect abstraction from outward things, which in hysterical persons is the effect of weakness and passive-mindedness—of the inability to resist and shake off the spell of passions and emotions; is in others the effect of active self-control, of voluntary concentration, of a complete mastery over passions and emotions. Yet though the causes of the abnormal state are different, its effects may well be the same.

In thus maintaining the healthiness and vigour of Mother Juliana's mind, we may seem to be implicitly treating her revelation, not as coming from a Divine source, but simply as an expression of her own habitual line of thought—as a sort of pouring forth of the contents of her subconscious memory. Our direct intention, however, is to show how very unlikely it is antecedently that one so clear-headed and intelligent should be the victim of the common and obvious illusions of the hysterical visionary. For her book contains not only the matter of her revelations, but also the history of all the circumstances connected with them, as well as a certain amount of personal comment upon them, professedly the fruit of her normal mind; and best of all, a good deal of analytical reflection upon the phenomena which betrays a native psychological insight not inferior to that of St. Teresa. From these sources we could gather the general sobriety and penetration of her judgment, without assuming the actual teaching of the revelations to be merely the unconscious self-projection of her own mind. But in so much as many of these revelations were professedly Divine answers to her own questions, and since the answer must ever be adapted not merely to the question considered in the abstract, but as it springs from its context

in the questioner's mind; we are not wrong, on this score alone, in arguing from the character of the revelation to the character of the mind to which it was addressed. Fallible men may often speak and write above or beside the intelligence of their hearers and readers; but not so He who reads the heart He has made. Now these revelations were not addressed to the Church through Mother Juliana; but, as she says, were addressed to herself and were primarily for herself, though most that was said had reference to the human soul in general. They were adapted therefore to the character and individuality of her mind; and are an index of its thoughts and workings. For her they were a matter of faith; but, as she tells us, she had no token or outward proof wherewith to convince others of their reality. Those who feel disposed, as we ourselves do, to place much confidence in the word of one so perfectly sane and genuinely holy, may draw profit from the message addressed to her need; but never can it be for them a matter of faith as in a Divine message addressed directly or indirectly to themselves. So far as these revelations are a clear and noble expression of truths already contained implicitly in our faith and reason, which it brings into more explicit consciousness and vitalizes with a new power of stimulus, they may be profitable to us all; but they must be received with due criticism and discernment as themselves subject to a higher rule of truth—namely, the teaching of the Universal Church.

But to determine, with respect to these and kindred revelations, how far they may be regarded as an expression of the recipient's own mind and latent consciousness, will need a digression which the general interest of the question must excuse.

There is a tendency in the modern philosophy of religion (for example, in Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*) to rationalize inspired revelation and to explain it as altogether kindred to the apparently magical intuitions of natural genius in non-religious matters; as the result, in other words, of a rending asunder of the veil that divides what is called "super-liminal" from "subliminal" consciousness; to find in prophecy and secret insight the effect of a flash of unconscious inference from a mass of data buried in the inscrutable darkness of our forgotten self. Together with this, there is also a levelling-up philosophy, a sort of modernized ontologism, which would attribute all natural intuition to a more immediate self-revelation on God's part than seems quite compatible with orthodoxy.

But neither of these philosophies satisfy what is vulgarly understood by "revelation," and therefore both use the word in a somewhat strained sense. For certainly the first sense of the term implies a consciousness on the part of the recipient of being spoken to, of being related through such speech to another personality, whereas the flashes and intuitions of natural genius, however they may resemble and be called "inspirations" because of their exceeding the known resources of the thinker's own mind, yet they are consciously autochthonous; they are felt to spring from the mind's own soil; not to break the soul's solitude with the sense of an alien presence. Such interior illuminations, though doubtless in a secondary sense derived from the "True Light which enlightens every man coming into this world," certainly do not fulfil the traditional notion of revelation as understood, not only in the Christian Church, but also in all ethnic religions. For common to antiquity is the notion of some kind of possession or seizure, some usurpation of the soul's faculties by an external personality, divine or diabolic, for its own service and as its instrument of expression—a phenomenon, in fact, quite analogous, if not the same in species, with that of hypnotic control and suggestion, where the thought and will of the subject is simply passive under the thought and will of the agent.

Saints and contemplatives are wont—not without justification—to speak of their lights in prayer, and of the ordinary intuitions of their mind, under the influence of grace, as Divine utterances in a secondary sense; to say, "God said to me," or "seemed to say to me," or "God showed me," and so on. But to confound these products of their own mind with revelation is the error only of the uninstructed or the wilfully self-deluded. Therefore, as commonly understood, "revelation" implies the conscious control of the mind by another mind; just as its usual correlative, "inspiration," implies the conscious control of the will by another will.

There can be no doubt whatever but that Mother Juliana of Norwich considered her revelations to be of this latter description, and not to have been merely different in degree from those flashes of spiritual insight with which she was familiar in her daily contemplations and prayers. How far, then, her own mind may have supplied the material from which the tissues were woven, or lent the colours with which the pictures were painted, or supplied the music to which the words were set, is what we must now try to determine.

II.

Taking the terms "revelation" and "inspiration" in the unsophisticated sense which they have borne not only in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, but in almost all the great ethnic religions as well, we may inquire into the different sorts and degrees of the control exercised by the presumably supernatural agents over the recipient of such influence. For clearness' sake we may first distinguish between the

control of the cognitive, the volitional, and the executive faculties. For our present inquiry we may leave aside those cases where the control of the executive faculties, normally subject to the will and directed by the mind, seem to be wrested from that control by a foreign agent possessed of intelligence and volition, as, for example, in such a case as is narrated of the false prophet Balaam, or of those who at the Pentecostal outpouring spoke correctly in languages unintelligible to themselves, or of the possessed who were constrained in spite of themselves to confess Christ. In these and similar cases, not only is the action involuntary or even counter to the will, but it manifests such intelligent purpose as seemingly marks it to be the effect of an alien will and intelligence. Of this kind of control exercised by the agent over the outer actions of the patient, it may be doubted if it be ever effected except through the mediation of a suggestion addressed to the mind, in such sort that though not free, the resulting action is not wholly involuntary. Be this as it may, our concern at present is simply with control exercised over the will and the understanding.

With regard to the will, it is a commonplace of mystical theology that God, who gave it its natural and essential bent towards the good of reason, i.e., towards righteousness and the Divine will; who created it not merely as an irresistible tendency towards the happiness and self-realization of the rational subject, but as a resistible tendency towards its *true*, happiness and *true* self-realization—that this same God can directly modify the will without the natural mediation of some suggested thought. We ourselves, by the laborious cultivation of virtue, gradually modify the response of our will to certain suggestions, making it more sensitive to right impulses, more obtuse to evil impulses. According to mystic theology, it is the prerogative of God to dispense with this natural method of education, and, without violating that liberty of choice (which no inclination can prejudice), to incline the rational appetite this way or that; not only in reference to some suggested object, but also without reference to any distinct object whatsoever, so that the soul should be abruptly filled with joy or sadness, with fear or hope, with desire or aversion, and yet be at a loss to determine the object of these spiritual passions. St. Ignatius Loyola, in his "Rules for Discerning Spirits," borrowed no doubt from the current mystical theology of his day, makes this absence of any suggested object a criterion of "consolation" coming from God alone—a criterion always difficult to apply owing to the lightning subtlety of thoughts that flash across the soul and are forgotten even while their emotional reverberation yet remains. Where there was a preceding thought to account for the emotion, he held that the "consolation" might be the work of spirits (good or evil) who could not influence the will directly, but only indirectly through the mind; or else it might be the work of the mind itself, whose thoughts often seem to us abrupt through mere failure of self-observation.

Normally what is known as an "actual grace" involves both an illustration of the mind, and an enkindling of the will; but though supernatural, such graces are not held to be miraculous or preternatural, or to break the usual psychological laws of cause and effect; like the ordinary answers to prayer, they are from God's ordinary providence in that supernatural order which permeates but does not of itself interfere with the natural. But over and above what, relatively to our observation, we call the "ordinary" course, there is the extraordinary, whose interference with it is apparent, though of course not absolute or real—since nothing can be out of harmony with the first and highest law, which is God Himself. And to the category of the extraordinary must be assigned such inspirations and direct will-movements as we here speak of. [5]

Yet not altogether; for in the natural order, too, we have the phenomenon of instinct to consider—both spiritual and animal. Giving heredity all the credit we can for storing up accumulated experience in the nervous system of each species, there remains a host of fundamental animal instincts which that law is quite inadequate to explain; those, for example, which govern the multiplication of the species and secure the conditions under which alone heredity can work. Such cannot be at once the effect and the essential condition of heredity; and yet they are, of all instincts, the most complex and mysterious. Indeed, it seems more scientific to ascribe other instincts to the same known and indubitable, if mysterious, cause, than to seek explanation in causes less known and more hypothetical. In the case of many instincts, it would seem that the craving for the object precedes the distinct cognition of it; that the object is only ascertained when, after various tentative gropings, it is stumbled upon, almost, it might seem, by chance. And this seems true, also, of some of our fundamental spiritual instincts; for example, that craving of the mind for an unified experience, which is at the root of all mental activity, and whose object is ever approached yet never attained; or, again, there is the social and political instinct, which has not yet formed a distinct and satisfying conception of what it would be at. Or nearer still to our theme, is the natural religious instinct which seeks interpretations and explanatory hypotheses in the various man-made religions of the race, and which finds itself satisfied and transcended by the Christian revelation.

In these and like instances, we find will-movements not caused by the subjects' own cognitions and perceptions, but contrariwise, giving birth to cognitions, setting the mind to work to interpret the said movements, and to seek out their satisfying objects.

This is quite analogous to certain phenomena of the order of grace. St. Ignatius almost invariably speaks, not, as we should, of thoughts that give rise to will-states of "consolation" or "desolation," but conversely, of these will-states giving rise to congruous thoughts. Indeed, nothing is more familiar to us than the way in which the mind is magnetized by even our physical states of elation or depression, to select the more cheerful or the gloomier aspects of life, according as we are under one influence or the other; and in practice, we recognize the effect of people's humours on their opinions and decisions, and would neither sue mercy nor ask a favour of a man in a temper. In short, it is hardly too much to say, that our thoughts are more dependent on our feelings than our feelings on our thoughts. This, then, is one possible method of supernatural guidance which we shall call "blind inspiration"—for though the feeling or impulse is from God, the interpretation is from the subject's own mind. It is curious how St. Ignatius applies this method to the determining of the Divine will in certain cases—as it were, by the inductive principle of "concomitant variation." A suggestion that always comes and grows with a state of "consolation," and whose negative is in like manner associated with "desolation," is presumably the right interpretation of the blind impulse. [6] And perhaps this is one of the commonest subjective assurances of faith, namely, that our faith grows and declines with what we know intuitively to be our better moods; that when lax we are sceptical, and believing when conscientious.

Another species of will-guidance recognized by saints, is not so much by way of a vague feeling seeking interpretation, as by way of a sort of enforced decision with regard to some naturally suggested course of conduct. And this, perhaps, is what is more technically understood by an inspiration; as, for example, when the question of writing or not writing something publicly useful, say, the records of the Kings of Israel, rises in the mind, and it is decided for and in the subject, but not by him. Of course this "inspiration" is a common but not essential accompaniment of "revelation" or "mind-control,"—in those cases, namely, where the communicated information is for the good of others; as, also, where it is for the guidance of the practical conduct of the recipient. Such "inspiration" at times seems to be no more than a strong inclination compatible with liberty; at other times it amounts to such a "fixing" of the practical judgment as would ordinarily result from a determination of the power of choice—if that were not a contradiction. Better to say, it is a taking of the matter out of the jurisdiction of choice, by the creation of an *idée fixe* [7] in the subject's mind.

Turning now to "revelation" in the stricter sense of a preternatural enlightenment of the mind, it might conceivably be either by way of a real accretion of knowledge—an addition to the contents of the mind—or else by way of manipulating contents already there, as we ourselves do by reminiscence, by rumination, comparison, analysis, inference. Thus we can conceive the mind being consciously controlled in these operations, as it were, by a foreign will; being reminded of this or that; being shown new consequences, applications, and relations of truths already possessed.

When, however, there is a preternatural addition to the sum total of the mind's knowledge, we can conceive the communication to be effected through the outer senses, as by visions seen (real or symbolic), or words heard; or through the imagination—pictorial, symbolic, or verbal; visual or auditory; or, finally, in the very reason and intelligence itself, whose ideas are embodied in these images and signs, and to whose apprehension they are all subservient.

Now from all this tedious division and sub-division it may perhaps be clear in how many different senses the words of such a professed revelation as Mother Juliana has left on record can be regarded as preternatural utterances; or rather, in how many different ways she herself may have considered them such, and wished them so to be considered. Indeed, as we shall see, she has done a good deal more to determine this, in regard to the various parts of her record, than most have done, and it is for that reason that we have taken the opportunity to open up the general question. Such a record might then be, either wholly or in part:

(a) The work of religious "inspiration" or genius, in the sense in which rationalists use the word, levelling the idea down to the same plane as that of artistic inspiration.

(b) Or else it might be "inspired" as mystic philosophy or ontologism uses the expression, when it ascribes all natural insight to a more or less directly divine enlightenment.

(c) Or, taking the word more strictly as implying the influence of a distinct personal agency over the soul of the writer, it might be that the record simply expresses an attempted interpretation, an imaginary embodiment, of some blind preternatural stirring of the writer's affections—analogous to the romances and dreams created in the imagination at the first awakening of the amatory affections.

(d) Or, the matter being in no way from preternatural sources, the strong and perhaps irresistible impulse to record and publish it, might be preternatural.

(e) Or (in addition to or apart from such an impulse), it might be a record of certain truths

already contained implicitly in the writer's mind, but brought to remembrance or into clear recognition, not by the ordinary free activity of reason, but, as it were, by an alien will controlling the mind.

(f) Or, if really new truths or facts are communicated to the mind from without, this may be effected in various ways: (i) By the way of verbal "inspiration," as when the very words are received apparently through the outer senses; or else put together in the imagination. (ii) Or, the matter is presented pictorially (be it fact or symbol) to the outer senses or to the imagination; and then described or "word-painted" according to the writer's own ability. (iii) Or, the truth is brought home directly to the intelligence; and gets all its imaginative and verbal clothing from the recipient.

Many other hypotheses are conceivable, but most will be reducible to one or other of these. We may perhaps add that, when the revelation is given for the sake of others, this purpose might be frustrated, were not a substantial fidelity of expression and utterance also secured. This would involve, at least, that negative kind of guidance of the tongue or pen, known technically as "assistance."

Mother Juliana gives us some clue in regard to her own revelations where she says: [8] "All this blessed showing of our Lord God was showed in three parts; that is to say, by bodily sight; and by words formed in my understanding; and by ghostly sight. For the bodily sight, I have said as I saw, as truly as I can" (that is, the appearances were, she believed, from God, but the description of them was her own). "And for the words I have said them right as our Lord showed them to me" (for here nothing was her own, but bare fidelity of utterance). "And for the ghostly sight I have said some deal, but I may never full tell it" (that is to say, no language or imagery of her own can ever adequately express the spiritual truths revealed to her higher reason). As a rule she makes it quite clear throughout, which of these three kinds of showing is being described. We have an example of bodily vision when she saw "the red blood trickling down from under the garland," and in all else that seemed to happen to the crucifix on which her open eyes were set. And of all this she says: "I conceived truly and mightily that it was Himself that showed it me, without any mean between us;" that is, she took it as a sort of pictorial language uttered directly by Christ, even as if He had addressed her in speech; she took it not merely as *having* a meaning, but as designed and uttered to *convey* a meaning—for to speak is more than to let one's mind appear. Or again, it is by bodily vision she sees a little hasel-nut in her hand, symbolic of the "naughting of all that is made." Of words formed in her imagination she tells us, for example, "Then He (i.e., Christ as seen on the crucifix) without voice and opening of lips formed in my soul these words: *Herewith is the fiend overcome*." Of "ghostly sight," or spiritual intuition, we have an instance when she says: "In the same time that I saw (i.e., visually) this sight of the Head bleeding, our good Lord showed a ghostly sight of His homely loving. I saw that He is to us everything that is comfortable to our help; He is our clothing, that for love wrappeth us," &c.—where, in her own words and imagery, she is describing a divine-given insight into the relation of God and the soul. Or again, when she is shown our Blessed Lady, it is no pictorial or bodily presentment, "but the virtues of her blissful soul, her truth, her wisdom, her charity." "And Jesus … showed me a *ghostly* sight of her, right as I had seen her before, little and simple and pleasing to Him above all creatures."

Just as in the setting forth of these spiritual apprehensions, the words and imagery are usually her own, so in the description of bodily vision she uses her own language and comparisons. For example, the following realism: "The great drops of blood fell down from under the garland like pellets, seeming as it had come out of the veins; and in coming out they were brown red, for the Blood was full thick, and in spreading abroad they were bright red.… The plenteousness is like to drops of water that fall off the eavings after a great shower of rain.… And for roundness they were like to the scales of herrings in the spreading of the forehead," &c. These similes, she tells us, "came to my mind in the time." In other instances, the comparisons and illustrations of what she saw with her eyes or with her understanding, were suggested to her; so that she received the expression, as well as the matter expressed, from without.

But besides the records of the sights, words, and ideas revealed to her, we have many things already known to her and understood, yet "brought to her mind," as it were, preternaturally. Also, various paraphrases and elaborate exegeses of the words spoken to her; a great abundance of added commentary upon what she saw inwardly or outwardly. Now and then it is a little difficult to decide whether she is speaking for herself, or as the exponent of what she has received; but, on the whole, she gives us abundant indications. Perhaps the following passage will illustrate fairly the diverse elements of which the record is woven:

With good cheer our Lord looked into His side and beheld with joy [*bodily vision*]: and with His sweet looking He led forth the understanding of His creature, by the same wound, into His side within [*her imagination is led by gesture from one thought to another*]. [9] And then He showed a fair and delectable place, and large enough for all mankind that should be saved, and rest in peace and love [*a*

conception of the understanding conveyed through the symbol of the open wound in the Heart]. And therewith He brought to my mind His dear worthy Blood and the precious water which He let pour out for love [*a thought already contained in the mind, but brought to remembrance by Christ*]. And with His sweet rejoicing Pie showed His blessed Heart cloven in two [*bodily or imaginative vision*], and with His rejoicing He showed to my understanding, in part, the Blissful Godhead as far forth as He would at that time strengthen the poor soul for to understand [*an enlightening of the reason to the partial apprehension of a spiritual mystery*]. And with this our Good Lord said full blissfully: "Lo! how I love thee!" [*words formed in the imagination or for the outer hearing*], as if He had said: "My darling, behold, and see thy Lord," &c. [*her own paraphrase and interpretation of the said words*].

Rarely, however, are the different modes so entangled as here, and for the most part we have little difficulty in discerning the precise origin to which she wishes her utterances to be attributed—a fact that makes her book an unusually interesting study in the theory of inspiration.

Thus, in provisionally answering the problem proposed at the beginning of this article, as to how far Mother Juliana supplied from her own mind the canvas and the colours for this portrayal of Divine love, and as to how far therefore it may be regarded as a product of and a key to her inner self, we are inclined to say that, a comparison of her own style of thought and sentiment and expression as exhibited in her paraphrases and expositions of the things revealed to her, with the substance and setting of the said revelations, points to the conclusion that God spoke to her soul in its own language and habitual forms of thought; and that if the "content" of the revelation was partly new, yet it was harmonious with the previous "content" of her mind, being, as it were, a congruous development of the same—not violently thrust into the soul, but set down softly in the appointed place already hollowed for it and, so to say, clamouring for it as for its natural fulfilment. This, of course, is not a point for detailed and rigorous proof, but represents an impression that gathers strength the oftener we read and re-read Mother Juliana's "showings."

Jan. Mar. 1900.

Footnotes:

[Footnote 1: Prefatory Essay to Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*.]

[Footnote 2: The Protestant editor of the Leicester edition (of 1845), not understanding that an appreciation of difficulties, far from being incompatible with faith, is a condition of the higher and more intelligent faith, would fain credit Mother Juliana with a secret disaffection towards the Church's authority. How far he is justif may be gathered from such passages as these: "In this way was I taught by the grace of God that I should steadfastly hold me fast in the faith, as I had before understood." "It was not my meaning to take proof of anything that belongeth to our faith, for I believed truly that Hell and Purgatory is for the same end that Holy Church teacheth." "And I was strengthened and learned generally to keep me in the faith in every point ... that I might continue therein to my life's end." "God showed full great pleasaunce that He hath in all men and women, that mightily and wisely take the preaching and teaching of Holy Church; for it is His Holy Church; He is the ground; He is the substance; He is the teaching; He is the teacher," &c.]

[Footnote 3: *Ancren Riwle*.]

[Footnote 4: It is clear from many little touches and allusions that throughout the "showings" Mother Juliana considers herself to be gazing, not on a vision of Calvary, but on the illuminated crucifix hung before her by her attendants, in which crucifix these appearances of bleeding, suffering, movement, and speech take place. All else is shrouded in darkness. Yet she never loses the consciousness that she is in her bed and surrounded by others. Notice, for instance: "After this, I saw with bodily sight in the face *of the crucifix that hung before me*," &c. "The cross that stood before my face, methought it bled fast." "This [bleeding] was so plenteous, to my sight, that methought if it had been so in nature and substance" (i.e., in reality and not merely in appearance), "it should have made the bed all a-blood, and have passed over all about." "For this sight I laughed mightily, and made them to laugh that were about me." Evidently she is quite awake, is well conscious of her state and surroundings, and distinguishes appearance from reality, shadow from substance. There is no dream-like illusion in all this. Appearances presented to the outer senses are commonly spoken of as "hallucinations;" but it seems to me that this word were better reserved for those cases where appearance is mistaken for reality; and where consequently there is illusion and deception. Mother Juliana is aware that the crucifix is not really bleeding, as it seems to do, and she explicitly distinguishes such a vision from her later illusory dream-presentment of the Evil One. This dream while it lasted was, like all dreams, confounded with reality; whereas the other phenomena, even if made of "dream-stuff," were rated at their true value.

Hence it seems to me that if such things have any outward independent reality, to see them is no more an hallucination than to see a rainbow. Even if they are projected from the beholder's brain, there is no hallucination if they are known for such; but only when they are confounded with reality, as it were, in a waking-dream. As we are here using the word, an experience is "real" which fits in with, and does not contradict the totality of our experiences; which does not falsify our calculation or betray our expectancy. If I look at a fly through a magnifying medium of whose presence I am unconscious, its size is apparent, or illusory, and not real; for being unaware of the unusual condition of my vision, I shall be thrown out in my calculations, and the harmony of my experiences will be upset by seeming contradictions. If, however, I am aware of the medium and its nature, then I am not deceived, and what I see is "reality," since it is as natural and real for the fly to look larger through the optician's lense, as to look smaller through the optic lense. I cannot call one aspect more "real" than the other, for both are equally right and true under the given conditions. For these reasons I should object to consider Mother Juliana's "bodily showings" as hallucinations, so far as the term seems to imply illusion.]

[Footnote 5: For those therefore who make an act of faith in the absolute universality and supremacy of the laws of physics and chemistry, and find in them the last reason of all things, these phenomena are interesting only as studies in the mechanics of illusion.]

[Footnote 6: It was largely by this method, supplemented no doubt by that of reasoned discussion, that St. Ignatius guided himself in determining points connected with the constitution of his Order, according to the journal he has left us of his "experiences," which is simply a record of "consolations" and "desolations."]

[Footnote 7: i.e., A kinæsthetic idea, as it is called, an idea of something to be done in the given conditions.]

[Footnote 8: P. 272 in Richardson's Edit., from which I usually quote as being the readiest available.]

[Footnote 9: On another occasion, by looking down to the right of His Cross, He brought to her mind, "where our Lady stood in the time of His Passion and said: 'Wilt Thou see her?'" leading her by gesture from the seen to the not seen.]

XIV.

POET AND MYSTIC.

A biographer who has any other end in view, however secondary and incidental, than faithfully to reproduce in the mind of his readers his own apprehension of the personality of his subject, will be so far biassed in his task of selection; and, without any conscious deviation from truth, will give that undue prominence to certain features and aspects which in extreme cases may result in caricature. A Catholic biographer of Coventry Patmore would have been tempted to gratify the wish of a recent critic of Mr. Champneys' very efficient work, [1] and to devote ten times as much space as has been given to the account of his conversion, and a good deal, no doubt, to the discussion and correction of his eccentric views in certain ecclesiastical matters; thus giving us the history of an illustrious convert, and not that of a poet and seer whose conversion, however intimately connected with his poetical and intellectual life, was but an incident thereof. On the other hand, one less intelligently sympathetic with the more spiritual side of Catholicism than Mr. Champneys, would have lacked the principal key to the interpretation of Patmore's highest aims and ideals, towards which the whole growth and movement of his mind was ever tending, and by which its successive stages of evolution are to be explained. Again, with all possible respect for the feelings of the living, the biographer has wisely suppressed nothing needed to bring out truthfully the ruggednesses and irregularities that characterize the strong and somewhat one-sided development of genius as contrasted with the regular features and insipid perfectness of things wrought on a small scale. If idealizing means the filing-away of jagged edges—and surely it does not—Mr. Champneys has left us to do our own idealizing. The faults that marred Purcell's *Life of Manning* are here avoided, and yet truth is no whit the sufferer in consequence.

In speaking of Patmore as a thinker and a poet, we do not mean to dissociate these two functions in his case, but only to classify him (according to his own category) with those "masculine" poets whose power lies in a beautiful utterance of the truth, rather than in a truthful utterance of the beautiful.

We propose, however, to occupy ourselves with the matter rather than the mode of Patmore's utterance; with that truth which he conceived himself to have apprehended in a newer and clearer light than others before him; and this, because he does not stand alone, but is the representative and

exponent of a certain school of ascetic thought whose tendency is diametrically contrary to that pseudo-mysticism which we have dealt with elsewhere, and have ascribed to a confusion of neo-platonic and Christian principles. This counter-tendency misses the Catholic mean in other respects and owes its faultiness, as we shall see, to some very analogous fallacies. If in our chapter on "The True and the False Mysticism," it was needful to show that the principles of Christian monasticism and contemplative life, far from in any way necessarily retarding, rather favour and demand the highest natural development of heart and mind; it is no less needful to assign to this thought its true limits, and to show that the noblest expansion of our natural faculties does not conflict with or exclude the principles of monasticism. I think it is R.H. Hutton who remarks that it is not "easy to give us a firm grasp of any great class of truths without loosening our grasp on some other class of truths perhaps nobler and more vital;" and undoubtedly Patmore and his school in emphasizing the fallacies of neo-platonic asceticism are in danger of precipitating us into fallacies every whit as uncatholic. It is therefore as professedly formulating the principles of a certain school that we are interested in the doctrine of which Patmore constitutes himself the apostle.

> Lights are constantly breaking in upon me [he writes] and convincing me more and more that the singular luck has fallen to me of having to write, for the first time that any one even attempted to do so with any fulness, on simply the greatest and most exquisite subject that ever poet touched since the beginning of the world.
>
> The more I consider the subject of the marriage of the Blessed Virgin, the more clearly I see that it is the *one* absolutely lovely and perfect subject for poetry. Perfect humanity, verging upon, but never entering the breathless region of the Divinity, is the real subject of *all* true love-poetry; but in all love-poetry hitherto, an "ideal" and not a reality has been the subject, more or less.

Taking the "Angel of the House" as representing the earlier, and the "Odes" the later stage of the development which this theme received under his hands, it seems as though he passes from the idealization and apotheosis of married love to the conception of it as being in its highest form, not merely the richest symbol, but even the most efficacious sacrament of the mystical union between God and the soul. He is well aware—though not fully at first—that these conceptions were familiar to St. Bernard and many a Catholic mystic; it was for the poetic apprehension and expression of them that he claimed originality; or, at least, for their unification and systematic development. "That his apprehensions were based generally—almost exclusively, on the fundamental idea of nuptial love must," as Mr. Champneys says, "be admitted." This was the governing category of his mind; the mould into which all dualities naturally fell; it was to his philosophy what love and hate, light and dark, form and matter, motion and atoms, have been to others.

> It was, at all events, the predominance of this conception which bound together his whole life's work, rendering coherent and individualizing all which he thought, wrote, or uttered, and those who study Patmore without this key are little likely to understand him.

And it is the persistent and not always sufficiently restrained use of this category that made much of his writing just a trifle shocking to sensitive minds.

These latter will have "closed his works far too promptly to discover that far from gainsaying the Catholic instinct which prefers virginity to marriage" (not a strictly accurate statement) he makes virginity a condition of the idealized marriage-relation, and finds its realization in her who was at once matron and virgin. Following the fragmentary hints to be found here and there in patristic and mystical theology, he assumes that virgin-spousals and virgin-birth were to have been the law in that Paradise from which man lapsed back into natural conditions through sin; that in the case of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph the paradisaic law was but resumed in this respect. Accordingly, he writes of Adam and Eve in "The Contract,"

> Thus the first Eve
> With much enamoured Adam did enact
> Their mutual free contract
> Of virgin spousals, blissful beyond flight
> Of modern thought, with great intention staunch,
> Though unobliged until that binding pact.

To their infidelity to this contract he ascribes the subsequent degradation of human love through sensuality; and all the sin and selfishness thence deriving to our fallen race:

> Whom nothing succour can
> Until a heaven-caress'd and happier Eve
> Be joined with some glad Saint
> In like espousals, blessed upon Earth,

And she her fruit forth bring;

No numb chill-hearted shaken-witted thing,
'Plaining his little span.
But of proud virgin joy the appropriate birth,
The Son of God and Man.

The rationalistic objection to this suppression of what seems to be of the essence or integrity of matrimony is obvious enough, and yet finds many a retort even in the realm of nature, where the passage to a higher grade of life so often means the stultifying of functions proper to the lower. As to the pre-eminence of that state in which the spiritual excellencies of marriage and virginity are combined, Catholic teaching is quite clear and decided; in this, as in other points, Patmore's untaught intuitions, and instincts—his *mens naturaliter catholica*—had led him, whither the esoteric teaching of the Church had led only the more appreciatively sympathetic of her disciples, from time to time, as it were, up into that mountain of which St. Ambrose says: "See, how He goes up with the Apostles and comes down to the crowds. For how could the crowds see Christ save in a lowly spot? They do not follow Him to the heights, nor rise to sublimities"—a notion altogether congenial to Patmore's aristocratic bias in religion as in everything else. Undoubtedly it was this mystical aspect of Catholic doctrine that appealed to his whole personality, offering as it did an authoritative approval, and suggesting an infinite realization, of those dreams that were so sacred to him. As far as the logic of the affections goes, it was for the sake of this that he held to all the rest; for indeed the deeper Catholic truths are so internetted that he who seizes one, drags all the rest along with it under pain of self-contradiction.

No one knew better than Patmore the infinite insufficiency of the highest created symbols to equal the eternal realities which it is their whole purpose to set forth; he fully realized that as the lowliest beginnings of created love seem to mock, rather than to foreshadow, the higher forms of which they are but the failure and botched essay, so the very highest conceivable, taken as more than a metaphor, were an irreverent parody of the Divine love for the human soul. It is not the *same* relationship on an indefinitely extended scale, but only a somewhat *similar* relationship, the limits of whose similarity are hidden in mystery. But when a man is so thoroughly in love with his metaphor as Patmore was, he is tempted at times to press it in every detail, and to forget that it is "but one acre in the infinite field of spiritual suggestion;" that, less full and perfect metaphors of the same reality, may supply some of its defects and correct some of its redundancies. We should do unwisely to think of the Kingdom of Heaven only as a kingdom, and not also as a marriage-feast, a net, a treasure, a mustard-seed, a field, and so forth, since each figure supplies some element lost in the others, and all together are nearer to the truth than any one: and so, although the married love of Mary and Joseph is one of the fullest revealed images of God's relation to the soul, we should narrow the range of our spiritual vision, were we to neglect those supplementary glimpses at the mystery afforded by other figures and shadowings.

And this leads us to the consideration of a difficulty connected with another point of Patmore's doctrine of divine love. He held that the idealized marriage relationship was not merely the symbol, but the most effectual sacrament and instrument of that love; "yet the world," he complains, "goes on talking, writing, and preaching as if there were some essential contrariety between the two," the disproof of which "was the inspiring idea at the heart of my long poem (the 'Angel')." Now, although in asserting that the most absorbing and exclusive form of human affection is not only compatible with, but even instrumental to the highest kind of sanctity and divine love, Patmore claimed to be at one, at least in principle, with some of the deeper utterances of the Saints and Fathers of the Christian Church; it cannot be denied that the assertion is *prima facie* opposed to the common tradition of Catholic asceticism; and to the apparent *raison d'être* of every sort of monastic institution.

It must be confessed that, in regard to the reconciliation of the claims of intense human affection with those of intense sanctity, there have been among all religious teachers two distinct conceptions struggling for birth, often in one and the same mind, either of which taken as adequate must exclude the other. It would not be hard to quote the utterances of saints and ascetics for either view; or to convict individual authorities of seeming self-contradiction in the matter. The reason of this is apparently that neither view is or can be adequate; that one is weak where the other is strong; that they are both imperfect analogies of a relationship that is unique and *sui generis*—the relationship between God and the soul. Hence neither hits the centre of truth, but glances aside, one at the right hand, the other at the left. Briefly, it is a question of the precise sense in which God is "a jealous God" and demands to be loved alone. The first and easier mode of conception is that which is implied in the commoner language of saints and ascetics—language perhaps consciously symbolic and defective in its first usage, but which has been inevitably literalised and hardened when taken upon the lips of the multitude. God is necessarily spoken of and imagined in terms of the creature, and when the analogical character of such expression slips from consciousness, as it does almost instantly, He is spoken of, and therefore thought of, as the First of Creatures competing with the rest for the love of man's heart. He is

placed alongside of them in our imagination, not behind them or in them. Hence comes the inference that whatever love they win from us in their own right, by reason of their inherent goodness, is taken from Him. Even though He be loved better than all of them put together, yet He is not loved perfectly till He be loved alone. Their function is to raise and disappoint our desire time after time, till we be starved back to Him as to the sole-satisfying—everything else having proved *vanitas vanitatum*. Then indeed we go back to them, not for their own sakes, but for His; not attracted by our love of them, but impelled by our love of Him.

This mode of imagining the truth, so as to explain the divine jealousy implied in the precept of loving God exclusively and supremely, is, for all its patent limitations, the most generally serviceable. Treated as a strict equation of thought to fact, and pushed accordingly to its utmost logical consequences, it becomes a source of danger; but in fact it is not and will not be so treated by the majority of good Christians who serve God faithfully but without enthusiasm; whose devotion is mainly rational and but slightly affective; who do not conceive themselves called to the way of the saints, or to offer God that all-absorbing affection which would necessitate the weakening or severing of natural ties. In the event, however, of such a call to perfect love, the logical and practical outcome of this mode of imagining the relation of God to creatures is a steady subtraction of the natural love bestowed upon friends and relations, that the energy thus economized may be transferred to God. This concentration may indeed be justified on other and independent grounds; but the implied supposition that, the highest sanctity is incompatible with any pure and well-ordered natural affection, however intense, is certainly ill-sounding, and hardly reconcilable with the divinest examples and precepts.

The limitations of this simpler and more practical mode of imagining the matter are to some extent supplemented by that other mode for which Patmore found so much authority in St. Bernard, St. Francis, St. Teresa, and many another, and which he perhaps too readily regarded as exhaustively satisfactory.

In this conception, God is placed, not alongside of creatures, but behind them, as the light which shines through a crystal and lends it whatever it has of lustre. In recognizing whatever true brilliancy or beauty creatures possess as due to His inbiding presence, the love which they excite in us passes on to Him, through them. As He is the primary Agent and Mover in all our action and movement, the primary Lover in all our pure and well-ordered love; and we, but instruments of His action, movement, and love; so, in whatever we love rightly and divinely for its true merit and divinity, it is He who is ultimately loved. Thus in all pure and well-ordered affection it is, ultimately, God who loves and God who is loved; it is God returning to Himself, the One to the One. According to this imagery, God is viewed as the First Efficient and the ultimate Final Cause in a circular chain of causes and effects of which He is at once the first link and the last—a conception which, in so far as it brings God inside the system of nature as part thereof, is, like the last, only analogously true, and may not be pressed too far in its consequences.

In this view, to love God supremely and exclusively means practically, to love only the best things in the best way, recognizing God both in the affection and in its object. God is not loved apart from creatures, or beside them; but through them and in them. Hence if only the affection be of the right kind as to mode and object, the more the better; nor can there be any question of crowding other affections into a corner in order to make more room for the love of God in our hearts. The love of Him is the "form," the principle of order and harmony; our natural affections are the "matter," harmonized and set in order; it is the soul, they are the body, of that one Divine Love whose adequate object is God in, and not apart from, His creatures.

It would not perhaps be hard to reconcile this view with some utterances in the Gospel of seemingly opposite import; or to find it often implied in the words and actions of Catholic Saints; but to square it with the general ascetic traditions of the faithful at large is exceedingly difficult. Patmore would no doubt have allowed the expediency of celibacy in the case of men and women devoted to the direct ministry of good works, spiritual and corporal: a devotion incompatible with domestic cares; he could and did allow the superiority of voluntary virginity and absolute chastity over the contrary state of lawful use; but he could hardly have justified—hardly not have condemned those who leave father, friend, or spouse, not merely externally in order to be free for good works, but internally in order that their hearts may be free for the contemplation and love of God viewed apart from creatures and not merely in them. He might perhaps say that, as we cannot go to God through all creatures, but only through some (since we are not each in contact with all), we must select according to our circumstances those which will give the greatest expansion and elevation to our natural affections; and that for some, the home is wisely sacrificed for the community or the church. Yet this hardly consists with the pre-eminence he gives to married love as the nearest symbol and sacrament of divine.

Both these modes of imagining the truth, whatever their inconveniences, are helpful as imperfect formulations of Catholic instinct; both mischievous, if viewed as adequate and close-fitting

explanations. Patmore was characteristically enthusiastic for his own aspect of the truth; and characteristically impatient of the other. Thus, of à Kempis he says:

There is much that is quite unfit for, and untrue of, people who live in the ordinary relations of life. I don't think I like the book quite so much as I did. There is a hot-house, egotistical air about much of its piety. Other persons are, ordinarily, the appointed means of learning the love of God; and to stifle human affections must be very often to render the love of God impossible.

In other words, the further he pushed the one conception the further he diverged from à Kempis, whose asceticism was built almost purely on the other.

Most probably a reconciliation of these two conceptions will be found in a clear recognition of the two modes in which God is apprehended and consequently loved by the human mind and heart; the one concrete and experimental, accessible to the simplest and least cultured, and of necessity for all; the other, abstract in a sense—a knowledge through the ideas and representations of the mind, demanding a certain degree of intelligence and studious contemplation, and therefore not necessary, at least in any high degree, for all. The difference is like that between the knowledge of salt as tasted in solution and the knowledge of it as seen apart in its crystallized state; or between the knowledge and love of a musical composer as known in his compositions, and as known in himself, from his compositions. The latter needs a not universal power of inference which the most sympathetic musical expert may entirely lack.

Of these two approaches to Divine love and union, the former is certainly compatible with, and conducive to, the unlimited fulness of every well-ordered natural affection; but the latter—a life of more conscious, reflex, and actual attention to God—undoubtedly does require a certain abstraction and concentration of our limited spiritual energies, and can only be trodden at the cost of a certain inward seclusion of which outward seclusion is normally a condition. Instinctively, Catholic tradition has regarded it as a vocation apart—as, like the life of continence, a call to something more than human, and demanding a sacrifice or atrophy of functions proper to another grade of spirituality. Even what is called a "life of thought" makes a similar demand to a great extent; it involves a narrowing of other interests; a departure from the conditions of ordinary practical life. The "contemplative life" is inclusively all this and more; it is a sort of anticipation of the future life of vision. Still, though for a few it may be the surest or the only approach to sanctity, yet there is no degree of Divine love that may not be reached by the commoner and normal path; there have been saints outside the cloister as well as inside. One could hardly offend the first principles of the Gospel more grievously than by making intelligence, culture, and contemplative capacity conditions of a nearer approach to Christ.

It seems to us then that Patmore failed to get at the root of the neglected truth after which he was groping, and thereby fell into a one-sidedness just as real as that against which his chief work was a revolt and protest.

As a convert, Patmore is most uninteresting to the controversialist. His mind was altogether concrete, affirmative, and synthetic, with a profound distrust of abstract and analytical reasoning. As we have said, Christianity and, later, Catholicism appealed profoundly to his intellectual imagination in virtue of some of their deeper tenets, for whose sake he took over all the rest *per modum unius*.

The idea [of the Incarnation] no sooner flashed upon me as a possible reality than it became, what it has ever since remained, … the only reality worth seriously caring for; a reality so clearly seen and possessed that the most irrefragable logic of disproof has always affected me as something trifling and irrelevant.

Again: "Christianity is not an 'historical religion,' but a revelation which is renewed in every receiver of it." "My heart loves that of whose existence my intellect allows the probability, and my will puts the seal to the blessed compact which produces faith"—an ingenious application of his favourite category.

Of the efforts of Manning and de Vere to proselytize him, he says:

Their position seemed to me to be so logically perfect that I was long repelled by its perfection. I felt, half unconsciously, that a living thing ought not to be so spick and span in its external evidence for itself, and that what I wanted for conviction was not the sight of a faultless intellectual superficies, but the touch and pressure of a moral solid.

Whatever some may think or have thought of his theology, none who knew him could have any doubt as to the robust and uncompromising character of his faith. It was because he felt so sure of his footing that he allowed himself a liberty of movement perplexing to those whose position was one of more delicate balance. He had a ruthlessness in tossing aside what might be called "non-essentials," that was dictated not so much by an under-estimate of their due importance, as by an impatience with those who

over-estimated them, confounding the vessel with its contained treasure.

When he says: "I believe in Christianity as it will be ten thousand years hence," it would be a grave misinterpretation to suppose that he implied any lack of belief in the Christianity of to-day. It is but another assertion of his claim to be in sympathy with the esoteric rather than the exoteric teaching of the present; to be on the mount with the few and not on the plain with the many. For as the glacier formed on the mountain slips slowly down to the plain, so, he held, the esoteric teaching of to-day will be the popular teaching of future ages. However little we may relish this distinction between "aristocratic" and vulgar belief; however strongly we may hold that best knowledge of God—that, namely, which is experimental and tactual rather than intellectual or imaginative—is equally accessible to all; yet just so far as there is question of the intellectual and imaginative forms in which the faith is apprehended, the distinction does and must exist, not only in religion but in every department of belief, as long as there are different levels of culture in the same body of believers. It is, after all, a much more superficial difference than it sounds—a difference of language and symbolism for the same realities. Where language fits close, as it does to things measurable by our senses, divergency makes the difference between truth and error; but where it is question of the substitution of one analogy or symbol for another, the more elegant is not necessarily the more truthful; nor when we consider the infinite inadequacy of even the noblest conceivable finite symbolism to bring God down to our level, need we pride ourselves much for being on a mountain whose height is perceptible from the plain but imperceptible from the heavens.

Hence to say that the distinction between esoteric and exoteric teaching means that the Church has two creeds, one for the simple, another for the educated, is a thoughtless criticism which overlooks the necessarily symbolic nature of all language concerning the "eternities," and confounds a different mode of expression with a difference of the facts and realities expressed.

Matthew Arnold, too, believed in the Catholicism of the future; but in how different a sense! What he hoped for was, roughly speaking, the preservation of the ancient and beautiful husk after the kernel had been withered up and discarded; what Patmore looked forward to was the expansion of the kernel bursting one involucre after another, and ever clamouring for fairer and more adequate covering. With one, the language of religion was all too wide; with the other, all too narrow, for its real signification. Arnold belongs to the first, Patmore to the last of those three stages of religious thought of which Mr. Champneys writes:

The first is represented by those whose creed is so simple as to afford little or no ground for contention; the second by such as in their search for greater precision enlarge the domain of dogma, but fail to pass beyond its mere technical aspect; the third consists of those who rise from the technical to the spiritual, and without repudiating or disparaging dogma, use it mainly as a guide and support to thought which transcends mere definition.

Dec. 1900.

Footnotes:

[Footnote 1: *Coventry Patmore*. By Basil Champneys. Geo. Bell and Sons, 1900.]

XV.

TWO ESTIMATES OF CATHOLIC LIFE.

Dealing as both do so largely with the inner life of English Catholic society, it is hardly possible to avoid comparing and contrasting *One Poor Scruple* [1] with *Helbeck of Bannisdale,*—one the work of a Catholic who knows the matter she is handling, almost experimentally; the other the work of a gifted outsider whose singular talent, careful observation, and studious endeavour to be fair-minded, fail to save her altogether from that unreality and *à priori* extravagance which experience alone can correct. To the non-Catholic, Mrs. Humphrey Ward's book will appear a marvel of insight and acute analysis; for it will fit in with, and explain his outside observation of those Catholics with whom he has actually come in contact, far better than the preposterous notions that were in vogue fifty years ago. It represents them not as monstrously wicked and childishly idolatrous; but as narrow, extravagant, out-of-date, albeit, well-meaning folk—more pitiable than dangerous.

Formerly when they lived secret and unknown, anything might safely be asserted about them;

nothing was too wild or improbable. In those days "Father Clement" was the issue of a superhuman effort at charity and fairness; and the author almost seemed to think an apology was needed for such temerarious liberalism. But when Catholics began to breathe a little more freely and to creep out of their burrows somewhat less nervously; when, in fact, they were seen to be, at least in outward semblance, much as other men; some regard had to be paid to statements that could be checked by observation; and the Papist's disappointing ordinariness had to be attributed to dissimulation or to be otherwise interpreted into accord with the preposterous principles by which their lives were thought to be governed.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward represents the furthest advance of this reform. She at least has spared no pains to acquaint herself with facts, to gather information, to verify statements. She is never guilty of the grotesque blunders that other high-class novelists fall into about Catholic beliefs, practices, and habits, simply because they are dealing with what is to their readers a *terra incognita,* and can, therefore, afford to be loose and inaccurate. An artistic conscientiousness which values truth and honesty in every detail, saves her from this too common snare. But it does not and cannot save her in the work of selection, synthesis, and interpretation of instances, which has to be guided, not by objective facts, but by subjective opinions and impressions. History written in a purely positivist spirit, *ad narrandum*, and in no sense *ad docendum*, is a chimerical notion by which Renan beguiled himself into thinking that his *Vie de Jesus* was a bundle of facts and nothing more. And Mrs. Humphrey Ward is no less beguiled, if she is unaware that in threading together, classifying and explaining the results of her conscientious observation and inquiry, she is governed by an *a priori* conception of Catholicism hardly different from that which inspired the author of "Father Clement." Hence, to us Catholics, though her evident desire to be critical and impartial is gratifying, yet her failure is none the less conspicuous. Dr. Johnson once observed, that what might be wonderful dancing for a dog would be a very poor performance for a Christian; and so, to us, "Helbeck" as a presentment of Catholic life is wonderful as coming from an outsider, and, perhaps, especially from Mrs. Humphrey Ward, but in itself it is grotesque enough—not through any culpable infidelity to facts, but through lack of the visual power, the guiding idea, whereby to read them aright.

In *One Poor Scruple*, Mrs. Wilfrid Ward brings to bear upon a somewhat similar task, an equal fidelity of observation supplemented by a first-hand, far wider, and more intimate experience of Catholics and their ways, and, above all, by that key which a share in their faith and beliefs alone furnishes to the right understanding of their conduct. Here too, no doubt, a contrary bias is to be suspected, nor is a purely, "positive" treatment of the subject conceivable or desirable. The view of an insider is as partial as the view of an outsider, though less viciously so; nor can we get at truth by the simple expedient of fitting the two together. The best witness is the rare individual who to an inside and experimental knowledge, adds the faculty of going outside and taking an objective and disinterested view. In truth this needs an amount of intellectual self-denial seldom realized to any great degree; but we venture to say that Mrs. Wilfrid Ward proves herself very worthy of confidence in this respect. There is certainly no artistic idealizing of Catholics, such as we are accustomed to in books written for the edification of the faithful. There is the same almost merciless realism which we find in "Helbeck" in dealing with certain trivialities and narrownesses of piety—defects common to all whom circumstances confine to a little world, but more incongruous and conspicuous as contrasted with the dignity of Catholic ideals. Without conscious departure from truth, Mrs. Humphrey Ward is evidently influenced in her selection and manipulation of facts by the impression of Catholicism she already possesses and wants to illustrate and convey; but Mrs. Wilfrid Ward has, we think, risen above this weakness very notably, and should accordingly merit greater attention.

It may well be that this judicial impartiality may meet with its usual reward of pleasing neither side altogether. Some will complain that she brings no idealizing love to her subject, and does little to bring out the greatness and glory of her religion. Yet this would be a hasty and ill-judging criticism; for our faith is no less to be commended for the restraint it exercises over the multitude of ordinary men and women, than for the effect it produces in souls of a naturally heroic type. That it should bring a certain largeness into the smallest life, that it should impart a strange stability to a naturally unstable and frivolous character; that it should check the worldly-minded with a sense of the superior claims of the other world—all this impresses us, if not with the sublimity or mystic beauty, at least with the solid reality and penetrating power of the Catholic faith.

The most loyal and deep-seated love needs not to shut its eyes to all defects and limitations, but can face them unchilled; and similarly there is often more faith and reverence and quiet enthusiasm in this seemingly cold and critical attitude towards the cause or party we love, than in the extravagant idealism that depends for its maintenance on an ignoring of things as they are.

Nothing perhaps is more unintelligible to the Protestant critic of Catholicism, nothing more needs to be brought out prominently, than the firm hold our religion can exercise over souls that are naturally irreligious.

This very phrase "naturally irreligious" will fall with a shock on sensitive Protestant ears; yet we use it advisedly. While all men are capable of faith and of substantial fidelity to the law of God, it is undeniable that but few are by natural inclination "religious" in the common acceptation of the term. As there is a poetic or mystical temperament, so also there is a religious temperament—not quite so rare, but still something exceptional.

We find it so in all ages, ancient and modern; in all religions, Christian and non-Christian—nay, even amid agnostics and unbelievers we often detect the now aimless, unused faculty. But most men have, naturally, no ardent spiritual sympathy with holiness, or mysticism, or heroism; their interests are elsewhere; and even where there are latent capacities of that kind, they are not usually developed until life's severest lessons have been learnt. Thus the young, who have just left the negative faith and innocence of the nursery behind them and stand inexperienced on the threshold of life, are not normally religious; whereas we naturally expect those who have passed through the ordeal, and been disillusioned, to begin to think about their souls, since there is nothing else left to think about.

Now, the Catholic religion clearly recognizes these facts of human nature, and accommodates herself to them. However frankly it may be acknowledged that a religious temperament—a certain complexus of mental, moral, and even physical dispositions—is a condition favourable to heroic sanctity, it must be emphatically denied that to be "religious," in the Protestant sense of the word, is requisite for salvation. And this denial the Church enforces by her recognition of the "religious state" [2] as an extraordinary vocation. The purpose of "orders" and "congregations" is to provide a suitable environment for people of a religious temperament whose circumstances permit them to attend to its development in a more exclusive and, as it were, professional way. Not, indeed, that all religious-minded persons do, or ought to, enter into that external state of life; nor that all who so enter are by temperament and sympathy fitted for it, but that the institution points to the Church's recognition of what is technically called the "way of perfection" as something exceptional and super-normal.

But the Church has a wider vocation than to provide hot-houses for the forcing of these rare exotics, whom the rough climate of a worldly life would either stunt or kill. Her first thought is for the multitudes of average humanity, who are not, and cannot be, in intelligent sympathy with many of the commands she lays upon them. They are but as children in religious matters—however cultivated they may chance to be in other concerns. From such souls God requires faith, and obedience to the commandments—a due, which, in certain rare crises, may mean heroism and martyrdom; but He does not expect of them that refinement of sanctity, that sustained attention to divine things, which depends so largely on one's natural cast of mind and disposition; and may even be found where the martyr's temper is altogether wanting. We recognize that there is certain serviceable, fustian, every-day piety, where, together with a great deal of spiritual coarseness, insensibility to venial sin and imperfection, there exists a firm faith that would go cheerfully to the stake rather than deny God, or offend Him in any grave point that might be considered a *casus belli*. And on the other hand a certain nicety of ethical discernment and delicacy of devotion, an anxiety about points of perfection, is a guarantee rather of the quality of one's piety than of its depth or strength. The saint is usually one whose piety excels both in quality and strength; the martyr is often enough a man of many imperfections and sins, veiling an unsuspected, deep-reaching faith. The day of persecution has ever been a day of revelation in this respect—a day when the seemingly perfect have been scattered like chaff before the wind, while the once thoughtless and careless have stood stubborn before the blast.

Protestantism of the Calvinistic or Puritan type shows little consciousness of the distinction we are insisting upon. It is disposed to draw a hard-and-fast line between the "converted" and the reprobate. Those who are not religious-minded, or who do not take a serious turn, are scarcely recognized as "saved" although they may not be convicted of any very flagrant or definite breach of the divine law. Their morality or their "good works" go for little if they do not experience that sense of goodness, or of being saved, which is called faith. Much stress is laid on "feeling good" and little value allowed to what we might call an unsympathetic and grudging keeping of God's law—however much more it may cost, from the very fact that it is in some way unsympathetic, and against the grain. The service of fear and reverence, which Catholicism regards as the basis and back-bone of love, is held to be abject and unworthy—almost sinful.

Hence it befalls that no place is found in the Protestant heaven for the great majority of ordinary people who do not feel a bit good or religious, who rather dislike going to church and keeping the commandments, and yet who keep them all the same, because they believe in God and fear His judgments and honour His law, and even love Him in the solid, undemonstrative way in which a naughty and troublesome child loves its parents.

That such a character as Madge Riversdale's should cover a small, firm core of faith and fear under a cortex of worldliness and frivolity; that religion should have such a hold on one so entirely irreligious by nature, is something quite inconceivable to a mind like, let us say, Mrs. Humphrey Ward's; and yet

absolutely intelligible to the ordinary Catholic.

The Church to us, is not what it is to the Protestant—a sort of pasture land in which we are at liberty to browse if we are piously disposed. It is not merely a convenient environment for the development of the religious faculty. She stands to us in the relation of shepherd, with a more than parental authority to feed and train our souls through infancy to maturity; that is, from the time when we do not know or like what is good for us, to the time when we begin to appreciate and spontaneously follow her directions. Just then as a child, however naturally recalcitrant and ill-disposed, retains a certain fundamental goodness and root of recovery so long as it acknowledges and obeys the authority of its father and mother; so the ordinary unreligious Catholic, who has been brought up to believe in the divine authority of the Church, finds therein all the protection that obedience offers to those who are incapable of self-government. "In Madge's eyes the woman who married an innocent divorcee was no more than his mistress." Had Madge been a pious Protestant she naturally might have examined the question of divorce on its own merits; she might have weighed the pros and cons of the problem; she might have consulted God in prayer, and have listened to this clergyman on one side; and to that, on the other: but eventually she would have been thrown upon herself; she would have had no one whose decision she was bound to obey. But wild and lawless as she is, yet being a Catholic there is one voice on earth which she fears to disbelieve or disobey. Looked at even from a human standpoint, the consensus of a world-wide, ancient, organized society like the Roman Church cannot but exert a powerful pressure on the minds of its individual members. It would need no ordinary rebellion of the will for a thoughtless girl to shake her mind so free of that influence as to live happily in the state of revolt. But where in addition to this the Church is viewed as speaking in the name of God, and as so representing Him on earth that her ban or blessing is inseparable from His, it is obvious that such a belief in her claims will give her a power for good over the unreligious majority analogous to that possessed by a parent over an untrained child—a power, that is, of discipline and external motive which serves to supplement or supply for the present defect of internal motive.

Thus it is that the Church reckons among her obedient children thousands of very imperfect and non-religious people for whom Protestantism can find no place among the elect.

Again, the solid faith of men with so little intellectual or emotional interest in religion as Squire Riversdale or Marmaduke Lemarchant is something very puzzling to the Protestant critic who, for the reasons just insisted on, can have nothing corresponding to it in his own experience. It is a psychological state of which his own religious system takes no account. Where there is no intermediating Church, the soul is either in direct and mystical union with God or else wholly estranged and indifferent. A man is either serious and religious-minded, or he is nothing. Like an untutored child, if he is not naturally good, there is no one to make him so. But when the Church is acknowledged as our tutor under God, as empowered by Him to lead us to Him; a middle condition is found of those who are not naturally disposed to religion, and yet who are submissive to that divine authority whose office it is to shape their souls to better sympathies. Riversdale is a far truer type of the Catholic country squire of the old school than the somewhat morbid and impossible Helbeck of Bannisdale. With her preconceived notions, Mrs. Humphrey Ward could not imagine any alternative between 'religious' and 'irreligious' in the Puritan sense. If Helbeck was to be a good Catholic at all he must of necessity be fanatically devoted to the propagation of the faith and offer his fortune and energies to the service of an unscrupulous clergy only too ready to play upon his credulous enthusiasm. His is represented as being naturally a religious and mystical soul, but blighted and narrowed through the influence of Catholicism. We are made to feel that the only thing the matter with him is his creed—"all those stifling notions of sin, penance, absolution, direction, as they were conventionalized in Catholic practice and chattered about by stupid and mindless people."

On the other hand, in Squire Riversdale and Marmaduke Lemarchant there is by nature nothing but healthy humanity, no mystic or religious strain whatever; they are not semi-ecclesiastics like Helbeck; and yet we feel that their prosaic lives are governed, restrained, and rectified by a deep-rooted faith in the authority of the Catholic Church. "The qualities most obvious are not those of the mystic, but of the manly out-of-door sportsman who may seem to be nothing more than a bluff Englishman who rides to the hounds and does his ordinary duties. Yet one of these red-coated cavaliers would, I have not the least doubt, if occasion called for it, show himself capable of the very highest heroism. Men of action, I should say, and not of reflection—a race of few words but of brave deeds."

It was just men of this unromantic type, men of solid but unostentatious faith, given wholly to the business of this life save for one sovereign secret reserve, who in time of persecution stood fast "ready any day to be martyred for the faith and to regard it as the performance of a simple duty and nothing to boast of." And if there is in the type a certain narrowness of sympathy and lack of intelligent interest which offends us, we may ask whether, with our human limitations, narrowness is not to some extent the price we pay for strength; whether where decision of judgment and energy of action is demanded, as in times of persecution, width of view and multiplicity of sympathies may not be a source of

weakness. Contrast, for example, the character of Mark Fieldes with that of Marmaduke Lemarchant, and it will be clear that the strength and straightness of the latter is closely associated with the absence of that versatility of intellect and affection which make the former a more interesting but far less lovable and estimable personality. To see all sides and issues of a question, is a speculative, but not always a practical advantage; to have many diversified tastes and affections helps to enlarge our sympathies, but not to concentrate our energies.

Of course great minds and strong hearts can afford to be comprehensive without loss of depth and intensity; but our present interest is with ordinary mortals and average powers. A man who has all his life unreflectingly adopted the traditional principle that death is preferable to dishonour, that a lie is essentially dishonourable, will be far more likely to die for the truth, than one who has philosophized much about honour and veracity, and whose resolution is enfeebled by the consciousness of the weak and flimsy support which theory lends to these healthy and universally received maxims. And similarly those who have received the faith by tradition, who for years have assumed it in their daily conduct as a matter of course, in whom therefore it has become an ingrained psychological habit, who hold it, in what might be condemned as a narrow, unintellectual fashion, are just the very people who will fight and die for it, when its more cultivated and reflective professors waver, temporize, and fall away. Taking human nature as it is, who can doubt but that this is the way in which the majority are intended to hold their religious, moral, philosophical, and political convictions; that reflex thought is, must, and ought to be confined to a small minority whose function is slowly to shape and correct that great body of public doctrine by which the beliefs of the multitude are ruled? We do not mean to say that such prosaic "narrowness" as we speak of, is essential to strength; but only that a habit of theoretical speculation and a continual cultivation of delicate sensibility is a source of enervation which needs some compensating corrective. This corrective is found in the exalted idealism which characterizes the great saints and reformers, such as Augustine, or Francis, or Teresa, or Ignatius—souls at once mystical and energetically practical to the highest degree. It is something of this temper which is parodied in Alan Helbeck. But the Church's mission is not merely to those rare souls whose sympathy with her own mind and will is intelligent and spontaneous; but at least as much to the multitudes who have to be guided more or less blindly by obedience to tradition and authority, or else let wander as sheep having no shepherd. These considerations explain why *One Poor Scruple* seems to us so far truer a presentment of Catholic life than *Helbeck of Bannisdale*—the difference lying in the incommunicable advantage which an insider possesses over an outsider in understanding the spirit and principles by which the members of any social body are governed. Of all religions, Catholicism which represents the accumulated results of two thousand years' worldwide experience of human nature applied to the principles of the Gospel, is least likely to be comprehended by an outsider, however observant and fair-minded.

To those for whom the lawfulness of re-marriage for an innocent divorcee is, like the rest of their religious beliefs, a matter of opinion, the scruple of a character like Madge Riversdale is unthinkable and incredible. Such women do not trouble their heads about theological points; still less, make heroic sacrifices for their private and peculiar convictions. But those for whom the Church is a definite concrete reality—almost a person—governing and teaching with divine authority, will easily understand the firm grip she can and does exert on those who have no other internal principle of restraint; who would shake themselves free if they dared. Let those who despise the results of such a constraint be consistent and abolish all parental and tutorial control; all educative government of whatsoever description; nay, the imperious restraint of conscience itself, which is often obeyed but grudgingly.

While some features of this portrait of Catholic life are common to all its phases, others are peculiar to the aspect it presents in England, where Catholics being a small and weak minority are, so to say, self-conscious in their faith—continually aware that they are not as the rest of men; disposed therefore to be apologetic or aggressive or defensive. Again, the circumstance of their long exclusion from the social and intellectual life of their country is accountable for other undesirable peculiarities which Mrs. Wilfrid Ward sees no reason to spare.

We have not, however, attempted anything like a literary estimate of this interesting, altogether readable work, but have only endeavoured to draw attention to an important point, which, whether intentionally or unintentionally, it illustrates very admirably.

May, 1899.

Footnotes:

[Footnote 1: *One Poor Scruple.* By Mrs. Wilfrid Ward. London: Longmans, 1899.]

[Footnote 2: We do not mean to imply that there is any close etymological relation between these two uses of the term.]

XVI.

A LIFE OF DE LAMENNAIS.

The appearance of a work by the Hon. W. Gibson on *The Abbé de Lamennais, and the Catholic Liberal Movement in France*, invites us to a new attempt to grapple with a problem which has so far met with no satisfactory solution, and probably never will. Up to a certain point we seem to follow more or less intelligently the working of the restless soul of De Lamennais; but at the last and great crisis of his life we find all our calculations at fault; "we try to understand him; we wish that penetrating into the inmost recesses of his wounded soul, we could force it to yield up its secret, and once more sympathize with him, perhaps console him; but we cannot. He is an enigma, as impenetrable as the rocks on his native shore."

From whatever point of view the story of his life is regarded, it presents itself as a tragedy. The believing Catholic sees there the ruin of a vocation to such a work as only a few souls in the history of the Church are called to accomplish—a ruin desperate and deplorable in proportion to the force of the talents and energies diverted from the right path. The non-Catholic or unbeliever cannot fail to be moved by contemplating the fruitless struggles of a mind so keen, a heart so enthusiastic in the cause of light and liberty—struggles ending in failure, perplexity, confusion, and misery. But while we allow a large element of mystery in his character which will never be eliminated, yet as we return time after time to gaze upon the picture of his life, as a whole, and in its details, the seemingly discordant items begin quietly to drop into their places one after another, and to exhibit unnoticed connections; and the idea of his distinctive personality begins to shape itself into a coherent unity.

It is not our purpose here to summarize Mr. Gibson's admirable work, or to give even an outline of so well-known a history; but rather to attempt some brief criticism of the man himself, and incidentally of his views.

Temperament and early education are among the principal determinants of character; and certainly when we contrast Féli with his brother Jean, who presumably received the same home-training, we see how largely he was the creature of temperament. Jean was by nature the "good boy," tractable and docile; Féli, the unmanageable, the lawless, the violent. While Jean was dutifully learning his lessons to order, Féli, the obstreperous, imprisoned in the library, was feeding his tender mind with Diderot, Montaigne, Pascal, Voltaire, Rousseau, and similar diet, and at twelve exhibited such infidel tendencies as made it prudent to defer his first Communion for some ten years.

From first to last, whether we consider his childish waywardness and outbreaks of violent passion, which persevered in a less childish form through manhood; or the fits of intense depression and melancholy, alternating with spells of high nerve-tension and feverish excitement; or the restlessness and impatient energy which showed themselves always and everywhere, and at times drove him like a wild man into the woods, "seeking rest and finding none;" or the prophetic, not to say, the fanatical strain which breaks out in so much of his writing, especially in the *Paroles d'un Croyant*,—in all alike there is evident that predominance of the imaginative and emotional elements which, combined with intellectual gifts, constitute genius as commonly understood. For such a character the training which would suffice for half a dozen good little Jeans would be wholly inadequate. So much fire and feeling ill submits to the yoke of self-restraint in matters moral or intellectual. The mind is apt to be fascinated by the brilliant pictures of the imagination and to become a slave to the tyranny of a fixed idea; while the strength of passionate desire paralyzes the power of free deliberation. It is precisely this self-restraint, the fruit of a careful education given and responded to, that we miss in De Lammenais both in his moral character and in his mind. Peace and tranquillity of soul are essential to successful thinking, more especially in philosophy; and in proportion as a brilliant imagination is a help, it is also a danger if let run riot. At times, wearied out with himself, he seems to have felt the need of retreat and quiet; but he was almost as constitutionally incapable of keeping still, as certain modern statesmen in their retirement from public life. We smile when we hear him in the violent first fervour of his conversion, talking about becoming a Trappist, and, later, a Jesuit. He knew himself better when he shrank so long and persistently from the yoke of priesthood, and when, having yielded against his truer instincts to the indiscreet zeal of pious friends, he experienced an agony of repugnance at his first Mass. With different antecedents he might have profited by the yoke, but as things stood it could but gall him.

In spite of Mr. Gibson's contention to the contrary, it can hardly be maintained that De Lamennais was well educated in the strict sense of the expression. The evidence he adduces points to a marvellous

diversity of interests, and even to close and careful reading. But on the whole he was self-taught, and a self-taught man is never educated. Without intercourse with other living minds, education is impossible. This is indeed hoisting De Lammenais with his own petard. For, according to "Traditionalism," the mind is paralyzed by isolation, and can be duly developed only in society. An overweening self-confidence and slight regard for the labours of other thinkers usually characterizes self-taught genius. This it was that led him to cut all connection with the philosophy of the past, and to attempt to build up, single-handed, a new system to supplant that which had been the fruit of the collective mind-labour of centuries. "I shall work out," he writes calmly to the Abbé Brute, "a new system for the defence of Christianity against infidels and heretics, a very simple system, in which the proofs will be so rigorous that unless one is prepared to give up the right of saying *I am*, it will be necessary to say *Credo* to the very end." Only a man with a very slight and superficial acquaintance with the endeavours of previous apologists, and the extreme difficulty of the problem, could speak with such portentous self-confidence. And the result bears out this remark. For grand and imposing as is the structure of the *Essai sur l'Indifférence,* it rests on fallacies so patent that none but a man of no philosophical training could have failed to perceive them. Here it is that the self-taught man comes to grief and often misses the mere truisms of traditional teaching.

Doubtless ecclesiastical philosophy and theology was then more than ever painfully fossilized, and altogether lifeless and out of sympathy with the spirit of the age. It needed to be quickened, adapted and applied to modern exigencies. The undue intrusion of metaphysics into the domain of positive knowledge needed checking; the value of *consensus communis* as a criterion required to be insisted on, defended, and exactly defined. With characteristic impetuosity, De Lamennais, like Comte, must bundle metaphysics out of doors altogether as a merely provisional but illusory synthesis, necessary for the human intellect in its adolescence, but to be discarded in its maturity; and thereupon he proceeds to erect his system of Traditionalism mid-air, quite unconscious that in clearing away metaphysics he has deprived the structure of its only possible foundation. But this is the man all over. Because there is a truth in Traditionalism, therefore, it is the whole and only truth; because metaphysics alone can do little, it is therefore unnecessary and worthless. Had he spent but a fraction of the time and trouble he gave to the elaboration of his own system, in a liberal and critical study of that which he desired to supersede, his genius might have accomplished a work for the Church which is still halting badly on its way to perfection. One feels something like anger in contemplating such hot-headed zeal standing continually in its own light, and frustrating with perverse ingenuity the very end which it was most desirous to realize. For no one can deny that from his first conversion to his unhappy death De Lamennais was dominated by the highest and noblest and most unselfish motives; that he was a man of absolute sincerity of purpose.

His earliest enthusiasm was for the defence and exaltation of the Catholic Faith, for the liberation of the Church from the bonds of nationalism and Erastianism. Even those who repudiate altogether the extreme Ultramontanism of De Maistre and De Lamennais must allow their conception to be one of the boldest and grandest which has inspired the mind of man. He realized more vividly than many that the cause of the Church and of society, of Catholicism and humanity, were one and the same. It was the very intensity and depth of his convictions that made him so importunate in pressing them on others, so intolerant of delay, so infuriated by opposition. For indeed nothing is more common than to find a thousand selfishnesses co-existing and interfering with a dominant unselfishness, lessening or totally destroying its fruitfulness for good. A man who is unselfish enough to devote his fortune to charity will not necessarily be free from faults which may more than undo the good he proposes.

The same hastiness of thought which moved him to a wholesale, indiscriminate condemnation of metaphysics, led him to conclude that because hitherto no happy adjustment of the relations between Church and State had been devised, there could be no remedy save in their total severance. Doubtless such a severance would be better, if Gallicanism were the only alternative; or if the Church's liberty and efficiency were to be seriously curtailed. A superficial glance might fancy a fundamental discrepancy in this matter, as well as in the questions of toleration, and of the freedom of the press, between the official teaching of Gregory XVI. and Pius IX., and that of Leo XIII. But a closer inspection shows no alteration of principle, and only a recognition of altered circumstances, either necessitating a connivance at inevitable evils, or totally changing the aspect of the question. But De Lamennais should have learnt from his own teaching that liberty does not mean the independence of isolation, but the full enjoyment of all the means necessary for perfect self-development; that it does not mean the weakness of dissociation, but the strength of a perfectly organized association for mutual help and protection. And this holds good, not for individuals alone, but for societies, and for Church and State. Aiming at one common end, the perfection of humanity, they cannot but gain by association and lose by dissociation. Each is weaker even, in its own sphere, apart from the other. It is an unreal abstraction that splits man into two beings—a body and a soul; that draws a clean, hard-and-fast line between his temporal and eternal welfare; that commits the former interest to one society, the latter to another, absolutely distinct and unconnected. But all this holds true only in the hypothesis of a nation of

Christians or Theists.

When a large fraction of the community has ceased to believe in Christianity and the Church, the demands of justice and reason are different. It may well be allowed that, to determine the exact relation of the Catholic Church and Christian State, and the law of their organization into one complex society, is a problem for whose perfect solution we must wait the further development of the ideas of ecclesiastical and civil society. But to wait for growth of subjective truth was just what De Lamennais could not do. He saw that past solutions of the problem had been unsuccessful; that in most cases the Church was eventually drawn into bondage under the State as its creature and instrument in the cause of tyranny and oppression; that it was insensibly permeated with the local and national spirit, differentiated from Catholic Christendom, and severed from the full influence of its head, the Vicar of Christ. The independence of the Church he rightly judged to be the great safeguard of the people against the tyranny of their temporal rulers. In the face of that world-wide spiritual society, whose voice was at once the voice of humanity and the voice of God, he felt that "iniquity would stop its mouth," and injustice be put to shame. Yet all this seemed to him impossible so long as the Church depended on the State for temporalities, and because he could devise no form of association that would be guarantee against all abuses, he therefore insisted on total, severance, not merely as expedient for the present pressure, but as a divine and eternal principle.

When, therefore, it seemed to him that Gregory XVI. had condemned Ultramontanism, it was, to De Lamennais, as though he had condemned the cause of the Church and of humanity, and thrown the weight of his authority into that of Gallicanism. Here again we see how his mental intensity and impatience reduced him to the dilemma which found solution in his apostasy. Holding as he did to the Papal infallibility in a form far more extreme than that subsequently approved by the Vatican Council, he was bound in consistency to accept the Pope's decision as infallible in respect to its expediency and in all its detail. Thus it seemed to him that the ideal for which he had lived was shattered by a self-inflicted blow. The infallible voice of humanity had declared against the cause of humanity. He found himself compelled, in virtue of his principles, to choose between two alternatives. Either the cause of humanity, as he conceived it, was not the cause of God; or else the Pope was not the Vicar of Christ and the divinely-appointed guardian of that cause. But of the two denials the former was now to him the least tolerable. "Catholicism," he said, "was my life, because it was that of humanity." *Sacramenta, propter homines*; the Church was made for man, and not man for the Church. Given the dilemma, who shall blame his choice? But the dilemma was purely subjective and imaginary. Though truths are never irreconcilable, the exaggerations of truth may well be so.

Had he possessed that intellectual patience in perplexity, without which not only faith, but true science, is impossible, he would have been driven not to apostasy, but to a careful re-sifting of his views, issuing, perhaps, in a reconciliation of apparently adverse positions, or at all events in a confession of subjective, uncertainty and confusion. Faith, in the wider sense of the word, would have bid him to believe, without seeing, what we have lived to see under Leo XIII.

This seems to be the intellectual aspect of his defection, though of course there were many accelerating causes at work. Perhaps if Gregory XVI. had met his appeal with a few words of simple explanation and advice, instead of with that mysterious reticence which is falsely supposed to be the soul of diplomacy, the issue might have been as happy as it was miserable. De Lamennais himself, in his *Affaires de Rome*, makes the same remark in so many words. Again, the illiberal and ungenerous persecution of his triumphant adversaries, who endeavoured to goad him into some open act of rebellion in order to bring him under still heavier condemnation, can scarcely have failed to embitter and harden a soul naturally disposed to pessimism and melancholy. Nor can we omit from the influences at work upon him, that dramatic instinct which makes a mediocre and colourless attitude impossible for those who are strongly under its influence. Perhaps no nation is more governed by it than the French, with their partiality for *tableaux* and *sensation*; and in De Lamennais its presence was most marked, as the pages of his *Paroles* will witness. In the *Too Late* with which he received the overtures of Pius IX.; in the studied sensationalism of his funeral arrangements, and in many other minute points, we are made sensible that if his life culminated in a tragedy, the tragic aspect of it was not altogether displeasing to him. Still it would be a grievous slur on so great a character to suppose that such a weakness could have had any considerable part in his steady and deliberate refusal to see a priest at the last. This is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that he believed he could not be absolved without accepting the condemnation of his own views, and so abandoning the cause of humanity. While under the spell of his imaginary dilemma, he was constrained to follow the rule for a perplexed conscience, and to choose what seemed to him the less of two evils.

After his ideal had been destroyed, and the Church could no longer be for him the Saviour of the Nations, he threw himself without reserve into the cause of humanity and liberty. But his aims were now almost entirely destructive and revolutionary. His enthusiasm was rather a hatred of the things that were, than an ardent zeal for the things that ought to be; and the bitter elements in his character

become more and more accentuated as he finds himself gradually thrust aside and forgotten—cast off by the Church, ignored by the revolution. Even his friends, with one or two exceptions, dropped off one by one; some fleeing like rats from a sinking ship, others perplexed at his obstinacy or offended by his violence; others removed by death or distance; and we see him in his old age poor and lonely, and intensely unhappy.

When dangerously ill in 1827, he exclaimed, on being told that it was a fine night, "For my peace, God grant that it may be my last." The prayer was not heard, for, as he felt on his recovery, God had a great work for him to do. How that work was done we have just seen. Féli de Lamennais, who would have been buried as a Christian in 1827, was buried as an infidel in 1854.

It is vain to contend that he was not a man of prayer. That he had a keen discernment in spiritual things is evident from his *Commentary on the Imitation* and his other spiritual writings, as well as from the testimony of his young disciples at La Chênaie, to whom he was not merely a brilliant teacher, a most affectionate friend and father, but also a trusted guide in the things of God. Yet this would be little had we not also assurance of his personal and private devoutness.

All this would make his unfortunate ending a stumbling-block to those who cannot acquiesce in the fact that in every soul tares and wheat in various proportions grow side by side, and that which growth is to be victorious is not possible to predict with certainty; who deem it impossible that one who ends ill could ever have lived well; or that one who loses his faith, or any other virtue, could ever at any time have really possessed it. There is indeed some kind of double personality in us all which is perhaps more observable in strongly-marked characters like De Lamennais, where, so to say, the bifurcating lines are produced further. Proud men have occasional moods of genuine humility; and habitual bitterness is allayed by intervals of sweetness; and conversely, there are ugly streaks in the fairest marble.

And as to the fate of that restless soul, who shall dare to speak dogmatically? We cling gladly to the story of the tear that stole down his face in death, and would fain see in it some confirmation of the view according to which the soul receives in that crucial hour a final choice based on the collective experience of its mortal life. We would hope that as there is a baptism of blood or of charity, so there may perhaps be some uncovenanted absolution for one who so earnestly loved mankind at large, and especially the poor and the oppressed; who in his old age and misery was found by their sick-bed; who willed to be with them in his death and burial. And yet we feel something of that agonizing uncertainty which forced from the aged Abbe Jean the bitter cry, "Féli, Féli, my brother!"

Jan. 1897.

XVII.

LIPPO, THE MAN AND THE ARTIST.

"What pains me most," writes the late Sir Joseph Crowe in the *Nineteenth Century* for October, 1896, "is to think that the art of Fra Filippo, the loose fish, and seducer of holy women, looks almost as pure, and is often quite as lovely as that of Fra Giovanni Angelico of Fiesole." And indeed, if the fact be admitted, it cannot but be a shock to all those high-minded thinkers who have committed themselves unreservedly to the view that personal sanctity and elevation of character in the artist is an essential condition for the production of any great work of art, and especially of religious art. As regards the fact, we need not concern ourselves very long. If Rio and others, presumably biassed by the same theory, are inclined to see Lippi's moral depravity betrayed in every stroke of his brush, yet the more general and truer verdict accords him a place among the great masters of his age, albeit beneath Angelico and some others. Beyond all doubt it must be allowed that even in point of spirituality and heavenliness of expression, he stands high above numbers of artists of pure life and blameless reputation; and this fact leaves us face to face with the problem already suggested as to the precise connection between high morality and high art—if any.

Plainly a good man need not be a good artist. Must a good artist be a good man? I suppose from a vague feeling in certain minds that it ought to be so, there rises a belief that it must be so, and that it is so; and from this belief a disposition to see that it is so, and to read facts accordingly. Prominent among the advocates of this view is Mr. Ruskin in his treatment of the relation of morality to art. He holds "that the basis of art is moral; that art cannot be merely pleasant or unpleasant, but must be lawful or unlawful, that every legitimate artistic enjoyment is due to the perception of moral propriety, that every artistic excellence is a moral virtue, every artistic fault is a moral vice; that noble art can spring only from noble feeling, that the whole system of the beautiful is a system of moral emotions, moral

selections, and moral appreciation; and that the aim and end of art is the expression of man's obedience to God's will, and of his recognition of God's goodness." [1]

But a man who can characterize a vulgar pattern as immoral, plainly uses the term "morality" in some transcendental, non-natural sense, and therefore cannot be regarded as an exponent of the precise theory referred to. Still, as this larger idea of morality includes the lesser and more restricted, we may consider Mr. Ruskin and his disciples among those to whom the case of Lippo Lippi and many another presents a distinct difficulty. "Many another," for the principle ought to extend to every branch of fine art; and we should be prepared to maintain that there never has been, or could have been, a truly great musician, or sculptor, or poet, who was not also a truly good man. In a way the position is defensible enough; for one can, in every contrary instance, patch up the artist's character or else pick holes in his work. Who is to settle what is a truly great work or a truly good man. But a position may be quite defensible, yet obviously untrue. Again, if by great art we mean that which is subordinated to some great and good purpose, we are characterizing it by a goodness which is extrinsic to it, and is not the goodness of art itself, as such. If the end of fine art is to teach, then its goodness must be estimated by the matter and manner of its teaching, and a "moral pocket-handkerchief" must take precedence of many a Turner. Yet it would even then remain questionable whether a good and great moral teacher is necessarily a good man. In truth, a good man is one who obeys his conscience, and whose conscience guides him right. If, in defect of the latter condition, we allow that a man is good or well-meaning, it is because we suppose that his conscience is erroneous inculpably, and that he is faithful to right order as far as he understands it. But one who sees right and wills wrong is in no sense good, but altogether bad. Allowing that for the solution of some delicate moral problems a certain height of tone and keenness of insight inseparable from habitual conscientiousness is necessary, yet mere intellectual acumen, in the absence of any notably biassing influence, suffices to give us as great a teacher as Aristotle, who, if exonerated from graver charges, offers no example of astonishing elevation of heart at all proportioned to the profundity of his genius. We do not deny that in the case of free assent to beliefs fraught with grave practical consequences, the moral condition of the subject has much to do with the judgments of the intellect. But first principles and their logical issues belong to the domain of necessary truth; while in other matters a teacher may accept current maxims and sentiments with which he has no personal sympathy, and weave from all these a whole system of excellent and orthodox moral teaching. And if one may be a good moralist and a bad man, why *à fortiori* may one not be a good artist and a bad man? If vice does not necessarily dim the eye to ethical beauty, why should it blind it to aesthetic beauty? In order to get at a solution we must fix somewhat more definitely the notion of fine art and its scope.

I think it is in a child's book called *The Back of the North Wind*, that a poet is somewhat happily and simply defined as a person who is glad about something and wants to make other people glad about it too. Yet mature reflection shows two flaws in this definition. First of all, the theme of poetry, or any other fine art, need not always be gladsome, but can appeal to some other strong emotion, provided it be high and noble. The tragedian is one who is thrilled with awe and sorrow, and strives to excite a like thrill in others. Again, though the craving for sympathy hardly ever fails to follow close on the experience of deep feeling; and though, as we shall presently see, fine art is but an extension of language whose chief end is intercommunion of ideas, yet this altruist end of fine art is not of its essence, but of its superabundance and overflow. Expression for expression's sake is a necessity of man's spiritual nature, in solitude no less than in society. To speak, to give utterance to the truth that he sees, and to the strong emotions that stir within his heart, is that highest energizing in which man finds his natural perfection and his rest. His soul is burdened and in labour until it has brought forth and expressed to its complete satisfaction the word conceived within it. Nor is it only within the mind that he so utters himself in secret self-communing; for he is not a disembodied intelligence, but one clothed with body and senses and imagination. His medium of expression is not merely the spiritual substance of the mind, but his whole complex being. Nor has he uttered his "word" to his full satisfaction till it has passed from his intellect into his imagination, and thence to his lips, his voice, his features, his gesture. And when the mind is more vigorous and the passion for utterance more intense, he will not be at rest while there is any other medium in which he can embody his conception, be it stone, or metal, or line, or colour, or sound, or measure, or imagery, which under his skilled hand can be made to shadow out his hidden thought and emotion. We cannot hold with Max Müller and others, who make thought dependent and consequent on language.

For it is evident, on a moment's introspection, that thought makes language for itself to live in, just as a snail makes its own shell or a soul makes its own body. Who has not felt the anguish of not being able to find a word to hit off his thought exactly?—which surely means that the thought was already there unclothed, awaiting its embodiment. As the soul disembodied is not man, so thought not clothed in language is not perfect human thought. Its essence is saved, but not its substantial, or at least its desirable, completeness. A man thinks more fully, more humanly, who thinks not with his mind alone, but with his imagination, his voice, his tongue, his pen, his pencil. If, therefore, solitary contemplative

thought is a legitimate end in itself; if it is that *ludus*, or play of the soul, which is the highest occupation of man, a share in the same honour must be allowed to its accompanying embodiment; to the music which delights no ear but the performer's; to poetry, to painting, to sculpture done for the joy of doing, and without reference to the good of others communicating in that joy. And if the Divine Artist, whose lavish hand fills everything with goodness; who pours out the treasures of His love and wisdom in every corner of our universe; of whose greatness man knows not an appreciable fraction; who "does all things well" for the very love of doing and of doing well; who utters Himself for the sake of uttering, not only in His eternal, co-equal, all-expressive Word, but also in the broken, stammering accents of a myriad finite words or manifestations—if this Divine Artist teaches us anything, it is that man, singly or collectively, is divinest when he finds rest and joy in utterance for its own sake, in "telling the glory of God and showing forth His handiwork," or, as Catholic doctrine puts it, in praise; for praise is the utterance of love, and love is joy in the truth.

As most of the useful arts perfect man's executive faculties, and thus are said to improve upon, while in a certain sense they imitate nature; so the fine arts extend and exalt man's faculty of expression, or self-utterance, regarded not precisely as useful and *propter aliud*; but as pleasurable and *propter se*. Even the most uncultivated savage finds pleasure in some discordant utterance of his subjective frame of mind; and it is really hard to find any tribe so degraded as to show no rudiment of fine art, no sign of reflex pleasure in expression, and of inventiveness in extending the resources nature has provided us with for that end.

The artist as such aims at self-expression for its own sake. It is a necessity of his nature, an outpouring of pent-up feeling, as much as is the song of the lark. Of course we are speaking of the true creative artist, and not of the laborious copyist. If he subordinates his work as a means to some further end; if his aim is morality or immorality, truth or error, pleasure or pain; if it is anything else than the embodiment or utterance of his own soul, so far he is acting riot as an artist, but as a minister of morality, or truth, or pleasure, or their contraries. If we keep this idea steadily in view, we can see how much truth, or how little, is contained in the various theories of fine art which have been advanced from the earliest times. We can see how truly art is a [Greek: mimaesis] an imitating of realities; not that art-objects are, as Plato supposes, faint and defective representations, vicegerent species of the external world, whose beauty is but the transfer and dim reflection of the beauty of nature. Were it so, then the mirror, or the camera, were the best of all artists. As expression, fine art is the imitation of the soul within; of outward realities as received into the mind and heart of the artist, in their ideal and emotional setting. The artist gives word or expression to what he sees; but what he sees is within him. His work is self-expression. We can from this infer where to look for a solution of the controversy between idealism and realism. We can also see how, owing to the essential disproportion between the material and sensible media of expression which art uses, and the immaterial and spiritual realities it would body forth, its utterances must always be symbolic, never literal. We can see how needlessly they embarrass themselves who deny the name of fine art to any work whose theme is not beautiful, or which is not morally didactic. Finally, we can see that if fine art be but an extension of language, there can be no immediate connection between art as art, and general moral character; no more reason for supposing that skilful and beautiful self-utterance is incompatible with immorality, than that its absence is incompatible with sanctity.

Yet, as a matter of fact, and rightly, we judge of art not merely as art, or as expression; but we look to that which is expressed, to the inner soul which is revealed to us, to the "matter" as well as to the "form." And it maybe questioned whether our estimate of a work is not rather determined in most cases by this non-artistic consideration. Obviously it is possible in our estimate of a landscape, to be drawn away from the artistic to the real beauty; from its merits as a "word," or expression, to the merits of the thing signified. And still more naturally is our admiration drawn from the artist's self-utterance, to the self which he endeavours to utter, and we are brought into sympathy with his thought and feeling. Much of the fascination exercised over us by art, which precisely as art is rude and imperfect in many ways, is to be ascribed to this source. Though here we must remember that the soul is often more truly and artistically betrayed by the simple lispings of childhood than by the ornate and finished eloquence of a rhetorician.

It is in regard to the matter expressed, rather than to the mode of expression, that we have a right to look for a difference between such men as Lippo Lippi and Fra Angelico. According to a man's inner tone and temperament and character, will be the impression produced upon him by the objects of his contemplation. These will determine him largely in the choice of his themes, and in the aspect under which he will treat them. Obviously in many cases there are noble themes of art for whose appreciation no particular delicacy of moral or religious taste is required. There is no reason why such a subject as the Laocoon should make a different impression on a saint and on a profligate. It appeals to the tragic sense, which may be as highly developed in one as in the other. But if the Annunciation be the theme, we can well understand how differently it will impress a man of lively and cultured faith, a

contemplative and mystic, with an appreciative and effective love of reverence and purity; and another whose faith is a formula, whose life is impure, frivolous, worldly. Why then is there not a more distinctly marked inferiority in the religious art of Lippi to that of Angelico? Why does it look "almost as pure," and "often quite as lovely"? Two very clear reasons offer themselves in reply. First of all, the art of such a man as Angelico falls far more hopelessly short of his ideal. Most of the beauties which such a soul would find in the contemplation of Mary, or of Gabriel, are spiritual, moral, non-æsthetic, and can embody themselves in form and feature only most imperfectly. Given equal skill in expression, equal command of words, one man can say all that he feels, and more, while another is tortured with a sense of much more to be uttered, were it not unutterable. Perhaps it is in some hint of this hidden wealth of unuttered meaning that skilled eyes find in Angelico what they can never find in Lippi. A second reason might be found in the external influence exerted on the artist by society, its requirements, fashions, and conventions. It is plain that Lippi, left to himself, would never have chosen religious themes as such: it is equally plain, that having chosen them, he would naturally try to emulate and eclipse what was most admired in the great works of his predecessors and contemporaries. It would need little more than a familiar acquaintance with the great models, together with the artist's discriminating observance, for a man of Lippi's talent to catch those lines and shades of form and feature which hint at, rather than express, the inward purity, the reverence, the gentleness, with which he himself was so little in sympathy.

No doubt, were two such men equally skilled in all the arts of expression, in language, in verse, in song and music, in sculpture and painting, and acting, their general treatment of religious themes would be more glaringly different; but within the comparatively narrow limits of painting, we cannot reasonably expect more than we actually find.

The saint, as such, and the artist, as such, are occupied with different facets of the world; the former with its moral, the latter with its æsthetic beauty. Even were the artist formally to recognize that all the beauty in nature is but the created utterance of the Divine thought and love, and that the real, though unknown, term of his abstraction is not the impersonal symbol, but the person symbolized; yet it is not enough for sanctity or morality to be attracted to God viewed simply as the archetype of æsthetic beauty. On the other hand, one may be drawn, through the love of moral beauty in creatures, of justice, and mercy, and liberality, and truthfulness, to the love of God as their archetype, and yet be perfectly obtuse to æsthetic beauty; and thus again we see that high æstheticism is compatible with low morality, and conversely. Doubtless when produced to infinity, all perfections are seen to converge and unite in God, but short of this, they retain their distinctness and opposition. At the same time, it cannot for a moment be denied that keenness of moral, and of æsthetic perception, act and react upon one another. He gains much morally whose eyes are opened to the innumerable traces of the Divine beauty with which he is surrounded, and there are æsthetic joys which are necessarily unknown to a soul which is selfish and gross—still more to a soul from which the glories of revealed religion are hidden, either through unbelief or sluggish indifference. Yet, on the whole, it may be said that sanctity is benefited by art more than art is by sanctity, especially where we deal with so limited a medium of expression as painting. And so it seems to us that, after all, there is nothing to surprise or pain us in the fact that "the art of a Fra Filippo, the loose fish, looks almost as pure, and is often quite as lovely as that of Fra Giovanni Angelico of Fiesoli."

Dec. 1896.

Footnotes:

[Footnote 1: Vernon Lee, *Belcaro*.]

XVIII.

THROUGH ART TO FAITH.

There are few books more difficult to estimate than those in which M. Huysman sets forth the story of a conversion generally supposed to bear no very distant resemblance to his own. It would be easy to find excellent reasons for a somewhat sweeping condemnation of his work, and others as excellent for a most cordial approval; and, indeed, we find critics more than usually at variance with one another in its regard. To be judged justly, these books must be judged slowly. The source of perplexity is to be found in the fact that the author, who has recently passed from negation to Catholicism, carries with him the language, the modes of thought, the taste and temper of the literary school of which he was, and, in so many of his sympathies, is still a pupil, a school which regards M. Zola as one of its leading lights. *En*

Route, and its sequels, portray in the colours of realism, in the language of decadence, the conversion of a realist, nay, of a decadent, to mysticism and faith. "The voice indeed is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau," and according as the critic centres his attention too exclusively on one or the other, such will his judgment be.

That his works have commanded attention, and awakened keen interest among members of the most varying and opposite schools of thought, is an undeniable fact which at all events proves them to be worth careful consideration.

The story of a soul's passage from darkness to light, of its wanderings, vacillations, doubts, and temptations, must necessarily exercise a strong fascination over all minds of a reflective cast: "The development of a soul!" says Browning, "little else is worth study. I always thought so; you, with many known and unknown to me, think so; others may one day think so." [1] It is from this attraction of soul to soul that the *Pilgrim's Progress*, together with many kindred works, derives its spell; and indeed it is to this that all that is best and greatest in art owes its power and immortal interest. Here, however, is one reason why *The Cathedral* [2] can never be so attractive as *En Route*, ministering as it does but little to that deepest and most insatiable curiosity concerning the soul and its sorrows. It portrays but little perceptible movement, little in the way of violent revulsion and conflict; the spiritual growth which it registers is mostly underground, a strengthening and spreading of the roots. It deals with a period of quiet healing and convalescence after a severe surgical operation; with the "illuminative" stage of conversion—for there is scarcely any doubt that the three volumes correspond to the "purgative," "illuminative," and "unitive" ways respectively.

Between pulling down and building up—both sensational processes, especially the former—there intervenes a sober time of planning and surveying, a quiet taking of information before entering on a new campaign of action. When the affections have been painfully and violently uprooted from earth, then first is the mind sufficiently free from the bias of passion and base attachments to be instructed and illuminated with profit in the things concerning its peace, and to be prepared for the replanting of the affections in the soil of Heaven. The arid desert, with its seemingly aimless wanderings, intervenes between the exodus from Egypt and the entrance into the Land of Promise.

Dealing with this stage of the process of conversion, *The Cathedral* is comparatively monotonous and barren of spiritual incident. What removes it still further from all chances of anything like popularity in this country is the extent to which it is occupied with matters of purely archæological and artistic interest, and more especially with the mystical symbolism of the middle ages as chronicled in every detail of the great Cathedral of Chartres. Little as may be the enthusiasm for such lore in France, it is far less in England, where the people have for three centuries been out of all touch with the Catholic Church, and therefore with whatever modicum of mediævalism she still preserves as part of her heritage from the past. Architecturally we appreciate our dismantled cathedrals to some extent, but their symbolism is far less understood than even the language and theology of the schools, while the study of it meets as much sympathy as would the study of heraldry in a modern democracy. Yet we may say that the bulk of the book consists of an inventory of every symbolic detail in architecture, in sculpture, in painting, in glass-colouring, to be found at Chartres; to which is added a careful elaboration of the symbolism of beasts, flowers, colours, perfumes, all very dreary reading for the uninitiated, and to be criticized only by the expert.

Little scope as the plan of the book offers for any variety or display of character, being mainly occupied with erudite monologue, put sometimes into the mouth of Durtal, sometimes into that of the Abbé Plomb, yet the personalities of these two, as well as those of Géversin, Madame Bavoil, and Madame Mesurat, stand out very vividly, and make us wish for that fuller acquaintance with them which a little more movement and incident would have afforded.

But what will give most offence, and tend to alienate a certain amount of intelligent and valuable sympathy, is the violence, and even the coarseness, with which the author, or at least his hero, handles, not only the opinions, but the very persons of those from whom he differs; the intemperance of his invective, the narrow intolerance and absolute self-confidence with which he sits in judgment on men and things.

As a matter of fact, this is rather a defect of style and expression than of the inner sentiment. It is part and parcel of the realist temper to blurt out the thought in all the clothing or nakedness with which it first surges up into consciousness, before it has been submitted to the censorship of reason; in a word, to do its thinking aloud, or on paper; to give utterance not to the tempered and mature judgment—the last result of refinement and correction, but to display the whole process and working by which it was reached. As it is part of M. Zola's art to linger lovingly over each little horror of some slaughter-house scene, until the whole lives for us again as in a cinematograph, so M. Huysman, engaged in the portrayal of a spiritual conflict, spares us no link in the chain of causes by which the

final result is produced; he bares the brain, and exposes its workings with all the scientific calmness of the vivisector.

Whether we like or dislike this realism, we must allow for it in forming our judgment on these volumes, nor must we treat as final and approved opinions what are often the mere spontaneous suggestions and first thoughts of the mind, the oscillations through which it settles down to rest. Over and over again we shall find that Durtal subsequently raises the very objection to his own view that was on our lips at the first reading of it.

But even making such allowance, it none the less remains a matter of regret that one who, with perhaps some justice, considers that in point of art-appreciation "the Catholic public is still a hundred feet beneath the profane public," and chides them for "their incurable lack of artistic sense," who speaks of "the frightful appetite for the hideous which disgraces the Church of our day," who himself in many ways, in a hundred passages of sublime thought, of tender piety, of lyrical poesy, has proved beyond all cavil his delicacy of sentiment, his exquisite niceness in matters of taste, his reverence for what is chaste and beautiful, should at times be so deplorably unfaithful to his better instincts, so forgetful of the close and inseparable alliance between restraint and elegance. What can be weaker or uglier, more unbecoming an artist, more becoming a fish-wife, than his description of Lochner's picture of the Virgin: "The neck of a heifer, and flesh like cream or hasty-pudding, that quivers when it is touched;" or of the picture of St. Ursula's companions, by the same hand: "Their squab noses poking out of bladders of lard that did duty for their faces;" not to speak of the characterization of a "Sacred Heart" too revolting to reproduce? Surely when, after having reviled M. Tissot almost personally, he describes his works as painted with "muck, wine-sauce, and mud," it is difficult not to answer with a *tu quoque* as far as this word-painting is concerned—difficult not to see here some morbid and "frightful appetite for the hideous" struggling with the healthy appetite for better things.

However lame and ridiculous an artist's utterance may be, yet there is a certain reverence sometimes due to what he is endeavouring to say, and even to his desire to say it. We do not think it very witty or tasteful or charitable to laugh at a man because he stammers; still less do we overwhelm him with the coarsest abuse. One may well shudder at most presentments of the Sacred Heart, but even apart from all consideration for the artist, a certain reverence for the idea there travestied and unintentionally dishonoured, should forbid our insulting what after all is so nearly related to that idea, and in the eyes of the untaught very closely identified with it.

But an occasional trespass of this kind, however offensive, is not enough to detract materially from the value of so much that is meritorious; nor again will that outspoken treatment of delicate topics (less observable in *The Cathedral* than in *En Route*), which makes the book undesirable for many classes of readers, prevent its due appreciation on the part of others—unless we are going to put the Sacred Scriptures on the Index. In this vexed question, M. Huysman takes what seems the more robust and healthy view, but he appears to be quite unaware how many difficulties it involves; and consequently lashes out with his usual intemperance against the contrary tradition, which is undeniably well represented. It is not as though the advocates of the "flight" policy in regard to temptations against this particular virtue were ignorant of the general principle which undoubtedly holds as regards all other temptations, and bids us turn and face the dog that barks at our heels. This counsel is as old as the world. But from the earliest time a special exception has been made to it in the one case of impurity by those who have professedly spoken in the light of experience rather than of *à priori* inference. Both views are encompassed with difficulty, nor does any compromise suggest itself.

What seems to us one of the most interesting points raised by the story of Durtal's spiritual re-birth and development is the precise relation between the Catholic religion and fine art.

God has not chosen to save men by logic; so neither has He chosen to save them by fine art. If the "election" of the Apostolic Church counted but few scribes or philosophers among its members—and those few admitted almost on sufferance—we may also be sure that the followers of the Galilean fishermen were not as a body distinguished by a fastidious criticism in matters of fine art. In after ages, when the Church asserted herself and moulded a civilization more or less in accordance with her own exigencies and ideals, it is notorious how she made philosophy and art her own, and subjected them to her service; but whether in so doing she in any way departed from the principles of Apostolic times is what interests us to understand.

There is certainty no more unpardonable fallacy than that of "Bible Christians," who assume that the Church in the Apostolic age had reached its full expansion and expression, and therefore in respect of polity, liturgy, doctrinal statement and discipline must be regarded as an immutable type for all ages and countries; from which all departure is necessarily a corruption. They take the flexible sapling and compare it with aged knotty oak, and shake their heads over the lamentable unlikeness: "That this should be the natural outgrowth of that! *O tempora, O mores!*"

Like every organism, in its beginning, the Church was soft-bodied and formless in all these respects; but she had within her the power of fashioning to herself a framework suited to her needs, of assuming consistency and definite shape in due time. The old bottles would not serve to hold the new wine, but this did not mean that new bottles were not to be sought. Because the philosophy, the art, the polity of the age in which she was born were already enlisted in the service of other ideas and inextricably associated with error in the minds of men, it was needful for her at first to dissociate herself absolutely from the use of instruments otherwise adaptable in many respects to her own ends, and to wait till she was strong enough to alter them and use them without fear of scandal and misinterpretation.

The Church is many-tongued; but though she can deliver her message in any language, yet she is not for that reason independent of language in general. There is no way to the human ear and heart but through language of some kind or another. It is not her mission to teach languages, but to use the languages she finds to hand for the expression of the truths, the facts, the concrete realities to which her dogmas point. This does not deny that one language may not be more flexible, more graphic than any other, more apt to express the facts of Heaven as well as those of earth. It only denies that any one is absolutely and exclusively the best.

It is no very great violence to include rhetoric, music, painting, sculpture, architecture, ritual, and every form of decorative art in the category of language and to bring them under the same general laws, since even philosophy may to a large extent be treated in the same way. Christ has not commissioned His Church to teach science or philosophy, nor has He given her an infallible *magisterium* in matters of fine art. She uses what she finds in use and endeavours with the imperfect implements, the limited colours, the coarse materials at her disposal to make the picture of Christ and His truth stand out as faithful to reality as possible; and—to press the illustration somewhat crudely—as what is rightly black, in a study in black and white, may be quite wrongly black in polychrome; so what the Church approves according to one convention, she may condemn according to another. May we not apply to her what Durtal says of our Lady: "She seems to have come under the semblance of every race known to the middle ages; black as an African, tawny as a Mongolian;"—"she unveils herself to the children of the soil … these beings with their rough-hewn feelings, their shapeless ideas, hardly able to express themselves"? The more we study the visions and apparitions with which saints have been favoured and the revelations which have been vouchsafed to them, the more evident is it that they are spoken to in their own language, appealed to through their own imagery. Indeed, were it not so, how could they understand? Our Lady is the all-beautiful for every nation, but the type of human beauty is not the same for all. The Madonna of the Ethiopian might be a rather terrifying apparition in France or Italy.

There is no art too rough or primitive, or even too vulgar, for the Church to disdain, if it offers the only medium of conveying her truth to certain minds. Though custom has made it classical, her liturgical language, whether Latin or Greek, when first assumed, was that of the mob—about as elegant as we consider the dialects of the peasantry. She did not use plain-chaunt for any of those reasons which antiquarians and ecclesiologists urge in its favour now-a-days, but because it was the only music then in vogue. Even to-day the breeziest popular melodies in the East are suggestive of the *Oratio Jeremiæ*. Her vestments (even Gothic vestments!) were once simply the "Sunday best" of the fashion of those days. If to-day these things have a different value and excellence, it is in obedience to the law by which what is "romantic" in one age becomes "classical" in the next, or what is at first useful and commonplace becomes at last ceremonial and symbolic; and by which the common tongue of the vulgar comes by mere process of time to be archaic and stately. To "create" ancient custom and ritual on a sudden, or to resuscitate abruptly that which has lapsed into oblivion, is, to say the least, a very Western idea, akin to the pedantry of trying to restore Chaucer's English to common use. *Nascitur non fit*, is the law in all such matters.

While we assert the Church's independence of any one in particular of these means of self-expression, her indifference to style and mode of speech so long as substantial fidelity is secured, we must not deny that some of them are, of their own nature, more apt to her purpose than others and allow a fuller revelation of her sense; and that in proportion as her influence is strong in the world she tends to modify human thought and language, to leaven philosophy and fine art, so as to form by a process of selection and refusal, and in some measure even to create, an ever richer and more flexible medium of utterance.

In this sense we can with some caution speak of "Catholic art" in music, architecture, and painting, so far, that is, as we can determine the extent and nature of the Church's action, and therefore the tendency of her influence in the way of stimulus and restraint with regard to subject and treatment. We do not unjustly discern an author's style as a personal element distinct from the language and phraseology of which no item is his own. The manner in which he uses that language, his selections and refusals make, in union with the borrowed elements, a tongue that may be called his, in an exclusive sense. The Church, too, has her style, which, though difficult to discern amid her use of a Pentecostal

variety of languages, is no doubt always the same—at least in tendency.

Salvation-Army worship is certainly not of the Church's style, but I do not think, were there no absolute irreverence and scandal to be feared, that she would hesitate to use such a language, were it the only one understood by such a people. St. Francis Xavier's "catechisms" were often hardly less uncouth. Still, her whole tendency would be towards restraint, order, and exterior reverence. Again, the stoical coldness and formalism of a liturgical worship, centered round no soul-stirring mystery of Divine love where there can be feeling so strong as to need the restraint of liturgy and ritual, has still less of the Church's style about it. For she is human, not merely in her reason and self-restraint, but in the fulness of her passion and enthusiasm; and restraint is only beautiful and needful where there is something to restrain.

We are now in a position to consider the surface objection that will present itself to many a reader concerning Durtal's conversion. "He has been converted," it will be said, "by a fallacy. He has identified the Catholic religion with the cause of plain-chaunt and Gothic architecture, and of all that is, or that he considers to be, best in art. He has laid hold not of Catholicism, but of its merest accessories, which it might shake off any day, and him along with them. Indeed, he scarcely makes any pretence at being in sympathy with the Catholicism of to-day, which he regards as almost entirely philistine and degenerate, if we except La Trappe and Solesmes and a few other corners where the old observances linger on. 'It was so ugly, so painfully adorned with images, that only by shutting his eyes could Durtal endure to remain in Notre Dame de la Brèche.' Yes, but what sort of convert is this who is so insensible to substantials, so morbidly sensitive about mere accidentals? We come to the Church for the true faith and the sacraments, not for 'sensations.' In fine, Durtal has not observed the route prescribed by the apologetics for reaching the door of the sheep-fold, but has climbed over in his own way, like a thief and a robber; he has not (as a recent critic says of him) *tombé entre les bras maternals de l'Eglise selon toutes les régles*."

Without for a moment denying one of the legitimate claims of scientific apologetic, we may at once dismiss the idea that it pretends to represent a process through which the mind of the convert to Christianity either does or ought necessarily to pass. Its sole purport is to show that if it is not always possible to synthetize Christianity with the current philosophy, science, and history of the day, at least no want of harmony can be positively demonstrated. As secular beliefs and opinions are continually shifting, so too apologetic needs continual adjustment: and as that of a century back is useless to us now, so will ours be in many ways inadequate a century hence. It is fitting for the Church at large that she should in each age and country have a suitable apologetic, taking cognizance of the latest developments of profane knowledge. It is needful for her public honour in the eyes of the world that she should not seem to be in contradiction with truth, but that either the apparent truth should be proved questionable, or else that her own teaching should be shown to be compatible with it. But in no sense is such apologetic always a necessity for the individual, still less a safe or adequate basis for a solid conversion, which in that case would be shaken by every new difficulty unthought of before.

Our subjective faith in the Church must be like the faith of the disciples of Christ, an entirely personal relation; an act of implicit trust based on no lean argument or chain of reasoning, but on the irresistible spell, the overmastering impression created upon us by a character manifested in life, action, speech, even in manner; as impossible to state in its entirety and as impossible to doubt as are our reasons for loving or loathing, for trusting or fearing.

No doubt we hear of men of intellect and learning "reading" or "reasoning" themselves into the Church; but others as able have read and reasoned along the same line, and yet have not come; for in truth, reason at the most can set free a force of attraction created by motives other than reason.

What this attraction is in each case is impossible to specify accurately—"Ask me and I know not," one might say, "do not ask me and I know." Each soul is hooked with its own bait, called by its own name, drawn in its own way; and as the attractiveness of Christ is virtually infinite in its multiformity, so is that of His Church, nor is there a more unpardonable narrowness than that of insisting that others shall be drawn in the same way as we ourselves, or not at all.

Let it also be noticed that a very prolonged and minute intimacy is not always necessary in order that we should feel the spell of personality. Much depends on our own gifts of sympathy, insight and apprehension, on the simplicity and strength of the personality in question, on the nature of the incidents by which it is disclosed to us. We know one man in a moment, another only after years of intimacy, while others in regard to the same individuals might experience the converse. We must not then suppose that because in one case the impression is the result of slowly-accumulated observations, and in another the work of an instant, it is less trustworthy in the latter instance than in the former. It may be, or it may not be. St. Augustine needed years to feel the spell that one word, nay, one glance from Christ cast upon St. Peter. Nor again is it always in some striking and notable crisis that a

character reveals itself abruptly, but often in the merest nuance—a manner, an intonation, something quite unintentional, unpremeditated. We know well, if we know ourselves at all, how irresistible is the impression created on us at times by such trifles, and yet how more than reasonable it often is.

Who shall say, then, that to an eye and heart attuned to quick sympathy, any indication is too small to betray the inward spirit and character of the Catholic Church, or to magnetize a soul and render it restless, until it obeys her attraction and rests in union with her?

To a sensitively artistic temperament such as Durtal's, the indications of the Church's "style," revealed in her influence upon art, in her creations, in her selections and refusals, would be eloquent of her whole character and ethos; it would be to him what the very tone of Christ's voice was to the Baptist, or what His glance was to Peter, or what His silence was to Pilate. We have known too many instances of deep-seated and entire conviction, based on seemingly as little or less, to wish for one moment to indulge in any foolish rationalizing or to question the possibility or probability of God's drawing souls to Himself by such methods.

We must, however, remember that it is not merely by the Church's mediæval art that Durtal is attracted, but still more by that mysticism which created it, and by which it was served and fostered in return. Mysticism must necessarily excite the sympathy of one who is in devout pursuit of the highest and most spiritual forms of æsthetic beauty. Whatever be the long-sought and never-to-be-forgotten definition of the Beautiful, of this much at least a mere process of induction will assure us, that men count things beautiful in the measure that they are released from the grossness, formlessness, and heaviness of matter, and by their delicacy, shapeliness, and unearthliness, betray the influence of that principle which is everywhere in conflict with matter and is called spirit. Man at his best is most at home, where at his worst he is least at home, namely, in the world of those super-realities which are touched and felt by the soul, but refuse to be pictured or spoken in the language of the five senses. A hard, "common-sense," labour-and-wages religion, such as is consonant with the utilitarianism of a commercial civilization, could never appeal to a temperament like Durtal's.

Doubtless Catholic Christianity admits of being apprehended under the narrower and grosser aspect, which however inadequate and unworthy, is not absolutely false. The Jews were suffered to believe not merely that God rewards the just and punishes the wicked—which is eternally true—but that He does so in this life, which is true only with qualification; and that He rewards them with temporal prosperity and adversity—which is hardly true at all. Catholic truth, in itself the same, can only be received according to the recipient's capacity and sensitiveness. What one age or country is alive to, another may be dead to; nor can we pretend that here all is progress and no regress, unless we are prepared to say that in no respect have we anything to learn from the past. The Ignatian meditation on the "Kingdom of Christ" evoked heroic response in an age impregnated with the sentiments of chivalry, but to-day it needs to be adapted to a great extent, and some have vainly hoped to gather grapes from a thistle by substituting a parable drawn from some soul-stirring commercial enterprise—a colossal speculation in cheese.

Whatever signs there may be of a reaction, yet the whole temper and spirit of our age is unfavourable to that mysticism which is the very choicest flower of the Catholic religion. The blame is not with the seed, but with the soil. Even where least of all we should look for such indifference, among those who have built up the sepulchres and shrines of the great masters of mysticism, we sometimes observe a profound distrust for what is esteemed an unpractical, unhealthy kind of piety, while every preference is given to what is definite and tangible in the way of little methods and industries, multitudinous practices, lucrative prayers, in a word, to what a critic already quoted describes as *les petitesses des cerveaux étroits et les anguleuses routines*. [3]

It is one of the narrownesses of Durtal himself to ascribe all this to the wilful perversity of a person or persons unknown, and not to see in it the inevitable result of the vulgarizing tendency of modern life upon the masses. Things being as they are, surely it is better that the Church should do the little she can than do nothing at all. The "meditative mind" is incompatible with the rush and worry of a busy life, especially where educational methods substitute information for reflection, and so kill the habit, and eventually the faculty, of thought in so many cases. But if the higher prayer is impossible, the lower is possible and profitable. Again, if the liturgical sense has in a great measure become extinct among the faithful owing to the unavoidable disuse of the public celebration of the Church's worship, it is well that they should be allowed devotions accommodated to their limited capacity. As the Church would never dream of expecting a keen sympathy with her higher dogmas, her mystical piety, her artistic symbolism, her transcendent liturgy, on the part of a newly-converted tribe of savages, so neither is she impatient with the civilized Philistine, but is willing to speak to him in a language all his own, hoping indeed to tune his tongue one day to something less uncouth. None can sympathize more cordially than the writer does with Durtal in his horror of unauthorized devotions, of insufferable vernacular litanies, of nerveless and sickly hymns, of interminable "acts of consecration" void of a single definite idea, more

especially when these things are brought into the very sanctuary itself, with stole and cope and every apparent endeavour to fix the responsibility on the Universal Church. But if the Church is willing to go in rags to save those who are in rags, she is only using her invariable economy. We know well the sort of robe that befits her dignity, and no doubt it is this contrast that makes the trial of her present humiliation more difficult for us to bear.

We do not for a moment allow that the difference between bad taste and good is merely relative, or that a language or art which is externally vulgar can ever be the adequate and appropriate expression of the Catholic religion, whose tendency when unimpeded is ever to refine and purify. But it is perhaps another narrowness to suppose that a reform can only be effected by a return to the past, to mediæval symbolism and music and architecture. No effort of the kind has ever met with more than seeming success. What is consciously imitated from the past is not the same as that natural growth which it imitates, and which was as congenial to those days as it is uncongenial to ours. It is all the difference between the Mass ceremonial in a Ritualist church and in a Catholic church—the historical sense is violated in one case and satisfied in the other.

What is once really dead can never revive in the same form—at best we get a cast from the dead face. No doubt the old music and the old symbolism always will have a beauty of antiquity that can never belong to the new; but it was not this beauty—the beauty of death, of autumn leaves, that made them once popular, but the beauty of fresh green life and flexibility. The effort to make antiquity popular is almost a contradiction in terms. What we may hope for at most is an improvement in the æsthetic tastes of the Catholic public which comes from freer and healthier surroundings, from saner ideas and wider opportunities of education and liberal culture. When they begin to speak a richer language, the Church will take that language and find in it a fuller expression of her mind than she can in the present *patois*; she will be able again to say to them in other words, as yet unknown, what she said to the middle ages in Gregorian chaunt and Gothic cathedral. She, who in virtue of her Pentecostal gift of tongues, speaks in sundry times and divers manners, may in due season find words as eloquent of her heart and mind as those which she spoke to Durtal in the aisles of Chartres and in the cadences of Solesmes.

July, 1898.

Footnotes:

[Footnote 1: Introduction to Sordello.]

[Footnote 2: *The Cathedral*. By M.T.K. Huysman. Translated by Clare Bell.]

[Footnote 3: R. P. Pacher, S.J., *De Dante à Verlaine*.]

XIX.

TRACTS FOR THE MILLION.

The paradoxes of one generation are the common-places of the next; what the savants of to-day whisper in the ear, the Hyde Park orators of to-morrow will bawl from their platforms. Moreover, it is just when its limits begin to be felt by the critical, when its pretended all-sufficingness can no longer be maintained, that a theory or hypothesis begins to be popular with the uncritical and to work its irrevocable ill-effects on the general mind. In this, as in many other matters, the lower orders adopt the abandoned fashions of their betters, though with less of the well-bred taste which sometimes in the latter makes even absurdity graceful. In this way it has come to pass that at the very moment in which a reaction against the irreligious or anti-religious philosophy of a couple of generations ago is making itself felt in the study, the spreading pestilence of negation and unbelief has gained and continues to gain possession of the street. Some fifty years ago religion and even Christianity, seemed to the sanguine eyes of Catholics so firmly rooted in England that the recovery of the country to their faith depended almost entirely on the settlement of the Anglo-Roman controversy; to which controversy they accordingly devoted, and, in virtue of the still unexhausted impetus of that effort, do still devote their energies, almost exclusively. But together with a dawning consciousness that times and conditions have considerably changed, there is growing up in certain quarters a feeling that we too shall have to make some modifications in order to adapt ourselves to the altered circumstances. It is becoming increasingly evident that even could the said Anglo-Roman controversy be settled by some argument so

irresistibly evident as to leave no *locus standi* to the opponents of the Petrine claims, yet the number of those Anglicans who admit the historical, critical, philosophical, and theological assumptions upon which the controversy is based and which are presumed as common ground, is so small and dwindling that, were they all gained to the Church, we should be still a "feeble folk" in the face of that tidal wave of unbelief whose gathering force bids fair to sweep everything before it. Also the lingering impression left from "Tractarian" days as to the intellectual pre-eminence of the Catholicizing party in the Anglican Church, which pre-eminence might make amends for their numerical insignificance, is gradually giving way to the recognition of the sobering fact that at present that party in no exclusive sense represents the cultivated intellect of the country. It is no disrespect to that party to say that while scholarship and intelligence are therein well represented by scattered individuals, yet it is cumbered, like most religious movements after they have streamed some distance from their source, with a majority of those whose adhesion has little or no pretence to an intellectual basis; and whose occasional accession to the Catholic Church is almost entirely their own gain.

To give the last decisive push to those who are already toppling over the border-line that divides England from Rome, to reap and gather-in the harvest already ripe for the sickle, is a useful, a necessary, and a charitable work; one that calls for a certain kind of patient skill not to be underestimated; but there is a wider and perhaps more fruitful field whose soil is as yet scarcely broken. It may even be asserted with only seeming paradox that the best religious intelligence of the country is to be found in the camp of negation rather than in that of affirmation; among Broad Churchmen, Nonconformists, Unitarians, and Positivists, rather than among those who seek rest in the unstable position of a modified Catholicism. The very instability and difficulty of that position elicits much ingenuity from its theological defenders, though it also divides their counsels not a little; nor do we quarrel with them for affirming instead of denying, but for not affirming enough. But this attempt at compromise, this midway abortion of the natural growth of an idea, even were it justifiable as sometimes happens when legitimate issues are obscured through failure of evidence, repels the great multitude of religious thinkers who are not otherwise sufficiently drawn towards Catholicism to care to examine these claims. To say that there is no logical alternative between Rome and Agnosticism is a sufficiently shallow though popular sophism. At most it means that from certain given premisses one or other of those conclusions must follow syllogistically—a statement that would be more interesting were the said premisses indisputable and admitted by all the world. Still it may be allowed that a criticism of these premisses, which is a third alternative, opens up to religious thought a number of roads, all of which lead away from, rather than towards the extreme Anglican position, and hence that the more searching religious intelligence of the country is as adverse to that position—and for the same reasons —as it is to our own. And by the "religious intelligence" I mean all that intelligence that is interested in the religious problem; be that interest hostile or friendly; be it, in its issue, negative or constructive. For it must not be forgotten that the enemies of a truth are as interested in it as its friends; or that the friendliest interest, the strongest "wish to believe," may at times issue in reluctant negation. So far then as the great mass of religious intelligence in this country is not "Anglo-Catholic" in its sympathies; and so far as it is chiefly on the "Anglo-Catholic" section that we make any perceptible impression, the conversion of England, for what depends on our own efforts, does not seem to be as imminent a contingency as it would appear to be in the eyes of those foreign critics for whom Lord Halifax is the type of every English Churchman and the English Church co-extensive with the nation—save for a small irreclaimable residue of Liberals and Freemasons.

Those who, influenced by such considerations, would have us extend our efforts from the narrowing circle of Anglo-Catholicism to the ever-widening circle of doubt and negation, are not always clear about the practically important distinction to be drawn between the active leaders of doubt, and those who are passively led; the more or less independent few, and the more or less dependent many; between the man of the study and the man of the street—a distinction analogous to that between the *Ecclesia docens* and *Ecclesia discens*, and which permeates every well-established school of belief, whether historical, ethical, political, or religious.

Dealing first with the latter, that is, with those who are led; we are becoming more explicitly conscious of the fact that in all departments of knowledge and opinion the beliefs of the many are not determined by reasoning from premisses, but by the authority of reputed specialists in the particular matter, or else by the force of the general consent of those with whom they dwell. There may be other non-rational causes of belief, but these are the principal and more universal. And when we say they are non-rational causes, we do not mean that they are non-reasonable or unreasonable. They provide such a generally trustworthy, though occasionally fallible, method of getting at truth, as is sufficient and possible for the practical needs of life—social, moral, and religious. There is an inborn instinct to think as the crowd does and to be swayed by the confident voice of authority. If at times it fail of its end, as do other instincts, yet it is so trustworthy in the main that to resist it in ordinary conditions is always imprudent. That our eyes sometimes deceive us would not justify us in always distrusting their evidence. If a child is deceived through instinctively trusting the word of its parents, the blame of its

error rests with them, not with it. And so, whatever error the many are led into by obeying the instinct of submission to authority or to general consent, is their misfortune, not their fault. Of course there are higher criteria by which the general consent and the opinion of experts can be criticized and modified; but such criticism is not obligatory on the many who have neither leisure nor competence for the task. For here, as elsewhere, a certain diversity of gifts results in a natural division of labour in human society; those who have, giving to those who have not; some ministering spiritual, others temporal benefits to their neighbours. Not that a man can save another's soul for him any more than he can eat his dinner for him, but he can minister to him better food or worse.

The Mussulman child, then, may be bound, during his intellectual minority, to accept the religious teaching of its parents, just as is the Christian child. That one, in obeying this natural but fallible rule, is led into error, the other into, truth, only verifies the principle that right faith is a gift of God,—a grace, a bit of good fortune. None of those who are not professedly teachers of religion and experts, can be morally bound to a criticism above their competence, or to more than an obedience to those ordinary causes of assent to whose influence they are subjected by their circumstances. The ideal of a Catholic religion is to provide, by means of a divinely guided body of authorities and experts, an universal, international, inter-racial consensus regarding truths that are as obscure as they are vital to individual and social happiness; and thus to afford a means of sure and easy guidance to those uncritical multitudes whose necessary preoccupations forbid their engaging in theology and controversy. This ideal was sufficiently realized for practical purposes in the "ages of faith," when the whole public opinion of Europe, then believed to be coterminous with civilization, was Catholic; when dissent needed as much independence of character, as in so many places, profession does now. And surely it is a narrow-hearted criticism to prefer the primitive conditions in which none but those strong enough to face persecution could reap the benefits of Christianity. The weak and dependent are ever the majority, and if Christianity had been intended to pass them by or sift them out, "its province were not large," nor could it claim to be the religion of humanity. The Christian leaven was never meant to be kept apart, but to be hidden and lost in that unleavened mass which it seeks slowly to transform into its own nature. The majority, in respect to religion and civilization, are like unwilling school-boys who need to be coerced for their own benefit, to be kept to their work till they learn (if they ever do) to like it, and to need no more coercion. The support that Catholic surroundings give to numbers, who else were too weak to stand alone, cannot be overvalued, although it may weaken a few who else had exerted themselves more strenuously, or may foster hypocrisy in secret unbelievers who would like to, but dare not withstand public opinion.

Now it is the gradual decay of this support—of this non-rational yet most reasonable cause of belief, that is rendering the religious condition of the man in the street so increasingly unsatisfactory. Not only is there no longer an agreement of experts, and a consequent consensus of nations, touching the broad and fundamental truths of Christianity, but what is far more to the point, the knowledge of this Babylonian confusion has become a commonplace with the multitudes. No doubt there are yet some shaded patches where the dew still struggles with the desiccating sun—old-world sanctuaries of Catholicism whose dwellers hardly realize the existence of unbelief or heresy, or who give at best a lazy, notional assent to the fact. But there are few regions in so-called Christendom where the least educated are not now quite aware that Christianity is but one of many religions in a much larger world than their forefathers were aware of; that the intellect of modern, unlike that of mediæval Europe, is largely hostile to its claims; that its defenders are infinitely at variance with one another; that there is no longer any social disgrace connected with a non-profession of Christianity; in a word, that the public opinion of the modern world has ceased to be Christian, and that the once all-dominating religion which blocked out the serious consideration of any other claimant, bids fair to be speedily reduced to its primitive helplessness and insignificance. The disintegrating effect of such knowledge on the faith of the masses must be, and manifestly is, simply enormous. Not that there is any rival consensus and authority to take the place of dethroned Catholicism. Even scepticism is too little organized and embodied, too chaotic in its infinite variety of contradictory positions, to create an influential consensus of any positive kind against faith. Its effect, as far as the unthinking masses are concerned, is simply to destroy the chief extrinsic support of their faith and to throw them back on the less regular, less reliable causes of belief. If in addition it teaches them a few catchwords of free-thought, a few smart blasphemies and syllogistic impertinences, this is of less consequence than at first sight appears, since these are attempted after-justifications, and no real causes of their unbelief. For they love the parade of formal reason, as they love big words or technical terms, or a smattering of French or Latin, with all the delight of a child in the mysterious and unfamiliar; but their pretence to be ruled by it is mere affectation, and the tenacity with which they cling to their arguments is rather the tenacity of blind faith in a dogma, than of clear insight into principles.

And this brings us to the problem which gave birth to the present essay.

The growing infection of the uneducated or slightly educated masses of the Catholic laity with the

virus of prevalent unbelief is arousing the attention of a few of our clergy to the need of coping with what is to them a new kind of difficulty. Amongst other kindred suggestions, is that of providing tracts for the million dealing not as heretofore with the Protestant, but with the infidel controversy. While the danger was more limited and remote it was felt that, more harm than good would come of giving prominence in the popular mind to the fact and existence of so much unbelief; that in many minds doubts unfelt before would be awakened; that difficulties lay on the surface and were the progeny of shallow-mindedness, whereas the solutions lay deeper down than the vulgar mind could reasonably be expected to go; that on the whole it was better that the few should suffer, than that the many should be disturbed. The docile and obedient could be kept away from contagion, or if infected, could be easily cured by an act of blind confidence in the Church; while the disobedient would go their own way in any case. Hence the idea of entering into controversy with those incompetent to deal with such matters was wisely set aside. But now that the prevalence and growth of unbelief is as evident as the sun at noon—now that it is no longer only the recalcitrant and irreligious, but even the religious and docile-minded who are disturbed by the fact, it seems to some that, a policy of silence and inactivity may be far more fruitful in evil than in good, that reverent reserve must be laid aside and the pearls of truth cast into the trough of popular controversy.

But to this course an almost insuperable objection presents itself at first seeming. Seeing that, the true cause of doubt and unbelief in the uncritical, is to be sought for proximately in the decay of a popular consensus in favour of belief, and ultimately in the disagreements and negations of those who lead and form public opinion, and in no wise in the reasons which they allege when they attempt a criticism that is beyond them; what will it profit to deal with the apparent cause if we cannot strike at the real cause? In practical matters, the reasons men give for their conduct, to themselves as well as to others, are often untrue, never exhaustive. Hence to refute their reasons will not alter their intentions. To dispel the sophisms assigned by the uneducated as the basis of their unbelief, is not really to strike at the root of the matter at all. Besides which, the work is endless; for if they are released from one snare they will be as easily re-entangled in the next; and indeed what can such controversy do but foster in them the false notion that, belief in possession may be dispossessed by every passing difficulty, and that their faith is to be dependent on an intellectual completeness of which they are for ever incapable. Indeed the unavoidable amount of controversy of all kinds, dinned into the ears of the faithful in a country like this, favours a fallacy of intellectualism very prejudicial to the repose of a living faith founded on concrete reasons, more or less experimental.

As far as the many are concerned, much the same difficulty attends the preservation of their faith in these days, as attended its creation in the beginnings of Christianity, before the little flock had grown into a kingdom, when the intellect and power of the world was arrayed against it, when it had neither the force of a world-wide consensus nor the voice of public authority in its favour. In those days it was not by the "persuasive words of human wisdom" that the crowds were gained over to Christ, but by a certain *ostensio virtutis*, by an experimental and not merely by a rational proof of the Gospel—a proof which, if it admitted of any kind of formulation, did not compel them in virtue of the logicality of its form. Further, when the conditions and helps needed by the Church in her infancy, gave way to those belonging to her established strength, it was by her ascendency over the strong, the wealthy, and the learned, that she secured for the crowd,—for the weak and the poor and the ignorant,—the most necessary support of a Christianized, international public opinion, and thereby extended the benefit of her educative influence to those millions whom disinclination or weakness would otherwise have deterred from the profession and practice of the faith.

If the Church of to-day is to retain her hold of the crowd in modernized or modernizing countries, it must either be by renewing her ascendency over those who form and modify public opinion, who even in the purest democracy are ever the few and not the many; or else by a reversion to the methods of primitive times, by some palpable argument that speaks as clearly to the simplest as to the subtlest, if only the heart be right. An outburst of miracle-working and prophecy is hardly to be looked for; while the argument from the tree's fruits, or from the moral miracle, is at present weakened by the extent to which non-Christians put in practice the morality they have learnt from Christ. Other non-rational causes of belief draw individuals, but they do not draw crowds.

If we cannot see very clearly what is to supply for the support once given to the faith of the millions by public opinion, still their incapacity for dealing with the question on rational grounds will not justify us altogether in silence. For in the first place it is an incapacity of which they are not aware, or which at least they are very unwilling to admit. A candidate at the hustings would run a poor chance of a hearing who, instead of seeming to appeal to the reason of the mob should, in the truthfulness of his soul, try to convince them of their utter incompetence to judge the simplest political point. Again, though unable to decide between cause and cause, yet the rudest can often see that there is much to be said on both sides—though what, he does not understand; and if this fact weakens his confidence in the right, it also weakens it in the wrong; whereas had the right been silent, the wrong, in his judgment,

would thereby have been proved victorious. This will justify us at times in talking over the heads of our readers and hearers, and in not sparing sonorous polysyllables, abstruse technicalities, or even the pompous parade of syllogistic arguments with all their unsightly joints sticking out for public admiration. Some hands may be too delicate for this coarse work; but there will always be those to whom it is easy and congenial; and its utility is too evident to allow a mere question of taste to stand in the way.

Moreover, it must be remembered that while many of the class referred to are glad to be free from the pressure of a Christianized public opinion, and are only too willing to grasp at any semblance of a reason for unbelief; others, more religiously disposed, are really troubled by these popular, anti-Christian difficulties, the more so as they are often infected with the fallacy, fostered by ceaseless controversy, which makes one's faith dependent on the formal reason one can give for it.

Though this is not so, yet moral truthfulness forbids us to assent to what we, however falsely, believe to be untrue. Hence while the virtue of faith remains untouched, its exercise with regard to particular points may be inculpably suspended through ignorance, stupidity, misinformation, and other causes.

In the interest of these well-disposed but easily puzzled believers of the ill-instructed and uncritical sort, a series of anti-agnostic tracts for the million would really seem to be called for. Yet never has the present writer felt more abjectly crushed with a sense of incompetence than when posed by the difficulties of a "hagnostic" greengrocer, or of a dressmaker fresh from the perusal of "Erbert" Spencer. Face to face with chaos, one knows not where to begin the work of building up an orderly mind; nor will the self-taught genius brook a hint of possible ignorance, or endure the discussion of dull presuppositions, without much pawing of the ground and champing on the bit: "What I want," he says, "is a plain answer to a plain question." And when you explain to him that for an answer he must go back very far and become a little child again, and must unravel his mind to the very beginning like an ill-knit stocking, he looks at once incredulous and triumphant as who should say: "There, I told you so!" Yet the same critical incompetence that makes these simple folk quite obtuse to the true and adequate solution of their problems (I am speaking of cases where such solutions are possible), makes them perfectly ready to accept any sort of counter-sophistry or paralogism. A most excellent and genuine "convert" of that class told me that he had stood out for years against the worship of the Blessed Virgin, till one day it had occurred to him that, as a cause equals or exceeds its effect, so the Mother must equal the Son. Another, equally genuine, professed to have been conquered by the reflection that he had all his life been saying: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," and he could not see the use of believing in it if he didn't belong to it. If their faith in Catholicism or in any other religion depended on their logic, men of this widespread class were in a sorry plight. Like many of their betters, these two men probably imagined the assigned reasons to be the entire cause of their conversion, making no account of the many reasonable though non-logical motives by which the change was really brought about. Hence to have abruptly and incautiously corrected them, would perhaps but have been to reduce them to confusion and perplexity, and to "destroy with one's logic those for whom Christ died."

That we do not sufficiently realize the dialectical incompetence of the uneducated is partly to be explained by the fact that they often get bits of reasoning by rote, much as young boys learn their Euclid; and that they frequently seem to understand principles because they apply them in the right cases, just as we often quote a proverb appropriately without the slightest idea of its origin or meaning beyond that it is the right thing to say in a certain connection. As we ascend in the scale of education, there is more and more of this reasoning by rote, so that critical incompetence is more easily concealed and may lurk unsuspected even in the pulpit and the professorial chair, where logic alone seems paramount. The "hagnostic" greengrocer, in all the self-confidence of his ignorance, is but the lower extreme of a class that runs up much higher in the social scale and spreads out much wider in every direction.

But when we have realized more adequately how hopelessly incompetent the multitude must necessarily be in the problems of specialists, we shall also see that it is only by inadequate and even sophistical reasoning that most of their intellectual difficulties can be allayed; that the full truth (and the half-truth is mostly a lie) would be Greek to them. If, then, *Tracts for the Million* seem a necessity, they also seem an impossibility; for what self-respecting man will sit down to weave that tissue of sophistry, special-pleading, violence, and vulgarity, which alone will serve the practical purpose with those to whom trenchency is everything and subtlety nothing? Even though the means involve a violation of taste rather than of morals, yet can they be justified by the goodness of the end? Fortunately, however, the difficulty is met by a particular application of God's universal method in the education of mankind. In every grade of enlightenment there are found some who are sufficiently in advance of the rest to be able to help them, and not so far in advance as practically to speak a different language. What is a dazzling light for those just emerging from darkness, is darkness for those in a yet stronger light. A statement may be so much less false than another, as to be relatively true; so much less true than a third, as to be relatively false. For a mind wholly unprepared, the full truth is often a

light that blinds and darkness; whereas the tempered half-truth prepares the way for a fuller disclosure in due time, even as the law and the prophets prepared the way for the Gospel and Christ, or as the enigmas of faith school us to bear that light which now no man can gaze on and live. Thus, though we may never use a lie in the interest of truth, or bring men from error by arguments we know to be sophistical, yet we have the warrant of Divine example, both in the natural and supernatural education of mankind, for the passive permission of error in the interest of truth, as also of evil in the interest of good. Since then there will ever be found those who in all good faith and sincerity can adapt themselves to the popular need and supply each level of intelligence with the medicine most suited to its digestion, all we ask is that a variety of standards in controversial writings be freely recognized; that each who feels called to such efforts should put forth his very best with a view to helping those minds which are likest his own; that none should deliberately condescend to the use of what from his point of view would be sophistries and vulgarities, remembering at the same time that the superiority of his own taste and judgment is more relative than absolute, and that in the eyes of those who come after, he himself may be but a Philistine.

We conclude then that all that can be done in the way of *Tracts for the Million* should be done; that seed of every kind should be scattered to the four winds, hoping that each may find some congenial soil.

But even when all that can be done in this way to save the masses from the contagion of unbelief has been done, we shall be as far as ever from having found a substitute for the support which formerly was lent to their faith by a Christianized public opinion. Can we hope for anything more than thus to retard the leakage? The answer to this would take us to the second of our proposed considerations, namely, our attitude towards those who form and modify that public opinion by which the masses are influenced for good or for evil. But it is an answer which for the present must be deferred. [1]

Nov. 1900.

Footnotes:

[Footnote 1: The Introduction to the First Series of these essays attempts to deal with this further question.]

XX.

AN APOSTLE OF NATURALISM.

> "A man that could look no way but downwards, with a muck-rake in his hand" and "did neither look up nor regard, but raked to himself the straws, the small sticks, and the dust of the floor…. Then said Christiana, 'Oh, deliver me from this muck-rake.'"—Bunyan.

Naturalism includes various schools which agree in the first principle that nothing is true but what can be justified by those axiomatic truths which every-day experience forces upon our acceptance, not indeed as self-evident, but as inevitable, unless we are to be incapacitated for practical life. It is essentially the philosophy of the unphilosophical, that is, of those who believe what they are accustomed to believe, and because they are so accustomed; who are incapable of distinguishing between the subjective necessity imposed by habits and the objective necessity founded in the nature of things. It is no new philosophy, but as old as the first dawn of philosophic thought, for it is the form towards which the materialistic mind naturally gravitates. Given a population sufficiently educated to philosophize in any fashion, and of necessity the bent of the majority will be in the direction of some form of Naturalism. Hence we find that the "Agnosticism" of Professor Huxley is eminently suited to the capacity and taste of the semi-educated majorities in our large centres of civilization. Still it must not be supposed that the majority really philosophizes at all even to this extent. The pressure of life renders it morally impossible. But they like to think that they do so. The whole temper of mind, begotten and matured by the rationalistic school, is self-sufficient: every man his own prophet, priest, and king; every man his own philosopher. Hence, he who poses as a teacher of the people will not be tolerated. The theorist must come forward with an affectation of modesty, as into the presence of competent critics; he must only expose his wares, win for himself a hearing, and then humbly wait for the *placet* of the sovereign people. But plainly this is merely a conventional homage to a theory that no serious mind really believes in. We know well enough, that the opinions and beliefs of the multitude are formed almost entirely by tradition, imitation, interest, by in fact any influence rather than that of pure reason.

Taught they are, and taught they must be, however they repudiate it. But the most successful teachers and leaders are those who contrive to wound their sense of intellectual self-sufficiency least, and to offer them the strong food of dogmatic assertion sugared over and sparkling with the show of wit and reason.

Philosophy for the million may be studied profitably in one of its popular exponents whose works have gained wide currency among the class referred to. Mr. S. Laing is a very fair type of the average mind-leader, owing his great success to his singular appreciation of the kind of treatment needed to secure a favourable hearing. We do not pretend to review Mr. Laing's writings for their own sake, but simply as good specimens of a class which is historically rather than philosophically interesting.

We have before us three of his most popular books: *Modern Science and Modern Thought* (nineteenth thousand), *Problems of the Future* (thirteenth thousand), *Human Origins* (twelfth thousand), to which we shall refer as M.S., P.F., H.O., in this essay; taking the responsibility of all italics on ourselves, unless otherwise notified.

Mr. Laing is not regretfully forced into materialism by some mental confusion or obscurity, but he revels in it, and invites all to taste and see how gracious a philosophy it is. There is an ill-concealed levity and coarseness in his handling of religious subjects which breaks,

At seasons, through the gilded pale,

and which warns us from casting reasons before those who would but trample them under foot. It is rather for the sake of those who read such literature, imprudently perhaps, but with no sympathy, and yet find their imagination perplexed and puzzled with a swarm of minute sophistries and difficulties, collectively bewildering, though contemptible singly, that we think it well to form some estimate of the philosophical value of such works.

Nothing in our study of Mr. Laing surprised us more than to discover [1] that he had lived for more than the Scriptural span of three-score and ten years, a life of varied fortunes and many experiences. It seems to us incredible that any man of even average thoughtfulness could, after so many years, find life without God, without immortality, without definite meaning or assignable goal, "worth living," and that "to be born in a civilized country in the nineteenth century is a boon for which a man can never be sufficiently thankful." [2] [Thankful to whom? one might ask parenthetically.] In other words, he is a bland optimist, and has nothing but vials of contempt to pour upon the pessimists, from Ecclesiastes down to Carlyle. Pessimism, we are told confidentially, is not an outcome of just reasoning on the miserable residue of hope which materialism leaves to us, but of the indisposition "of those digestive organs upon which the sensation of health and well-being so mainly depends." "It is among such men, with cultivated intellects, sensitive nerves, and bad digestion, that we find the prophets and disciples of pessimism." [3] The inference is, that men of uncultivated intellects, coarse nerves, and ostrich livers will coincide with Mr. Laing in his sanguine view of the ruins of religion. The sorrowing dyspeptic asks in despair: "Son of man, thinkest thou that these dry bones will live again?" "I'm cock-sure of it," answers Mr. Laing, and the ground of his assurance is the healthiness of his liver.

Carlyle, who in other matters is, according to Mr. Laing, a great genius, a more than prophet of the new religion, on this point suddenly collapses into "a dreadful croaker," styling his own age "barren, brainless, soulless, faithless." [4] But the reason is, of course, that "he suffered from chronic dyspepsia" and was unable "to eat his three square meals a day." A very consistent explanation for an avowed materialist, but slightly destructive to the value of his own conclusions, being a two-edged sword. Indeed he almost allows as much. "For such dyspeptic patients there is an excuse. Pessimism is probably as inevitably their creed, as optimism is for the more fortunate mortals who enjoy the *mens sana in corpore sano*." [5] However, there are some pessimists for whom indigestion can plead no excuse, [6] but for whose intellectual perversity some other cosmic influence must be sought "behind the veil, behind the veil,"—to borrow Mr. Laing's favourite line from his favourite poem. These are not only "social swells, would-be superior persons and orthodox theologians, but even a man of light and learning like Mr. F. Harrison." "Religion, they say, is becoming extinct.… Without a lively faith in such a personal, ever-present deity who listens to our prayers, … there can be, they say, no religion; and they hold, and I think rightly hold, that the only support for such a religion is to be found in the assumed inspiration of the Bible and the Divinity of Christ." "Destroy these and they think the world will become vulgar and materialized, losing not only the surest sanction of morals, but … the spiritual aspiration and tendencies," &c. [7] "To these gloomy forebodings I venture to return a positive and categorical denial … Scepticism has been the great sweetener of modern life." [8] How he justifies his denial by maintaining that morality can hold its own when reduced to a physical science; that the "result of advancing civilization" and of the materialistic psychology is "a clearer recognition of the intrinsic sacredness and dignity of every human soul;" [9] that Christianity without dogma, without miracles [or, as he calls it, "Christian agnosticism"], shall retain the essential spirit, the pure morality, the consoling

beliefs, and as far as possible even the venerable form and sacred associations of the old faith, may appear later. At present we are concerned directly with pointing out how Mr. Laing's optimism at once marks him off from those men who, whether believing or misbelieving or unbelieving, have thought deeply and felt deeply, who have seen clearly that materialism leaves nothing for man's soul but the husks of swine; who have therefore boldly faced the inevitable alternative between spiritualistic philosophy and hope, and materialism with its pessimistic corollary. That a man may be a materialist or atheist and enjoy life thoroughly, who does not know? but then it is just at the expense of his manhood, because he lives without thought, reflection, or aspiration, *i.e.,* materialistically. Mr. Laing no doubt, as he confesses, has lived pleasantly enough. He has found in what he calls science an endless source of diversion, he betrays himself everywhere as a man of intense intellectual curiosity in every direction, and yet withal so little concerned with the roots of things, so easily satisfied with a little plausible coherence in a theory, as not to have found truth an apparently stern or exacting mistress, not to have felt the anguish of any deep mental conflict. His intellectual labours have been pleasurable because easy, and, in his own eyes, eminently fruitful and satisfactory. He has adopted an established cause, thrown himself into it heart and soul; others indeed had gone before him and laboured, and he has entered into their labours. Indeed, he is frank in disclaiming all originality of discovery or theory; [10] he has not risked the disappointment and anxiety of improving on the Evolution Gospel, but he has collected and sorted and arranged and published the evidence obtained by others. This has always furnished him with an interest in life; [11] but whether it be a rational interest or not depends entirely on the usefulness or hurtfulness of his work. He admits, however, that though life for him has been worth living, "some may find it otherwise from no fault of their own, more by their own fate." [12] But all can lead fairly happy lives by following his large-type platitudinous maxim, "Fear nothing, make the best of everything." [13] In other words, the large majority, who are not and never can be so easily and pleasantly circumstanced as Mr. Laing, are told calmly to make the best of it and to rejoice in the thought that their misery is a necessary factor in the evolution of their happier posterity. This is the new gospel: *Pauperes evangelizantur*—"Good news for the poor." [14] "Progress and not happiness" is the end we are told to make for, over and over again; but, progress towards what, is never explained, nor is any basis for this duty assigned. Indeed, duty means nothing for Mr. Laing but an inherited instinct, which if we choose to disobey or if we happen not to possess, who shall blame us or talk to us of "oughts"?

And now to consider more closely the grounds of Mr. Laing's very cheerful view of a world in which, for all we know, there is no soul, no God, and certainly no faith. Since of the two former we know and can know nothing, we must build our happiness, our morality, our "religion," on a basis whereof they form no part. He believes that morality will be able to hold its own distinct, not only from all belief in revelation, in a personal God, and in a spiritual soul, but in spite of a philosophy which by tracing the origin of moral judgments to mere physical laws of hereditary transmission of experienced utilities, robs them of all authority other than prudential, and convicts them of being illusory so far as they seem to be of higher than human origin.

Herein, as usual, he treads in the steps of Professor Huxley, "the greatest living master of English prose" (though why his mastery of prose should add to his weight as a philosopher, we fail to see). "Such ideas *evidently* come from education, and are not the results either of inherited instinct [15] or of supernatural gift.... Given a being with man's brain, man's hands, and erect stature, *it is easy to see* how ... rules of conduct ... must have been formed and fixed by successive generations, according to the Darwinian laws." [16]

He tells us: "We may read the Athanasian Creed less, but we practise
Christian charity more in the present than in any former age." [17]
"Faith has diminished, charity increased." [18]

Of moral principles, he says: "Why do we say that ... they carry conviction with them and prove themselves?... Still, there they are, and being what they are ... it requires no train of reasoning or laboured reflection to make us *feel* that 'right is right,' and that it is *better* for ourselves and others to act on such precepts ... rather than to reverse these rules and obey the selfish promptings of animal nature." [19] "It is *clearly* our highest wisdom to follow right, not from selfish calculation, ... but because 'right is right.' ... For practical purposes it is comparatively unimportant how this standard got there ... as an absolute imperative rule." [20] As to the apprehended ill effect of agnosticism on morals, he says: "The foundations of morals [21] are fortunately built on solid rock and not on shifting sand. It may truly be said in a great many cases that, as individuals and nations become more sceptical, they become more moral." [22] "*If there is one thing more certain than another* in the history of evolution, it is that morals have been evolved by the same laws as regulate the development of species." [23]

These citations embody Mr. Laing's opinions on this point, and show very clearly his utter incapacity for elementary philosophic thought. Here, as elsewhere, as soon as he leaves the bare record of facts and embarks in any kind of speculation, he shows himself helpless; however, he tries to fortify his own

courage and that of his readers, with "it is clear," "it is evident," "it is certain."

To say that "right is right," sounds very oracular; but it either means that "right" is an ultimate spring of action, inexplicable on evolutionist principles, or that right is the will of the strongest, or an illusory inherited foreboding of pain, or a calculation of future pleasure and pain, or something which, in no sense, is a true account of what men *do* mean by right. To say that moral principles "carry conviction with them, and prove themselves" *(i.e.*, are self-evident), unless, as we suspect, it is mere verbiage conveying nothing particular to Mr. Laing's brain, is to deny that right has reference to the consequences of action as bearing on human progress and evolution, which is to deny the very theory he wishes to uphold. No intuitionist could have spoken more strongly. Then we are assured that we "feel" rightness, or that "right is right"—apparently as a simple irresoluble quality of certain actions—and with same breath, that "it is *better* for ourselves and others to act on these rules," where he jumps off to utilitarianism again; and then we are forbidden to "obey the selfish impulses of our animal nature"—a strange prohibition for one who sees in us nothing but animal nature, who denies us any free power to withstand its impulses. Then it is "clearly our highest wisdom to follow right"—an appeal to prudential motives—"not from any selfish calculations"—a repudiation of prudential motives—"but because 'right is right'"—an appeal to a blind unreasoning instinct, and a prohibition to question its authority. We are told that for practical purposes it matters little whence this absolute imperative rule originates. Was there ever a more unpractical and short-sighted assertion! Convince men that the dictates of conscience are those of fear or selfishness, that they are all mere animal instincts, that they are anything less than divine, and who will care for Mr. Laing's appeal to blind faith in the "rightness of right"?

As long as Christian tradition lives on, as it will for years among the masses, the effects of materialist ethics will not be felt; but as these new theories filter down from the few to the many, they will inevitably produce their logical consequences in practical matters. No one with open eyes can fail to see how the leaven is spreading already. Still the majority act and speak to a great extent under the influence of the old belief, which they have repudiated, in the freedom of man's will and the Divine origin of right. It is quite plain that Mr. Laing has either never had patience to think the matter out, or has found it beyond his compass. Having thus established morality on a foundation independent of religion and of everything else, making "right" rest on "right," he assumes the prophetic robe, and on the strength of his seventy years of experience and philosophy poses as a *Cato Major* for the edification of the semi-scientific millions of young persons to whom he addresses his volumes. We have a whole chapter on Practical Life, [24] on self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, full of portentous platitudes and ancient saws; St. Paul's doctrine of charity, and all that is best in the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, is liberated from its degrading association with the belief in a God who rewards and punishes.[25] We are "to act strenuously in that direction which, after *conscientious* inquiry, seems the best, … and trust to what religious men call Providence, and scientific men Evolution, for the result," and all this simply on the bold assertion of this sage whose sole aim is "to leave the world a little better rather than a little worse for my individual unit of existence." [26]

And here we may inquire parenthetically as to the motive which urges Mr. Laing to throw himself into the labours of the apostolate and to become such an active propagandist of agnosticism. We are told[27] that the enlightened should be "liberal and tolerant towards traditional opinions and traditional practices, and trust with cheerful faith to evolution to bring about *gradually* changes of form," &c.; that the influence of the clergy is "on the whole exerted for good," and it is frankly acknowledged that Christianity has been a potent factor in the evolution of modern civilization. It has, however, nearly run its course, and the old order must give place to the new, *i.e.*, to agnosticism. But even allowing, what we dare say Mr. Laing would not ask, that the speculative side of the new religion is fully defined and worked out, and ready to displace the old dogmatic creeds, yet its practical aspect is so vague that he writes: "I think the time is come when the intellectual victory of agnosticism is so far assured, that it behoves thinking men to *begin to consider* what practical results are likely to follow from it." [28] In the face of this confession we find Mr. Laing industriously addressing himself to "those who lack time and opportunity for studying," [29] to the "minds of my younger readers, and of the working classes who are striving after culture," [30] "to what may be called the semi-scientific readers, … who have already acquired some elementary ideas about science," "to the millions;" [31] and endeavouring by all means in his power to destroy the last vestige of their faith in that religion which alone provides for them a definite code of morality strengthened by apparent sanctions of the highest order, and venerable at least by its antiquity and universality. [32] And while he is thus busily pulling down the old scaffolding, he is calmly *beginning* to consider the practical results. This is his method of "leaving the world a little better than he found it." He professes to understand and appreciate "In Memoriam." Has he ever reflected on the lines: "O thou that after toil and storm," [33] when the practical conclusion is—

Leave thou thy sister, when she prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy views;

Nor thou with shadowed hint infuse
A life that leads melodious days.
Her faith through form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good;
O sacred be the flesh and blood,
To which she links a truth divine.

On his own principles he is convicted of being a lover of mischief. No, one is sorely tempted to think that these men are well aware that the moral sense which sound philosophy and Christian faith have developed, is still strong in the minds and deeper conscience of the English-speaking races, and that were they to present materialism in all its loathsome nudity to the public gaze, they would be hissed off the stage. And so they dress it up in the clothes of the old religion just for the present, with many a quiet wink between themselves at the expense of the "semi-scientific" reader.

We have already adverted to Mr. Laing's utter incapacity for anything like philosophy, except so far as that term can be applied to a power of raking together, selecting, and piling up into "a popular shape" the scraps of information which favour the view whose correctness he was convinced of ere he began. A few further remarks may justify this somewhat severe estimate. After stating that in the solution of life and soul problems, science stops short at germs and nucleated cells, he proceeds with the usual tirade against metaphysics: "Take Descartes' fundamental axiom: *Cogito ergo sum*.... Is it really an axiom?... If the fact that I am conscious of thinking proves the fact that I exist, is the converse true that whatever does not think does not exist?... Does a child only begin to exist when it begins to think? If *Cogito ergo sum* is an institution to which we can trust, why is not *Non cogito ergo non sum?*" [34] Here is a man posing before the gaping millions as a philosopher and a severe logician, who thinks that the proposition, "every cow is a quadruped," is disproved by the evident falsehood of, "what is not a cow is not a quadruped," which he calls "the converse." He sums up magnificently by saying: "These are questions to which no metaphysical system that I have ever seen, can return the semblance of an answer;" giving the impression of a life devoted to a deep and exhaustive study of all schools of philosophy. Mr. Laing here surely is addressing his "younger readers."

He tells us elsewhere [35] that, "when analyzed by science, spiritualism leads straight to materialism;" free-will "can be annihilated by the simple mechanical expedient of looking at a black wafer stuck on a white wall;" that if "Smith falls into a trance and believes himself to be Jones, he really is Jones, and Smith has become a stranger to him while the trance lasts.... I often ask myself the question, If he died during one of these trances, which would he be, Smith or Jones? and I confess it takes some one wiser than I am to answer it." Without pretending to be wiser than Mr. Laing, we hope it will not be too presumptuous for us to suggest that if Smith dies in a trance *believing* himself to be Jones, he is under a delusion, and that he really is Smith. Else it would be very awkward for poor Jones, who in nowise believes himself to be Smith. Mr. Laing would have to break it gently to Jones, that, "in fact, my dear sir, Smith borrowed your personality, and unfortunately died before returning it; and as to whether you are yourself or Smith, as to whether you are alive or dead, 'I confess it takes some one wiser than I am to decide.'" That a man's own name, own surroundings, own antecedents, are all objects of his thought, and distinguished from the *self, ego,* or *subject* which contemplates them, has never suggested itself to Mr. Laing. That though Smith may mistake every one of these, yet the term "I" necessarily and invariably means the same for him, the one central, constant unity to which every *non-ego* is opposed. And this from a man who elsewhere claims an easy familiarity with Kant. "Again what can be said of love and hate if under given circumstances they can be transformed into one another by a magnet?" What indeed? And how is it that the gold-fish make no difference in the weight of the globe of water?

His conclusion to these inquiries is: "When Shakespeare said, 'We are such stuff as dreams are made of,' he enumerates what has become a scientific fact. The 'stuff' is in all cases the same—vibratory motions of nerve particles." [36] Thus knowledge, self-consciousness, free-choice, is as much a function of matter as fermentation, or crystallisation—a mode of motion, not dissimilar from heat, perhaps transformable therewith.

Recapitulating this farrago of nonsense on p. 188, he adds a new difficulty which ought to make him pause in his wild career. "What is the value of the evidence of the senses if a suggestion can make us see the hat, but not the man who wears it; or dance half the night with an imaginary partner? Am I 'I myself, I,' or am I a barrel-organ playing 'God save the Queen,' if the stops are set in the normal fashion, but the 'Marseillaise' if some cunning hand has altered them without my knowledge? These are questions which I cannot answer." He cannot answer a question on which the value of his whole system of physical philosophy depends; uncertain about his own identity, about the evidence of his senses, he would make the latter the sole rule and measure of certitude, and deny to man any higher faculty by which alone he can justify his trust in his cognitive faculties. Another instance of his absolute ignorance of common philosophic terminology is when he asserts that according to theology we know the dogmas

of religion by "intuition." [37]

This doctrine rests on Cardinal Newman's celebrated theory of the "Illative Sense." Surely a moment's reflection on the meaning of words, not to speak of a slight acquaintance with the book referred to, would have saved him from confounding two notions so sharply distinguished as "intuition" and "inference." Again, "There can be no doubt there are men often of great piety and excellence who have, or fancy they have, a sort of sixth sense, or, as Cardinal Newman calls it, an 'illative sense,' by which they see by intuition … things unprovable or disprovable by ordinary reason." [38] Can a man who makes such reckless travesties of a view which he manifestly has never studied, be credited with intellectual honesty?

Doubtless, the semi-scientific millions will be much impressed by the wideness of Mr. Laing's reading and his profound grasp of all that he has read, when they are told casually that "space and time are, … to use the phraseology of Kant, 'imperative categories;'" [39] but perhaps to other readers it may convey nothing more than that he has heard a dim something somewhere about Kant, about the categories, about space and time being schemata of sense, and about the *categorical imperative.* It is only one instance of the unscrupulous recklessness which shows itself everywhere. Akin to this is his absolute misapprehension of the Christian religion which he labours to refute. He never for a moment questions his perfect understanding of it, and of all it has got to say for itself. Brought up apparently among Protestants, who hold to a verbal inspiration [40] and literal interpretation of the Scriptures, who have no traditional or authoritative interpretation of it, he concludes at once that his own crude, boyish conception of Christianity is the genuine one, and that every deviation therefrom is a "climbing down," or a minimizing. He has no suspicion that the wider views of interpretation are as old as Christianity itself, and have always co-existed with the narrower.

He regards the Christian idea of God as essentially anthropomorphic. Indeed, whether in good faith or for the sake of effect, he brings forward the old difficulties which have been answered *ad nauseam* with an air of freshness, as though unearthed for the first time, and therefore as setting religion in new and unheard-of straits. So, at all events, it will seem to the millions of his young readers and to the working classes.

Let us follow him in some of his destructive criticism, or rather denunciations, in order to observe his mode of procedure. "The discoveries of science … make it impossible for *sincere* men to retain the faith," &c., [41] therefore all who differ from Mr. Laing are insincere. "It is *absolutely certain* that portions of the Bible are not true; and those, important portions." [42] This is based on two premisses which are therefore absolutely certain, (i) Mr. Laing's conclusions about the antiquity of man—of which more anon; (43) his baldly literal interpretation of the Bible as delivered to him in his early "infancy. On p. 253, we have the ancient difficulty from the New Testament prophecy of the proximate end of the world, without the faintest indication that it was felt 1800 years ago, and has been dealt with over and over again. Papias [44] is lionized [45] in order to upset the antiquity of the four Gospels—which upsetting, however, depends on a dogmatic interpretation of an ambiguous phrase, and the absence of positive testimony. Here again there is no evidence that Mr. Laing has read any elementary text-book on the authenticity of the Gospels. He is "perfectly clear" as to the fourth Gospel being a forgery; again for reasons which he alone has discovered. [46] Paul is the first inventor of Christian dogma, without any doubt or hesitation. But the undoubted results of modern science … shatter to pieces the whole fabric. *It is as certain as that* 2 + 2 = 4 that the world was not created in the manner described in Genesis."

As regards harmonistic difficulties of the Old and New Testaments, he assumes the same confident tone of bold assertion without feeling any obligation to notice the solutions that have been suggested. It makes for his purpose to represent the orthodox as suddenly struck dumb and confounded by these amazing discoveries of his. He sees discrepancies everywhere in the Gospel narrative, e.g.: [47]

> "Judas' death is *differently* described." "Herod is introduced by Luke and not mentioned by the others." "Jesus carried His own Cross in one account, while Simon of Cyrene bore it in another. Jesus gave no answer to Pilate, says Matthew; He explains that His Kingdom was not of the world, says John. Mary His Mother sat *(sic)* at the foot of the Cross, according to St. John; it was not His Mother, but Mary the mother of Salome *(sic)* 'who beheld Him from afar,' according to Mark and Matthew. There was a guard set to watch the tomb, says Matthew; there is no mention of one by the others."

At first we thought Mr. Laing must have meant *differences* and not discrepancies; but the following paragraph forbade so lenient an interpretation. "The only other mention of Mary by St. John, who describes her as sitting *(sic)* by the foot of the Cross, is apocryphal, being directly contradicted by the very precise statement [48] in the three other Gospels, that the Mary who was present on that occasion was a different woman, the mother of Salome." Even his youngest readers ought to open their eyes at

this. Similarly he thinks the omission of the Lord's Prayer by St. Mark tells strongly against its authenticity. [49]

II.

We must now say something about the great facts of evolutionary philosophy which have shattered dogmatic Christianity to pieces, and have made it impossible for any sincere man to remain a Christian. To say that Mr. Laing is absolutely certain of the all-sufficiency of evolutionism to explain everything that is knowable to the human mind, that he does not hint for a moment that this philosophy is found by the "bell-wethers" of science to be every day less satisfactory as a complete *rationale* of the physical cosmos; is really to understate the case for sheer lack of words to express the intensity of his conviction. His fundamental fact is that, however theologians may shuffle out of the first chapter of Genesis by converting days into periods, when we come to the story of the Noachean Deluge, we are confronted with such a glaring absurdity that we must at once allow that the Bible is full of myths. For history and science show that man existed probably two hundred thousand years ago, at all events not less than twenty thousand; also that five thousand B.C., a highly organized civilization existed in Egypt, whose monuments of that date give evidence to the full development of racial and linguistic differences as now existing among men; that this plants the common stem from which these have branched off, in an indefinitely remote pre-historic period; that to suppose that the present races and tongues are all derived from one man (Noe), who lived only two thousand B.C., is a monstrous impossibility; still more so, to believe that the countless thousands of species of animals which populate the world were collected from the four quarters of the globe, were housed and fed in the Ark, landed on Mount Ararat, and thence spread themselves out over the world again regardless of interjacent seas. Hence the Bible story of human origins is a mere myth; man has not fallen, but has risen by slow evolution from some ancestor common to him and apes, at a remote period, long sons prior even to the miocene period, which shows man to have been then as obstinately differentiated from the apes as ever. Therefore "all did not die in Adam," and seeing this is the foundation of the dogmatic Christianity invented by Paul, the whole thing collapses like a house of cards. [45]

And indeed, given that the Bible means what Mr. Laing says it means, and that science has proved what he says it has proved, that the two results are incompatible, few would care to deny. As regards the latter condition, let us see some of his reasonings. We are told that "modern science shows that uninterrupted historical records, confirmed by contemporary monuments, carry history back at least one thousand years before the supposed creation of man … and show then no trace of a commencement, but populous cities, celebrated temples, great engineering works, and a high state of the arts and of civilization already existing." [46] Strange to say, Mr. Laing developes a sudden reverence for the testimony of *priests* at the outset of his historical inquiries, and finds that history begins with "priestly organizations;" [47] that the royal records are "made and preserved by special castes of priestly colleges and learned scribes, and that they are to a great extent precise in date and accurate in fact." Of course this does not include Christian priests, but the priests of barbarous cults of many thousand years ago, who, as well as their royal masters, are at once credited with all the delicacy of the accurate criticism which we boast of in these days—how vainly, God knows. We are told one moment that Herodotus "was credulous, and not very critical in distinguishing between fact and fable," that his "sources of information were often not much better than vague popular traditions, or the tales told by guides;" [48] and yet we are to lay great stress on his assertion that the Egyptian priests told him "that during the long succession of ages of the three hundred and forty-five high priests of Heliopolis, whose statues they showed him in the Temple of the Sun, there had been no change in the length of human life or the course of nature." [49] A valuable piece of evidence *if* Herodotus reports rightly, and *if* the priest was not like the average guide, and *if* the statues answered to real existences, and *if* each of the three hundred and forty-five high priests made a truthful assertion of the above to his successor for the benefit of posterity.

Manetho's History is, however, the chief source of our information as to the antiquity of Egyptian civilization. He was commissioned to compile this History by Ptolemy Philadelphus, "from the most authentic temple records and other sources of information," [50] whose infallibility is taken for granted. He was "eminently qualified for such a task, being," as Mr. Laing will vouch, [51] "a learned and judicious man, and a priest of Sebbenytus, one of the oldest and most famous temples." Let us by all means read Manetho's History; but where is it? It is "unfortunately lost, … but fragments of it have been preserved in the works of Josephus, Eusebius, Julius Africanus, and Syncellus…. With the curious want of critical faculty of almost all the Christian Fathers" [52] (so different from the learned, judicious, upright priests of the sun), "these extracts, though professing to be quotations from the same book, contain many inconsistencies and in several instances they have been obviously tampered with, especially by Eusebius, in order to bring their chronology more in accordance with that of the Old Testament, … but there can be *no doubt* that his original work assigned an antiquity to Menes of over 5500 B.C." [53] "On the whole, we have to fall back on Manetho as the only authority for anything like

precise dates and connected history."

Manetho, however, needed confirmation against the aspersions of the orthodox, who thought he might be deficient in critical delicacy, and prone to exaggerate as even later historians had done. Their casuistic minds also suggested that his list comprised Kings who had ruled different provinces simultaneously. But this "effugium" was cut off by the witness of contemporary monuments and manuscripts. "This has now been done to such an extent that it may be fairly said that Manetho is confirmed, and it is fully established, as a fact acquired by science, that nearly all his Kings and dynasties are proved by monuments to have existed, and that, successively." [54]

What is needed for the validity of this argument is a concurrence, which could not possibly be fortuitous, between the clear and undoubted testimony of Manetho and of the monuments. But first of all, what sort of probability is there left of our possessing anything approximately like the results of Manetho: and if we had them, of their historical accuracy? Secondly, is it at all credible that so fragmentary and fortuitous a record as survives in monuments (allowing again their very dubious historical worth) should just happen to coincide with the surviving fragments of our patch-work Manetho, king for king and dynasty for dynasty, as Mr. Laing would have us believe? On the contrary, nothing would throw more suspicion on the interpretation of these monuments than the assertion of such an improbable coincidence. What, then, is the force of this argument from Egyptology? *If* the records from which Manetho compiled were historically accurate; *if* he was perfectly competent to understand them; *if* he was scrupulously honest and critical; *if* from the tampered-with fragments in the Christian Fathers we can arrive at a reliable and accurate knowledge of his results; and *if* the Bible in the original text—whatever that may be—undoubtedly asserts that man was not created till 4000 B.C., then according to certain Egyptologists (Boeck), Menes reigned fifteen hundred years previously, and according to others (Wilkinson), one thousand years subsequently. Similarly as to the argument from coincidence: *if*, as before, we possess Manetho's genuine list intact, and *if* we have the clear testimony of the monuments giving a precisely similar record, this coincidence, apart from all independent value to be given to Manetho or to the monuments, is an effect demanding a cause, for which the most probable is the objective truth from which both these veracious records have been copied. But the monuments are not written in plain English, and need a key; and we must be first assured that Manetho's list has not been used for this purpose. We are told; for example, [55] that the name "Snefura," deciphered on a tablet found at the copper-mines of Wady Magerah, is the name of a King of the third dynasty, who reigned about 4000 B.C. Now *if* there were no doubt about the reading of this name on the tablet, and *if* his date and dynasty were as plainly there recorded, and *if* all this tallies exactly with equally precise particulars in Manetho's list, it would indeed be a remarkable coincidence and would imply some common source, whether record or fact. But if having credited Manetho with the record of such a name and date, one tortures a hieroglyph into a faintly similar name, and concludes at once that the same name must be the same person, and that therefore this is the oldest record in the world, the confirmation is not so striking. That it is so in this instance we do not affirm; but we should need the assertion of a man of more intellectual sobriety than Mr. Laing to make it worth the trouble of investigating.

Passing over the confirmation which he draws from the "known rate of the deposit of Nile mud of about three inches a century," which would give a mild antiquity of twenty-six thousand years to pottery fished up from borings in the mud, since he admits that "borings are not *very* conclusive," we may notice how he deals with evidence from Chaldea on much the same principles. Here, again, the source had been till lately only "fragments quoted by later writers from the lost work of Berosus. Berosus was a *learned priest* of Babylon, who ... wrote in Greek a history of the country from the most ancient times, compiled from the annals preserved in the temples and from the oldest traditions." [56] Still this "learned priest," though antecedently as competent a critic as Manetho, is so portentously mythical in his accounts, that "no historical value can be attached to them," which must be regretted, since he pushes history back a quarter of a million years prior to the Deluge, and the Deluge itself to about half a million years ago. Here, therefore, we are thrown solely upon the independent value of the monumental evidence, and must drop the argument from coincidence. This evidence, we are told, "is not so conclusive as in the case of Egypt, where the lists of Manetho, &c.... The date of Sargon I. [57] (3800 B.C.) rests mainly on the authority of Nabonidus, who lived more than three thousand years later, and may have been mistaken." "The probability of such a remote date is enhanced *by the certainty* that a high civilization existed in Egypt as long ago as 5000 B.C." If the evidence for the antiquity of Chaldee civilization is "less conclusive" than that for Egyptian, and rests on it for an argument *à pari*, it cannot be said in any way to strengthen Mr. Laing's position.

These strictures are directed chiefly to showing Mr. Laing's incapacity for anything like coherent reasoning in historical matters. Subsequently he uses these most lame and impotent conclusions as demonstrated certainties, without the faintest qualification, and builds up on them his refutation of dogmatic Christianity.

However, it is only in his more recent work on *Human Origins* that he thus comes forward as an historian, in preparation for which he seems to have devoted himself to the study of cuneiform and hieroglyphs and mastered the subject thoroughly and exhaustively, before bursting forth from behind the clouds to flood the world with new-born light.

It is deep down in the bowels of the earth, at the bottom of a geological well, that he has found not only truth but, also man—among the monsters,

> Dragons of the prime
> Who tare each other in their slime,

and has hauled him up for our inspection. Mr. Laing is before all else an evolutionist, with an unshaken belief in spontaneous generation. He is quite confident that force and atoms will explain everything. He seems to mean force, pure and simple, without any intelligent direction; atoms, ultimate, homogeneous, undifferentiated. No doubt, if the subsequent evolution depends on the *kind* and *direction* of force, or on the *nature* of the atoms; then there is a remoter question for physics to determine; but if, as he implies, force and atoms are simple and ultimate, then evolution is as fortuitous as a sand-storm, or more so. All prior to force and atoms is "behind the veil." "The material universe is composed of ether, matter, and energy." [58] Ether is a billion times more elastic than air, "almost infinitely rare," [59] its oscillations must be at least seven hundred billions per second, "it exerts no gravitating or retarding force;" in short, Mr. Laing has to confess some uncertainty about his original dogma as to the triple constituents of the universe, and say "that it may be *almost doubted* whether such an ether has any real material existence, and is anything more than a sort of mathematical [why 'mathematical'?] entity." [60] "It is clear that matter really does consist of minute particles which do not touch," and even these we must conceive of as "corks as it were floating in an ocean of ether, causing waves in it by their own proper movement," [61]—an explanation which loses some of its helpfulness when we remember that the ethereal ocean is only a mathematical entity. "A cubic centimetre contains 21,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 molecules," "the number of impacts received by each molecule of air during one second will be 4,700 millions. The distance traversed between each impact averages 95/1000000 of a millimetre," and so on with lines of ciphers to overawe the gaping millions with Mr. Laing's minute certainty as to the ultimate constitution of matter. [62]

As to *how* atoms came into existence, he can only reply, "Behind the veil, behind the veil;" for it is at this point at last that he becomes agnostic.[63] The notion of creation is rejected (after Spencer) as inconceivable, because unimaginable, as though the origination of every change in the phenomenal world were not just as unimaginable; we see movement *in process*, and we see its results, but its inception is unimaginable, and its efficient cause still more so.

The evolution of man is practically taken for granted, the only question being the *when*.

We have the old argument from embryonic transformism brought forward without any hint that later investigation tends to show differentiation further and further back, prior to segmentation and, according to some, in the very protoplasm itself. Nothing could be more inaccurate than to say "every human being passes through the stage of fish and reptile before arriving at that of a mammal and finally of man." [64] All that can be truly said is that the embryonic man is at certain stages not superficially distinguishable from the embryonic fish—quite a different thing, and no more significant than that the adult man possesses organs and functions in common with other species of the animal genus.

Mr. Laing's own conclusions from skulls and human remains which he takes to be those of tertiary man, show man to be as obstinately unlike the "dryopithecus" as ever, in fact, the reputedly oldest skulls [65] are a decided improvement on the Carnstadt and Neanderthal type. Even then man seems to have been the same flint-chipping, tool-making, speaking animal as now. So convinced is he of this essential and ineradicable difference in his heart, that seeing traces of design in palaeolithic flint flakes, and so forth, he has "not the remotest doubt as to their being the work of human hands,"—"as impossible to doubt as it would be if we had found clasp-knives and carpenters adzes." [66] Perhaps Professor Boyd-Dawkins, who credits the "dryopithecus" with these productions, is a more consistent evolutionist; but at present Mr. Laing is defending a thesis as to *man's* antiquity. Yet he has just said that these flint instruments are "*only one step* in advance of the rude, natural stone which an *intelligent* orang or chimpanzee might pick up to crack a cocoa-nut with." Truly a very significant step, though it be only one. How hard this is to reconcile with what Mr. Laing ascribes to dogs and ants elsewhere, or with what he says on page 173, "These higher apes remain creatures of very considerable intelligence.... There is a chimpanzee now in the Zoological Gardens ... which can do *all but* speak" [either it speaks, or it does not. It is precisely a case of the "only one step" quoted above. Here if anywhere a "miss is as good as a mile"], "which understands almost every word the keeper says to it, and when told to sing will purse out its lips and try to utter connected notes." [How on earth do we

know what it is trying to do?] "In their native state they (apes) form societies and obey a chief." [The old fallacy of metaphors adverted to in relation to ants and dogs.] Yet "no animal has ever learned to speak," "no chimpanzee or gorilla has ever been known to fashion any implement." [67] Their nearest approach to invention is in the building of huts or nests, in which they "are very inferior to most species of birds, to say nothing of insects." On the other hand, "as regards tool-making, no human race is known which has not shown some faculty in this direction." [68] "The difference is a very fundamental one," and "may be summed up in the words 'arrested development.'" Words, indeed! but what do they mean? They mean that these animals have not developed the faculties of speech and tool-making, which would have been most useful to them in the struggle for existence, the reason being *that they did not*; and this reason is exalted into a cause or law of "arrested development." Who or what arrested it? The advantage of the term is that it implies that they were on the point of developing, that they could "all but speak," were "trying to utter connected notes," were "but one step" behind flint axes, when some cosmic power said, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further."

If the dog had organs of speech or an instrument like the hand by which to place himself in closer relation to the outer world, he would doubtless be on a footing of mental equality with man, according to Mr. Laing. [69] The elephant's trunk accounts for his superior sagacity, and the horse suffers by his hoof-enclosed forefoot. [70] "Given a being with man's brain, man's hand, and erect stature, *it is easy to see* how intelligence *must* have been gradually evolved." [71] Now honestly it seems to us that many animals are as well provided as man is with a variety of flexible organs of communication with the outward world (for example, the antennae of insects, the prehensile tails of some monkeys, whose hands are as lithe as man's and articulated bone for bone and joint for joint). But letting this pass, we thought evolutionists allowed that structure is determined by function, rather than the converse; and so the confession that "it is not so easy to see how this difference of the structure arose," [72] surprises us, coming from Mr. Laing; though why this difference should exist at all, on evolution principles, is a far greater difficulty. Yet he confesses that "the difference in structure between the lowest existing race of man and the highest existing ape, [73] is too great to admit of one being possibly the direct descendant of the other." The ape, then, is not a man whose development is arrested. "The negro in some respects makes a slight approximation, … still he is essentially a man, and separated by a wide gulf from the chimpanzee or gorilla. Even the idiot is … an arrested man and, not an ape." [74]

Nearly all these (higher intellectual and moral) faculties appear in a rudimentary state in animals…. Still there is this wide distinction that even in the highest animals these faculties remain rudimentary and seem incapable of progress, while even in the lowest races of man they have reached a much higher level [75] and seem capable of almost unlimited development. [76] Why does he not seek out the reason of this, or is he satisfied with the *words* "arrested development"? If I find a child who can repeat a poem of Tennyson's, am I to be puzzled because it cannot originate one as good, or go on even to something better? Am I to ascribe to it a rudimentary but arrested poetic faculty? Surely the same poem proceeding from the lips of the poet and of the child he has taught, are essentially different effects, though outwardly the same. If there were a true living germ, it would most certainly develope. If the savage developes through contact with the civilized man after centuries of degradation, why have not domesticated dogs, who are, according to Laing, their intellectual and moral equals, developed long ago?

However, as "evolution has become the axiom of science and is admitted by every one who has the slightest pretensions to be considered a competent authority," [77] it is preposterous to suppose man an exception, whatever be the difficulties. [78] And so Mr. Laing, assuming axiomatically that man and the ape have a common ancestor, is interested to make the differences between them deeply marked, and that, as far back as he can, for thereby "Human Origins" are pushed back by hundreds of thousands of years. If miocene man is as distinct from the ape as recent man, the inference is that we are then as far from the source as ever. Hence it is to geology he looks for the strongest basis of his position. One thought till lately that geology was a tentative science, hardly credited with the name of science, but Mr. Laing wisely and boldly classes it among the "exact sciences," whose subject-matter is "flint instruments, incised bones, and a few rare specimens of human skulls and skeletons, the meaning of which has to be deciphered by skilled experts." [79] "The conclusions of geology," up to the Silurian period, "are approximate facts, not theories." [80]

If he means that the only legitimate data of geologists are facts of observation, classified and recorded, well and good; but to deny that they deal largely in hypotheses, and use them constantly as the premisses for inferences which are equally hypothetical, is palpably absurd. First of all we are to "assume the principle of uniformity" which Lyell is said to have established on an unassailable basis and to have made the fundamental axiom of geological science. He "has shown conclusively that while causes identical with … existing causes will, *if given sufficient time*, account for all the facts hitherto observed, there is not a single fact which *proves* the occurrence of a totally different order of causes." [81] This, however, is (1) limited to the period of geology which gives record of organic life, and not to

the earlier astronomical period; nor (2) does it exclude changes in temperature, climate, distribution of seas and lands; nor (3) does it "*affirm positively* that there may not have been in past ages explosions more violent than that of Krakatoa; lava-streams more extensive than that of Skaptar-Jokul, and earthquakes more powerful than that which uplifted five or six hundred miles of the Pacific coast of South America six or seven feet." [82] Now, seeing that all these cataclysms have occurred within the brief limits of most recent time, compared with which the period of pretended uniformity is almost an eternity, what sort of presumption or probability is there that such occurrences should have been confined to historical times; and is not the presumption all the other way? Again, it is largely on the supposition of this antecedently unlikely uniformity, that Mr. Laing argues to the antiquity of life on earth; whereas Lyell's conclusion warrants nothing of the kind, being simply: that present causes, "*given sufficient time*," would produce the observed effects. [83]

Our tests of geologic time are denudation and deposition. We are told "the present rate of denudation of a continent is known with *considerable accuracy* from careful measurements of the quantity of solid matter carried down by rivers." [84] Now it is a considerable tax on our faith in science to believe that the *débris* of the Mississippi can be so accurately gauged as to give anything like approximate value to the result of one foot of continental denudation in 6,000 years. We cannot of course suppose this to be the result of 6,000 years registered observations, but an inference from the observations of some comparatively insignificant period; and we have also to suppose that the very few rivers which have been observed form a sufficient basis for a conclusion as to all rivers. In fact, a more feebly supported generalization from more insufficient data it is hard to conceive. To speak of it as "an *approximation* based on our knowledge of the time in which similar results on a smaller scale have been produced by existing natural laws within the historical period," [85] is a very inadequate qualification, especially when we have just been told that "here, at any rate, we are on comparatively certain ground, ... these are measurable facts which have been ascertained by competent observers." [86]

Assuming this rate of denudation as certain, and also the estimate of the known sedimentary strata as 177,000 feet in depth, we are to conclude that the formation took 56,000,000 years. A mountain mass which ought to answer to certain fault 15,000 high, and therefore is presumed to have vanished by denudation, points to a term of 90,000,000 years as required for the process. [87]

"Reasoning from these *facts*, assuming the rate of change in the forms of life to have been the same formerly, Lyell concludes that geological phenomena postulate 200,000,000 years at least," [88] "to account for the undoubted facts of geology since life began." [89] On the other hand, mathematical astronomy, [90] on theories which Mr. Laing complains of as wanting the solidity of geological calculations (yet which do not involve more, but fewer assumptions), cannot allow the sun a past existence of more than 15,000,000 years. [91] "It is evident that there must be some fundamental error on one side or the other," [92] "for the laws of nature are uniform, and there cannot be one code for astronomers, and one for geologists." But while modestly relegating this slight divergency among the "bell-wethers of science" (bell-wethers, I presume, because the crowd follow them like sheep), to the "problems of the future," Mr. Laing is quite confident that we should "distrust these mathematical calculations," and rely on conclusions based on *ascertained facts* and undoubted deductions from them, rather than on abstract and doubtful theories, "which would so reduce geological time as to negative the idea of uniformity of law and evolution, and introduce once more the chaos of catastrophes and supernatural interferences."[93] As regards the ice-age, Mr. Laing is professedly interested in putting it as far back as possible, since "a short date for that period shortens that for which we have positive proof of the existence of man, and ... a very short date ... brings us back to the old theories of repeated and recent acts of supernatural interference." [94] Strange, that in the same page he should refer to Sir J. Dawson as an "extreme instance" of one who approaches the question with "theological prepossessions;" and of course in complete ignorance of Mr. Laing's indubitable conclusions about the antiquity of Egyptian civilization. Unfortunately, even the best scientists have not that perfect freedom from bias, which gives Mr. Laing such a towering advantage over them all. "An authority like Prestwich," who "cannot be accused of theological bias," influenced, however, by a servile astronomical bias, "reduces to 20,000 years a period to which Lyell and modern geologists assign a duration of more than 200,000 years;" [95] which "shows in what a state of uncertainty we are as to this vitally important problem;" for this time assigned by Prestwich "would be clearly insufficient to allow for the development of Egyptian civilization, as it existed 5,000 years ago, from savage and semi-animal ancestors; as is *proved* to be the case with the horse, stag, elephant, ape," and so on. [96] Now Prestwich, we are told elsewhere, is "the first living authority on the tertiary and quaternary strata." [97] If, then, astronomical prepossession can reduce 200,000 to 20,000 years, the sin of theology, which reduces 20,000 to 7,000 is comparatively venial. Prestwich's two objections are (1) the data of astronomy, and (2) "the difficulty of conceiving that man could have existed for 80,000 or 100,000 years without change and without progress." The former is "only one degree less mischievous than the theological prepossession." However, Prestwich has some "facts" as well as prepossessions, such as "the rapid advance of the glaciers of Greenland,"[98] which does not accord with the generalization

from the Swiss glaciers;[99] and the quicker erosion of river valleys, due to a greater rainfall; facts which, however, are met by "a *minute description* of the successive changes by which in post-glacial time the Mersey valley and estuary were brought into their present condition, with an estimate of the time they may have required;" which is "in round numbers 60,000 years," as opposed to Prestwich's 10,000 or 8,000. [100] The 200,000 years for the ice-age depends chiefly on Croll's theory of secular variation of the earth's orbitular eccentricity; but we are told it is open to the "objection that it requires us to assume a periodical succession of glacial epochs" of which two or three "must have occurred during each of the great geological epochs. [101] This is opposed to geological evidence." "'Not proven' is the verdict which most geologists would return." "The confidence with which Croll's theory was first received has been a good deal shaken." "We have to fall back, therefore, on the geological evidence of deposition and denudation … in any attempt to decide between the 200,000 years of Lyell and the 20,000 years of Prestwich." [102]

As to his arguments based on ancient human remains, their value depends first on the accuracy of his geological conclusions, and then on preclusion of all possibility of the conveyance of the remains from upper strata to lower; on the certainty, moreover, of traces of design in many of the would-be miocene or tertiary flint instruments (which Prestwich is doubtful about).[103] He takes care not to tell us that the Carstadt skull which gives name to a race, is a very doubtfully genuine relic of one hundred and thirty years old, whose history is most dubious. His evidence for the absence of the slightest approximation to the simian type even in the oldest relics is cheering to the theologian, though it loses its value when we know it is in the interests of his foregone conclusions as to the unspeakable antiquity of man. The Nampe image, the oldest relic yet discovered, "revolutionizes our conception of this early palaeolithic age," being a "more artistic and better representation of the human form than the little idols of many comparatively modern and civilized people," very like those in Mexico, "believed to be not much older than the date of the Spanish conquest"—"and in truth, I believe, contemporaneous." [104]

As to his treatment of the Bible, it evinces everywhere the crudest anthropomorphic method of interpretation such as we should expect to find in a child or very ignorant person. In truth, Mr. Laing is in a perfectly childish state of mind both as regards the Christian religion and as regards philosophy, sciences, and all the subjects he dabbles with.

For our own part we have at most a general idea as to what exactly the Church does teach or may teach with regard to the interpretation of the Scripture. That she has so far acquiesced in the larger interpretation of Genesiacal cosmogony, that now the literal six-day theory would be very unsafe, forbids us to judge any present interpretation of other parts by the number, noise, or notoriety of its adherents. The universality of the Deluge is by no means the only tolerable interpretation now; though the doctrine of a partial deluge would have been most unsafe a century ago. All this does not mean giving up the inspiration of the record, but determining gradually what is meant by inspiration and the record. What could be less important to Christian dogma than the date of the Deluge or of Adam's creation? If it were proved that the original text *in this point* had been hopelessly corrupted, as the discrepancies between the LXX. numbers and the Hebrew hint to be true to some extent, it would not touch the guaranteed integrity of Christian dogma. If Christ is the "son" of David, and Zachæus is "son" of Abraham, what period may not an apparent single generation stand for, especially in regard to the earlier Patriarchs? As far as the prophetic import of the Deluge is concerned, a very small local affair might be mystically large with foreshadowings, as we see with regard to the enacted prophecies of the later prophets. For the rest, we are quite weary of Mr. Laing, and are content to have shown that everywhere he is the same biassed, inconsequent, untrustworthy writer. His only power is a certain superficial clearness of diction and brilliancy of style, and this is brought to bear on a mass of information drawn confessedly from the labours of others, and selected in the interest of a foregone conclusion, without a single attempt at a fair presentment of the other side.

Here, then, we have a very fair specimen of the pseudo-philosophy which is so admirably adapted to captivate the half-informed, wholly unformed minds of the undiscriminating multitudes who have been taught little or nothing well except to believe in their right, duty, and ability to judge for themselves in matters for which a life-time of specialization were barely sufficient. A congeries of dogmatic assertions and negations raked together from the chief writers of a decadent school, discredited twenty years ago by all men of thought, Christian or otherwise; a show of logical order and reasoning which evades our grasp the instant we try to lay critical hands on it; a profuse expression of disinterested devotion to abstract truth, an occasional bow to conventional morality, a racy, irreverent style, an elaborate display of miscellaneous information; good paper, large type, cheap wood-cuts, and the work is done.

Oct. Nov. 1895.

[Footnote 1: M.S. 319.]

[Footnote 2: Ibid. 319.]

[Footnote 3: M.S. 229, 230.]

[Footnote 4: P.F. 279.]

[Footnote 5: P.F. 280]

[Footnote 6: Ibid.]

[Footnote 7: P.F. 281, 282.]

[Footnote 8: Ibid.]

[Footnote 9: Ibid. 210.]

[Footnote: 10 M.S. Preface]

[Footnote 11: "These subjects ... have been to me the solace of a long life, the delight of *many quiet days*, and the soother of many troubled ones ... a source of enjoyment.

"'The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.'" (H.O. 3.)]

[Footnote: 12 M.S. 319.]

[Footnote: 13 Ibid. 320.]

[Footnote: 14 Cf. Ibid. 104, 282.]

[Footnote 15: This expression seems inconsistent with his here and elsewhere explicit maintenance of the hereditary transmission of gathered moral experiences. He means here to exclude innate ideas of morality as explained by Kant and by other intuitionists.]

[Footnote 16: M.S. 180.]

[Footnote 17: M.S. 285.]

[Footnote 18: M.S. 216.]

[Footnote 19: M.S. 294.]

[Footnote 20: M.S. 298, 299.]

[Footnote 21: P.F. 297. "The truth is that morals are built on a far surer foundation than that of creeds, which are here to-day and gone to-morrow. They are built on the solid rock of experiences, and of the 'survival of the fittest,' which in the long evolution of the human race from primeval savages, have by 'natural selection' and 'heredity' become almost instinctive." (How careless is this terminology. In the previous page he denies morality to be a matter of hereditary instinct.)]

[Footnote 22: P.F. 206.]

[Footnote 23: Ibid. 207.]

[Footnote 24: P.P. 204.]

[Footnote 25: M.S. Preface.]

[Footnote 26: H.O. 3.]

[Footnote 27: P.P. 3.]

[Footnote 28: "The simple undoubting faith which for ages has been the support and consolation of a large portion of mankind, especially of the weak, the humble, the unlearned, who form an immense majority, cannot disappear without a painful wrench, and leaving for a time a great blank behind." (M.S. 284.)]

[Footnote 29: xxxiii.]

[Footnote 30: M.S. 261.]

[Footnote 31: P.F. 176.]

[Footnote 32: P. 177.]

[Footnote 33: P.F. 192.]

[Footnote 34: P. 245.]

[Footnote 35: P.F. 222.]

[Footnote 36: Thus he assumes Mr. Spurgeon's definition of inspiration as the basis of operations (See H.O. 189), and says, "It is perfectly obvious that for those who accept these confessions of faith ... all the discoveries of modern science, from Galileo and Newton down to Lyall and Darwin, are simple delusions."]

[Footnote 37: M.S. 215.]

[Footnote 38: Ibid. 251.]

[Footnote 39: "The *simplest straightforward evidence* of the *earliest* Christian writer who gives any account of their origin, viz., Papias." (P.F. 236.) "What does Papias say? Practically this: that he preferred oral tradition to written documents.... This is a *perfectly clear* and *intelligible* statement made apparently in good faith without any dogmatic or other prepossession.... It has always seemed to me that all theories ... were comparatively worthless which did not take into account *the fundamental fact* of this statement of Papias." (238.) "The *clear* and *explicit* statement of Papias." (250.)]

[Footnote 40: PP. 258—260.]

[Footnote 41: P. 262.]

[Footnote 42: P.F. 266.]

[Footnote 43: With regard to this "very precise statement," it is noticeable that Matthew speaks of "Mary the mother of James and Joses;" Mark, of "Mary the mother of James the less and of Joseph and Salome," but not "of Salome." If Mr. Laing's precise mind had looked for a moment at the text he was criticizing he would have seen that Salome is a common name in the nominative case. St. Luke does not give the names of the women at all. These points are trifling in themselves, but important as evidencing Mr. Laing's standard of intellectual conscientiousness.]

[Footnote 44: P.F. 235]

[Footnote 45: M.S. 332 ff.]

[Footnote 46: H.O. 2.]

[Footnote 47: H.O. 8.]

[Footnote 48: H.O. II]

[Footnote 49: H.O. 9 and 199.]

[Footnote 50: H.O. 10.]

[Footnote 51: This seems, later, to be an inference, not an assertion. "Manetho was a learned priest of a celebrated temple, who *must have had* access to all the temples and royal records and other literature of Egypt, and who *must have been* also conversant with foreign literature to have been selected as the best man to write a complete history of his native country." (H.O. 22.)]

[Footnote 52: He seems to think that Josephus was a Christian, and Syncellus a "Father." We might mention that from the fragments of Africanus' *Pentabiblion Chronicon*, preserved in Eusebius, the author places the Creation at 5499 B.C., which is certainly hardly compatible with his giving such fragments of Manetho as would place Menes one year before that date. If we know nothing of Manetho's results except through these "orthodox" sources, it is inconceivable that Mr. Laing's version of them should have any historical basis whatever. It comes in fine to this, that because their report of Manetho does not give Mr. Laing what he wants, they have been tampered with.]

[Footnote 53: H.O. 11.]

[Footnote 54: H.O. 22.]

[Footnote 55: H.O. 17.]

[Footnote 56: H.O. 42.]

[Footnote 57: "There can be no doubt, moreover, that this Sargon I. is a perfectly historical personage. *A statue of him has been found at Agade."* (H.O. 55.)]

[Footnote 58: M.S. 50.]

[Footnote 59: Ibid.]

[Footnote 60: P.F. 28.]

[Footnote 61: M.S. 61.]

[Footnote 62: "Matter is made of molecules; molecules are made of atoms; atoms are little magnets which link themselves together and form all the complex creations of an ordered cosmos [an ordered order] by virtue of the attractive and repulsive forces which are the result of polarity." (P.F, 223.)]

[Footnote 63: We suppose he has a right to call himself *agnostic* as being a disciple of Professor Huxley, who, we believe, started or revived the term in our own times. Of course he is also a dogmatic materialist, and by no means an "agnostic" in the wider sense of general scepticism.]

[Footnote 64: M.S. 171.]

[Footnote 65: "Not only have no missing links been discovered, but the oldest known human skulls and skeletons, which date from the glacial period and are probably at least one hundred thousand years old, show no very decided approximation towards any such pre-human type. On the contrary," &c. (M.S. 181.) He replies (H.O. 373) that "five hundred thousand years prior to these men of Spy and Neanderthal, the human race has existed in higher physical perfection, nearer to the existing type of modern man," (Cf. P.F. 158.)]

[Footnote 66: M.S. 112, 114.]

[Footnote 67: P.F. 154.]

[Footnote 68: P.F. 154.]

[Footnote 69: M.S. 175.]

[Footnote 70: The horse "may be taken as the typical instance of descent by progressive specialization. What is a horse? It is essentially an animal specialized for ... the rapid progression of a bulky body over plains or deserts" [a definition which applies equally to the camel, &c.]. It commenced existence as a "pentadactyle plantigrade bunodont." For some indefined reason "the first step was to walking on the toes instead of on the flat of the foot, ... which became general in most lines of their descendants. For galloping on hard ground *it is evident* that one strong and long toe, protected by a solid hoof, was more serviceable than four short and weak toes." [But why should it gallop more than other animals; or why on the *hard* ground in the deserts and plains; or would not *four* strong and long toes have been better than one?] "The coalescence of the toes is the fundamental fact in the progress ... by which the primitive bunodont was converted into the modern horse." But we thought evolution was a change from the homogeneous, incoherent to the heterogeneous and coherent: surely the change from five toes to one must have been a misfortune on the whole, if the flexibility of the human hand accounts for man's intellect. The advantages of a convenient gallop over occasional oases of hard ground in the desert would hardly balance that of being able to climb trees. (P.F. 143.)]

[Footnote 71: Cf. P.F. 151.]

[Footnote 72: M.S. 180.]

[Footnote 73: "A wide gap which has never been bridged over." (Huxley,
P.F. 150.)]

[Footnote 74: But cf. M.S. 181. "Attempt after attempt has been made to find some fundamental characters in the human brain, on which to base a generic distinction between man and the brute creation." (P.F. 149.)]

[Footnote 75: Cf. "It is probable, therefore, that this (drill-friction) was the original mode of obtaining fire, but if so it must have required a good deal of intelligence and observation, for the discovery is by no means an obvious one." (M.S. 204.)]

[Footnote 76: P.F. 153.]

[Footnote 77: P.F. 135.]

[Footnote 78: "The inference, therefore, to be drawn alike from the physical development of the individual man and from the origin and growth" [as though he had explained their origin] "of all the faculties which specially distinguish him from the brute creation, … all point to the conclusion that he is the product of evolution." (M.S. 210.) "Man … whose higher faculties of intelligence and morality are *so clearly* … the products of evolution and education." (M.S. 182.)]

[Footnote 79: H.O. 260.]

[Footnote 80: M.S. 48.]

[Footnote 81: P.F. 17.]

[Footnote 82: P.F. 17, 18. "The conclusion is therefore certain that the land at this particular spot must have sunk twenty feet, and again risen as much so as to bring the floor of the temple to its present position, &c. Similar proofs may be multiplied to any extent.… In fact the more we study geology the more we are impressed with the fact that the normal states of the earth is and always has been one of incessant changes." (M.S. 35—9.)]

[Footnote 83: i.e., Lyell says: Present causes could give these effects, given the time. Laing says: Therefore, since they have given these effects, we must suppose the time.]

[Footnote 84: P.F. 18]

[Footnote 85: P.F. 74.]

[Footnote 86: Ibid.]

[Footnote 87: P.F. 20.]

[Footnote 88: M.S. 34, 41.]

[Footnote 89: P.F. 6.]

[Footnote 90: P.F. 23.]

[Footnote 91: M.S. 46.]

[Footnote 92: P.F. 24.]

[Footnote 93: P.F. 32.]

[Footnote 94: P.F. 66.]

[Footnote 95: "Thus giving to palæolithic man no greater antiquity than perhaps about 20,000 to 30,000 years, while, should he be restricted to the so-called post-glacial period, the antiquity need not go back further than from 10,000 to 15,000 years before the time of neolithic man." (57.)]

[Footnote 96: P.F. 67.]

[Footnote 97: M.S. 109.]

[Footnote 98: Prestwich evinces the same recalcitrance according to the *Nineteenth Century*, December 4, 1894, p. 961, being one of the geologists of high standing "who have lately come to believe in some sudden and extensive submergence of continental dimensions in very recent times."]

[Footnote 99: 74.]

[Footnote 100: P.F. 84.]

[Footnote 101: P.F. 69, 70.]

[Footnote 102: P.F. 70.]

[Footnote 103: H.O. 364.]

[Footnote 104: H.O. 388.]

XXI.

"THE MAKING OF RELIGION."

Some twelve years since we read Mr. Tylor's well-known and able work on *Primitive Culture*, and were much impressed with the evident fair-mindedness and courageous impartiality which distinguished the author so notably from the Clodds, the Allens, the Laings, and other popularizers of the uncertain results of evolution-philosophy. For this very reason we made a careful analysis of the whole work, and more particularly of his "animistic" hypothesis, and laid it aside, waiting, according to our wont, for further light bearing upon a difficulty wherewith we felt ourselves then incompetent to deal. This further light has been to some extent supplied to us by Mr. Andrew Lang's *Making of Religion*, which deals mainly with that theory of animism which is propounded by Mr. Tylor, and unhesitatingly accepted, dogmatically preached, and universally assumed, by the crowd of sciolists who follow like jackals in the lion's wake. Without denying the value of our conceptions of God and of the human soul, Mr. Tylor believes that these conceptions, however true in themselves, originated on the part of primitive man in fallacious reasoning from the data of dreams and of like states of illusory vision. He assumes, perhaps with some truth, that the distinction between dream and reality is more faintly marked in the less developed mind; in the child than in the adult, in the savage than in the civilized man. Hence a belief arises in a filmy phantasmal self that wanders abroad in sleep and leaves the body untenanted, and meets and converses with other phantasmal selves. Nor is it hard to see how death, being viewed as a permanent sleep, should be ascribed to the final abandonment of the body by its "dream-stuff" occupant. Whether as dreaded or loved or both, this ever-gathering crowd of disembodied spirits wins for itself a certain *cultus* of praise and propitiation, and reverence, and is humoured with food-offerings and similar sacrifices. Nor is it long before the form of an earthly polity is transferred to that unearthly city of the dead, till for one reason or another some jealous ghost gains a monarchic supremacy over his brethren, and thus polytheism gives place to monotheism. It need not be that this supreme deity is always conceived as a defunct ancestor, once embodied, but no longer in the body. Rather it would seem that the primitive savage, having once arrived at the conception of a ghost, passes by generalization to that of incorporeal beings unborn and undying, of spirits whose presence and power is revealed in stocks and stones, or in idols shaped humanwise—spirits who preside over trees, rivers, and elements, over species and classes and departments of Nature, over tribes and peoples and nations; until, as before, the struggle for existence or some other cause gives supremacy to some one god fittest to survive either through being more conceivable, or more powerful, or in some other way more popular than the rest of the pantheon.

Again, it is assumed that the gods of primitive man are non-ethical, that they do not "make for righteousness;" that they are at most jealous powers to be feared and propitiated. When the savage speaks of a god as good, he only means "favourable to me," "on my side;" he does not mean "good to me if I am good." God is conceived first as power and force; then as non-moral wisdom, or cunning, and only in the very latest developments as holy and just and loving.

Starting with the assumptions of evolutionists, the theory is plausible enough. Nor is it inconceivable that God, without using error and evil directly as a means to truth and good, should passively permit error for the sake of the truth that He foresees will come out of it. Astrology was not incipient astronomy; nor was alchemy primitive chemistry; the end and aim in each case was wholly different. Yet the pseudo-science gave birth to the true; as false premisses often lead by bad logic to sound conclusions. Totemism, "a perfectly crazy and degrading belief," says Mr. Lang, "rendered possible—nay, inevitable—the union of hostile groups into large and relatively peaceful tribal societies.... We should never have educated the world thus; and we do not see why it should have been thus done. But we are very anthropomorphic, and totally ignorant of the conditions of the problem." In like manner it might have been, that God willed to let men wander through the slums and backways of animism into the open road of theism.

But our concern is not with what might have been, but with what was.

Mr. Lang contends, first, that belief in spirits and in a circumambient spiritual world, more probably originated in certain real or imaginary experiences of supernormal phenomena, than in a fallacious explanation of dreams; then, that belief in a supreme god is most probably not derived from or dependent upon belief in ghosts.

Consistently with the whole trend of his thought in his recent work connected with psychical research, in *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, in *Cock-Lane and Common-Sense*, Mr. Lang begins by entering a protest against the attitude observed towards the subject by contemporary science, especially by anthropology, which, as having been so lately "in the same condemnation," might be expected to show itself superior to that injustice which it had itself so much reason to complain of. Yet anthropology, abandoning the first principles of modern science, still refuses to listen to the facts alleged by psychical research, and justifies its refusal on Hume's oft-exploded fallacy, namely, on an *à priori* conviction of their impossibility and therefore of their non-occurrence.

However wide the range of experience upon which physical generalizations are based, it can never be so wide as on this score alone to prove the inherent possibility of exceptions; more especially when we consider the confinement of the human race to what is relatively a momentary existence on a whirling particle of dust in a sandstorm. There may indeed be abundant evidence of a certain impetus or tendency enduring from a comparatively distant and indefinite past and making for an equally indefinite future; but there is not, cannot be evidence against the possibility of interference from other laws whose paths, at points unknown and incalculable, intersect those followed by the (to us) ordinary course of events.

And in this wholesome agnosticism we are confirmed when we see that while some animals are deprived of certain senses which we possess, and all of them of the gift of reason, others are apparently endowed with senses unknown to us, and are taught by seeming instincts which surpass what reason could effect; whence we may infer that the likelihood of our being *en rapport* with the greater part of the *possible* phenomena amidst which we live, or of our possessing all possible senses or the best of those possible, is infinitely small. What a magician a man with eyes would be among a race of sightless men; or a man with ears among a deaf population! How studiously would the scientists explain the effects of sight as produced by subtilty of hearing; and those of hearing as due to abnormal sensitiveness in some other respect!

But though there be no *à priori* impossibility in deviations from the beaten track, yet there is a certain *à priori* improbability which may seem to justify those who refuse to go into alleged instances of the supernormal. There is a story against Thomas Aquinas, that on being invited by a frisky brother-monk to come and see a cow flying, or some such marvel, he gravely came and saw not, but expressed himself far more astounded at the miracle that a religious man should say "the thing which was not." This is certainly a glorious antithesis to Hume's position. Whether we take it to illustrate the Saint's extreme lack of humour, or a subtler depth of humour veiled under stolidity, or his rigorous veracity, or his guileless confidence in the veracity of others, we certainly cannot approve it as an example of the attitude we ought to observe with regard to every newly recounted marvel. Truly there might be more liberality, more enlightenment, more imagination in such a ready credulity, than in the wall-eyed, ear-stopping scepticism of popular science; but the mere inner possibility of a recounted marvel does not oblige us to search into the matter unless the evidence offered bear some reasonable proportion to the burden it has to support. That this is the case as regards crystal-gazing, telepathy, possession, and kindred manifestation, is what Mr. Lang contends; nor would he have any quarrel with the anthropologists were they not fully impressed with the importance of similar or even weaker cumulative evidence for conclusions which happen to be in harmony with their preconceived hypotheses. Where such evidence exists it must be faced, and at least its existence must be explained.

True criticism should either account for the seeming breach of uniformity, by reducing it to law; or else should show how the assertion if false ever gained credence; but in no case is it scientific to put aside, on an *à priori* assumption, evidence that is offered from all sides in great abundance. Psychic research is daily applying to that tangled mass of world-wide evidence ancient and modern for the existence of an X-region of experience, those same critical and historical principles which created modern science. Men who, as often as not, have no religion or no superstition themselves, see that both religion and superstition are universal phenomena, and cannot be neglected by those who would study humanity historically and scientifically. Even if there be nothing in hallucinations, apparitions, scrying, second-sight, poltergeists, and the rest, there is a great deal in the fact that belief in these things is as wide and as old as the world; it is a fact to be explained. "Each man," says Meister, "commonly defends himself as long as possible from casting out the idols which he worships in his soul; from acknowledging a master-error, and admitting any truth that brings him to despair;" and indeed a system as complete and compact as that of Mr. Spencer or Mr. Tylor is apt to become an intellectual idol forbidding under pain of infidelity all inquiries that might cause it to totter on its throne, or which might unravel in an instant what has been woven by years of hard and honest thought. Few of us are in a position to cast stones on this score; still, recognizing the weakness more clearly in others than in ourselves, we are justified in reckoning with it, and in discounting for the unwillingness of men of science to listen to facts inconsistent with long-cherished theories, and for their tendency to accumulate and magnify evidence on the other side. "If the facts not fitting their theories are little observed by authorities so popular as Mr. Huxley and Mr. Spencer; if *instantiae contradictoriae* are ignored by them, or left vague; if these things are done in the green tree, we may easily imagine what shall be done in the dry. But we need not war with hasty *vulgarisateurs* and headlong theorists."

We cannot for a moment question the sincerity of purpose and honesty of intention of many of the leaders of modern scientific enlightenment, whatever we may think of the said crowd of *vulgarisateurs* —those camp-followers who bring disgrace on every respectable cause. But beside wilful bias and unfairness, there is unconscious bias from which none of us are free, but from which we need to be delivered by mutual criticism; for, however much a man can see of himself, he can never get behind his

own back. Of such unwitting dishonesty men of thought are abundantly guilty, when deeming themselves to be governed only by reason, they are in fact slaves to some intellectual fashion of the day. Not one of them in a thousand would dare to appear in public with the clothes of last century, or to face the laughter of a crowd of his compeers. Hence a certain indocility and rigidness of mind which they only escape who live out of the fashion or have strength to lead it or to live above it. Simple, whether from greatness or littleness, they escape the narrowing influence inseparable from being identified, even in their own mind, with a school or coterie; and can afford to say things as they see them.

Contemporary fashion says at present that there are to be no miracles, nothing supernormal; whatever cannot be reduced in any way to known laws and causes can be flatly denied, for the supposition of unknown causes and laws is rank heresy. Until more recent years, it was not permitted to listen to or show any disposition to investigate the narratives of phenomena which have since been "explained" and reduced to such legalized causes as hysteria or hypnotism, and even (of late) to thought-transference. But since this happy reconciliation has been effected, such stories are allowed to be believed on ordinary evidence, although the accounts of other "unclassed" supernormal marvels coming from the same lips with the same attestation are still brushed aside as traveller's tales, or as the puerilities of hagiography—not worth a thought. One would think that some kind of apology or reparation were due to ecclesiastical tradition, which was credited with wholesale lying so long as its recorded wonders were classed among impossibilities by the intellectual fashion-mongers, but it seems we have only partly escaped the reproach of knavery to incur that of wholesale folly for not having seen that these apparent miracles were but forms of hysteria or hypnotism.

Yet what is hysteria and what does it really explain? [1] Surely the etymology throws no light on the subject! Is it then merely a name for the unknown cause of phenomena every whit as strange as those which were held incredible till their like had been actually witnessed and forced upon the unwilling eyes of science beyond all possibility of denial? Is it that science blindly refused even to weigh the evidence for abnormal facts till the same or similar had become matters of personal observation? Is it that every reported breach of her assumed uniformities is incredible, because impossible, until the possibility has been proved by some fact which is then named, erected into a class, a cause, a law, and used to explain away similar facts formerly denied, and is thus taken into that bundle of generalizations called the "laws of nature"? The ancients assumed all heavenly motion to be circular of necessity, and where facts gave against them, they patched the matter up with an epicycle or two. Are not hysteria, hypnotism, and thought-transference of the nature of epicycles? It is now confessed that the mind can so affect and dominate the body as to produce blisters and wounds by mere force of suggestion and expectancy; that a like "faith" can cure, not only such ailments as are clearly connected with the nerves, but others where such connection is not yet traceable. And this is supposed to tell in some way against like marvels reported by hagiology, as though they were explained by being observed and named. Yet what did that supposed marvellousness consist in, except in a seeming revelation of the power and superiority of mind over matter, and of things unseen over things seen and palpable; and in proving that there were more wonders in heaven and earth than were dreamt of by a crude and self-satisfied materialism? They were taken as evidence of a circumambient X-region where the laws of mechanics were set at defiance and where the fetters of time and place were loosened or cast aside. Such an X-region being supposed by every supernatural religion and denied by most of those who deny religion, and on the same grounds, its establishment by any kind of experiment is rightly considered in some sort to make for religion. Indeed, it is just on this account that the evidence for it is so opposed by those who are pre-occupied by the anti-religious bias of contemporary science. But unless hysterical effects can be shown to be ultimately due, not to mind, but to matter acting on matter, according to methods approved by materialism, hysteria remains a word-cause and no more, like the meat-cooking quality of the roasting-jack.

Hypnotism is a kindred cause in every way. It means sleep-ism; yet manifestly it deals with characteristics which are utterly unlike those of sleep; and it is precisely these that need to be explained away in conformity with received laws, unless we are to find in these phenomena evidence of such modes of being and operation as every kind of religion postulates. "Possession" is of course a fable; the superabundant world-wide, world-old evidence for the phenomenon was thrust aside without a glance, till hypnotic experiments brought to light what is called "alternating personality." As though this name had explained everything in accordance with materialism, forthwith it was permitted to believe the aforesaid evidence, provided one laughed loudly enough at the theory of "possession." It is allowed that the hypnotic patient may in some sense be said to be "possessed" by the hypnotiser for the time being; nay, even a certain chronic possession of this kind is observable. But an invisible hypnotiser and possession by a disembodied spirit is still out of fashion, notwithstanding all Mrs. Piper's efforts and Dr. Hodgson's audacious declaration of his not very willing belief that those who speak through her "are veritably the personalities they claim to be, and that they have survived the change we call death."

Thought-transference, however, promises to be a potent and popular solvent of psychic problems. Thought-transference was a supremely ludicrous supposition till comparatively recently; nor could there be any credible testimony for what was known antecedently to be quite impossible. But some way or other, facts which demanded a name were forced upon the direct observation of science, and so Mr. F. Podmore has written a book in which, assuming thought-transference to be a scientifically recognized possibility, he proceeds to reduce many of the marvels collected by the S.P.R. to that simple and obvious cause, and to reject the residue on the sound old principle that what is known to be impossible cannot be true. Hallucinations, solitary and collective, and other perplexing instances are tortured into cases of thought-transfer with an ingenuity which we should smile at in a mediaeval scholastic explaining the universe by the four elements and the four temperaments. But is not thought-transference itself lamentably unscientific? No; because we see that unconnected magnets affect one another sympathetically; and the brain being a sort of magnet may well affect distant brains. Thought is a kind of electricity, and electricity, if not exactly a fluid, yet may some day be liquefied and bottled. At all events, science has seen something very remotely analogous to thought-transference and every whit as unintelligible and antecedently incredible till observed; and therefore it is permissible to listen to the evidence for it, and forced thereto, to accept the fact.

But have we really disposed of ghosts if we prove the appearance to be caused by a subjective modification of the perceiver's sensorium and not by a modification of the external medium—the air or the ether? Since it is a question of a spiritual substance independent of spatial dimensions and relations, said to be present only so far and where its effects and manifestations are present, what does it matter whether it reports itself by an effect outside or inside the percipient—whether it be a "vision sensible to feeling, as to sight," or but "a false creation proceeding from a heat-oppressed brain"? Is not this very distinction of outside and inside in the matter of perceptions open to no slight ambiguity? The savage, familiar with the electric sparks caused by the friction of deer-skins, ascribes the *aurora borealis* to the friction of a jostling herd of celestial deer. "Nonsense," says science, after centuries of false hypotheses, "it is nothing more nor less than electricity." This is very much the way she is dealing with the supernormal at present; brushing aside as wholly nonsensical, beliefs that envelope a core of useful fact in a wrapping of crude explanation, and then receiving the same facts as new discoveries, because she has fitted them into an involucre more to her own liking, though perhaps but little less crude. "Not deer-skin," says science, "but amber; not miracle, but faith-cure; not prophetic insight, but thought-transference; not apparition, but hallucination." And so with the rest.

Considering then the bias of the dominant scientific school, which makes it refuse even to examine the carefully gathered evidence of the S.P.R.; we need not wonder if the reports of travellers concerning the existence of like phenomena among savages and barbarians all over the world are dismissed with a certain *à priori* superciliousness. Yet surely, on evolutionist principles, the only possible clue to the mode in which belief in spirits and in God may have originated with "primitive man," is the mode in which those beliefs are actually now sustained, and, so to say, "proved" by the most primitive specimens of existing humanity; by, for example, those bushmen of Australia whose facial angle and cerebral capacity is supposed to leave no room for much difference between their mind and that of the higher anthropoids. Doubtless it is hard to get anything like scientific evidence out of people so uncultivated, whose language and modes of conception are so alien to our own. Individual travellers, moreover, have been the victims of their own credulity, stupidity, self-conceit, and prejudice. "But the best testimony of the truth of the reports as to the actual belief in the facts, is the undesigned coincidence of the evidence from all quarters. When the stories brought by travellers, ancient and modern, learned and unlearned, pious or sceptical, agree in the main, we have all the certainty that anthropology can offer."

From this ever-growing mass of evidence, it would appear that the universal belief among savages in a spirit-world is mainly strengthened and sustained, not by the phenomena of dreaming but by what Mr. Spencer would call "alleged" supernormal manifestations, such as those of clairvoyance, crystal-gazing, apparitions, miracles, prophecies, possession, and the like. For belief in such marvels exists beyond doubt, and furnishes a very obvious and logical basis for the further belief in the invisible causes of these visible effects; nor should we have recourse to an hypothetical and more indirect explanation of belief in a spirit-world when an actual and direct explanation is at hand. If we see the branch growing out of the tree, we need not inquire what trunk it sprang from, unless we have strong evidence that it is only a graft. All investigation tends to show that savages believe in spirits and in the spirit-world because they witness, or firmly believe they witness, supernormal phenomena.

Besides this, it must be allowed that together with the *normal* phenomena of dreaming, there are abnormal dreams which even to cultivated minds seem at times as supernormal as second-sight or prophecy. But it is not on supernormal, but on normal dreams that animists base their explanation. We need not deny that dreams and delirium may have given palpable shape to the conception of a ghost, and may also have helped forward the notion of a spirit by furnishing something intermediary between

the grossness of our waking sense-experiences, and the altogether elusive and difficult thought of unembodied will and intelligence independent of space and time.

In the main then it seems more plausible to maintain that the idea of unembodied or disembodied spirits was shaped by that instinctive law of our mind which makes us argue from the nature of effects to the nature of the agency. The first impulse would be to ascribe every intelligent effect to some human agency, but other circumstances would subsequently incline the savage reluctantly to divest the agent of one or more of the limitations of humanity, and to clothe him with preter-human attributes. Nearly all the supernormal phenomena believed in by primitive man—so far as we can judge of him from contemporary savagery—would suggest the agency of an invisible man; clairvoyance, and other manifestations of preternatural knowledge, would suggest independence of the senses in the acquisition of knowledge; every kind of "miracle" would bespeak an extension of power over physical nature beyond human wont; while all these together would point to that freedom from the trammels of space and time, which is of the very essence of immaterial or spiritual subsistence. Thus, by a gradual process of dehumanization, the mind would be instinctively led from the notion of a man magnified in all excellences and refined from all limitations, to the conception of spirit. But coexistently with this progress of the reason, the imagination would ever strain to clothe the thought in bodily form as far as possible, and would cling to the notions suggested by dreams and waking hallucinations, while language, after its wont, would speak of the spirit as the *umbra*, the *imago*, the shadow, the breath, the attenuated replica of the body. Thus we find among all men, savage and civilized, a certain unsteadiness in their notion of spirit, whether created or divine—a continual tendency to corruption and anthropomorphism, due to the conflict between reason and imagination, resulting so often in the domination of the latter.

For this view of the subject it is not necessary that we should admit the preternatural character of the phenomena which form the subject-matter of psychical research, but only that we should acknowledge the hardly disputable fact that belief in such marvels is universal and persistent among savages—a fact which science is bound by its own principles to explain, and not to ignore. Whether, as Mr. Lang seems inclined to think, among much illusion, chicanery, and ignorance, there may not be truth enough to make the inference of an X-world legitimate, whether the said universality, persistence, and recrudescence of this seeming credulity can be accounted for in any other satisfactory way, is a further consideration. If in some dim fashion the Northern Indians anticipated modern science in their explanation of the *aurora borealis*, connecting it with familiar electric manifestations, may it not be, asks Mr. Lang, that in their inference from supernormal facts which experimental science refuses to hear of or to examine, they have again been sagaciously beforehand? Doubtless their explanation is crude and inadequate in both cases; but is it much more so than that offered by supposing electricity to be a fluid subject to currents; or by assigning many inexplicable psychic phenomena to "hysteria"—a mere word-cause?

The supposition is somewhat favoured if we give ear to that crowd of witnesses whose combined evidence, duly discounted and tested, makes it clear that even among those who ought to have been civilized out of all belief in aught behind the veil, the very same superstitions break out, or creep in, time after time, with new names perhaps, new clothes, new faces, but in substance identical with those held by what we esteem the most benighted races.

Further, it is evident that savages pay attention—over-attention, no doubt—to these supernormal phenomena, being free from hostile philosophic bias in the matter, and bent the other way; and that in consequence they have everywhere observed, classified, and systematized them in their own rude, simple way, and have thus forestalled what the S.P.R., in the teeth of science, is now endeavouring to do scientifically. With us, moreover, it is mere chance that reveals a "medium," or hypnotic subject here and there: but with savages they are sought out diligently, and all who have any latent aptitude that way are detected and utilized; and thus the field of their experience is considerably widened.

But besides all this, it seems more than plausible to suppose that among primitive and undeveloped races such preternatural phenomena either occur, or seem to occur, much more frequently and extensively; and that apparently supernormal faculties are more often developed.

Nor can this be explained solely on the score of their readier credulity and their lack of criticism; for there is good evidence to show that the development of the rational and self-directive faculties is at the sacrifice of those instinctive and intuitional modes of operation which do duty for them while man is yet in a state of pupilage. Memory, for example, is fresher and more assimilative in childhood, but deteriorates very often as the higher faculties come into use; and indeed we cannot fail to see how the introduction of printing, writing, and mnemonic arts and artifices of all kinds, has lowered the average power of civilized memory, and made the ordinary feats of more primitive times seem to us magical and incredible. We also notice the high development of hearing, sight, and other forms of perception among savages who live by their five senses rather than by their wits. When we descend to the animal-world

we are confronted by cognitive faculties whose effects we see, but of whose precise nature we can form no conjecture whatever. That which guides the migratory birds in their wanderings, and simulates polity in the bee-hive and ant-hill, is not reason, but is something for practical purposes far better than reason. Putting a number of these and of similar considerations together seems to suggest that development in the direction of self-instruction (which is reason) and self-management and independence, is loss as well as gain.

What we gain is no doubt our own in a truer sense than that we had when we hung upon Nature's breast, and were guided passively by instincts and intuitions to purposes that reason can never reach to.

By far the most wonderful and seemingly intelligent work of the soul is that by which it builds up, nourishes, repairs, developes, and finally reproduces the body it dwells in. Yet in all this it is almost as passive and unconscious as a vegetable. The effect is (as far as our comprehension of it goes) altogether preternatural and inexplicable; yet it is far less *our* effect than what we do by reason and by taking thought. What we pay for in dignity we lose in efficiency. While Nature carries us in her arms we move swiftly enough, but when she sets us on our feet to learn independence and self-rule, we cut a sorry figure. In our helplessness she does all for us as though we were yet part of her; but in the measure that we are weaned and begin to fend for ourselves as responsible agents, we are deprived of the aids and easements befitting the childhood of our race.

If this be true, if man in his primitive state possessed intuitive powers which have sunk into abeyance, either through the diversion of psychic energy to the development of other powers, or through desuetude, or as the instincts of the new-born babe are lost when their brief purpose is fulfilled; if the occasional recrudescence of these powers among civilized peoples is really a survival of an earlier state; then indeed we can understand that the evidence, or apparent evidence, for the existence of an X-region, or spirit-world, may have been immeasurably more abundant in the infancy of the human race, than it is now even among contemporary savages.

Put it how we will, it cannot be denied that belief in divination, in diabolic possession, and in magic, has largely contributed to belief in spirits; and that to ignore this contribution by throwing the whole burden on ordinary dreams is unscientific. During sleep Mr. Tylor himself is as much a prey to delusion as the most primitive savage; but the criteria by which on waking we condemn *most* of our dreams as illusions, seem really as accessible and obvious to the child or savage as to the philosopher; though the former through carelessness or poverty of language will perhaps say: "I saw," instead of: "I dreamt I saw." Children will speak as it were historically of even their day-dreams and imaginings, not from any untruthfulness or wish to deceive, but from that romancing tendency rightly reprehended in their elders, who should be alive to the conventional value of language. But the first and most natural use of speech is simply to express and embody the thought that is in us, not to assert, or affirm, or to instruct others. The child's romancing is not intended as assertion, although so taken by prosaic adults. It is from the same instinct which lies at the back of his eternal monologue, of the "Let's pretend" by which he is for the moment transformed into a soldier, or a steam-engine, or a horse. Eye-reading without articulation is impossible for the beginner, and thought that is not talked and acted is impossible for the child. Yet deeply as the child is wrapped up in his dreams, there is nothing more certain than that he is as clear as any adult as to the difference between romance and fact; and so it is no doubt with the savage, who can hardly be denied to have at least as much reason as an average child.

Closer study of the savage points to the conclusion that the civilized man falls into the same error in his regard as many adults do with respect to children, whom they fail hopelessly to interpret through lack of imagination, and to whom they are but tedious and ridiculous when they would fain be instructive and amusing; forgetting that the difference between the two stages of life is rather in the size of the toys played with, than in the way they are regarded. So too we are apt to look on foreign, and still more on savage language, symbolism, ways, and customs, as indicative of a far more radical difference and greater inferiority of mental constitution and ethical instincts than really exists. Mr. Kidd, in his book on Social Evolution, has contended with some plausibility that the brain-power of the Bushman and of the Cockney is much on a par at starting, and that the subsequent divergence is due chiefly to education and moral training; and certainly much of the evidence brought forward in Mr. Lang's volume seems to look that way. If the aboriginal Australian has a faith in the immortality of the soul and in a supreme God, the rewarder of righteousness, if he summarizes the laws of God under the precept of unselfishness; if in all this he is but a type of the universal savage, surely it were well if some of the missionary zeal which is devoted to supplying the heathen with Bibles which they cannot understand, were turned to the work of bringing our own godless millions up to their religious level.

But this takes us to the second and still more interesting part of *The Making of Religion*, which we shall have to discuss in the next section. At present we only wish to insist that it is a mistake to assume that because savages and children are, when compared with ourselves, so little, therefore their

thoughts and ideas can be understood with little difficulty. Contrariwise, as the apparent difference in life and language is greater, the deeper and more patient investigation will it need to detect that radical sameness of mental and moral constitution which binds men together far more than diversity of education and environment can ever separate them. It is, therefore, exceedingly unlikely that either the child or the savage should, by failing to distinguish between dream and reality, introduce into his whole life that incoherence which is just the distinguishing characteristic of dreaming and lunacy. And, as a fact, do we really find the savage as depressed, on waking, by a dreamt-of calamity as by a real one; or as elated after a visionary scalping of foes as after a real victory? Does he on waking look for the said scalps among his collection of trophies, and is he perplexed and incensed at not finding them? Even if, like ourselves, he has occasionally a very vivid and coherent dream reconcilable with his waking circumstances, will he not judge of it by the vast majority of his dreams which are palpable illusions, and not by the few exceptional cases? If at times we ourselves doubt whether we witnessed something or dreamt it, yet we do so not because the seeming fact is one which makes for the existence of another world of a different order to this, but for the very contrary reason. If the savage only dreamt of the dead, he might find in this an evidence of their survival, but he dreams far more often of the living, and that, with circumstances which make the illusion manifest on waking. Seeing the awe and terror which all men have of the supernatural region, we ought, on the animistic hypothesis, to find among savages a great reluctance to go to bed—"to sleep! Perchance to dream—aye, there's the rub!" But we do not. Finally, just as the Chinese, who are supposed to mistake epilepsy for possession, have, unfortunately for the supposition, got two distinct words for the two phenomena, so it will doubtless be found that there is no savage who has not some word to express illusion; or whose language does not prove that he knows dreams are but dreams. We may well doubt if even animals on waking are affected by their dreams as by realities, or if a dog ever bit a man for a kick received in a dream. In short the dream-theory of souls is plausible only in the gross, but melts away under closer examination bit by bit.

Whether the S.P.R. will ever succeed in bottling a ghost, and in submitting it to the tests necessary to convince science, matters little. The real fruit of its labours will be to "convince men of sin," to convict science of being unscientific, and criticism of being uncritical—of being biassed by fashion to the extent of refusing to examine evidence which must be either admitted or explained away. Scepticism and credulity alike are hostile both to science and religion, and it is the common interest of these latter to secure a full recognition, on the one side of the principle of faith, that with God all things are possible; and on the other, of the principle of science which is: to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. Credulity tends to make the actual co-extensive with the possible; while scepticism would limit the possible to the known actual. The true mind would be one in which faith and criticism were so tempered as to secure width without slovenliness, and exactitude without narrowness.

II.

How, apart from the imperfect lingering tradition of some primitive revelation, the belief in a surviving soul originates with contemporary savages, or might have originated among still ruder past races, is a question of some interest, not only for its own sake, but for the sake of whatever little light it may throw upon the more vital question as to the value of that belief. Had the doctrine of souls no other origin than a false inference from the ordinary phenomena of sleeping and dreaming; were it in no sense an instinctive belief, suggested perhaps and confirmed by supernormal facts, it would still have interest for the anthropologist as one of those almost necessary and universal errors through which the human mind struggles to the truth, such as the errors of astrology or alchemy; but it would in no way contribute to the argument for immortality *ex consensu hominum*—an argument of much avail when it is a case of man's instinctive judgments and primary intuitions, which are God-given, but of ever less value in proportion as there is a question of deductions, inferences, and self-formed judgments. Even if we discard the dream-theory altogether, we get no support from the consensus of savages as to the soul's survival, unless we have reason to think that the facts on which their inference rests are truly, and not only apparently, supernormal, and are, moreover, such as leave no other inference possible.

We know only too well that there are universal fallacies as well as universal truths of the human mind. For the practical necessities of life the imagination stands to man in good stead, but as the inadequate instrument of speculative thought its fertile deceitfulness is betrayed in his very earliest attempts at philosophy; nor are his subsequent efforts directed to anything else than the endeavour to correct and allow for its refractions and distortions, to transcend its narrow limitations, to force it to express, meanly and clumsily, truths which otherwise it would entirely obscure and deny. There might well be facts, nay, there are undoubtedly facts, which to the untutored mind necessarily and always seem altogether supernormal, but which science rightly explains to be, however unusual, yet natural, and in no way outside the ordinary laws. So far as the marvels of sorcerers and medicine-men are the work of chicanery, they will lack that persistence and ubiquity which justifies the investigation of other marvels for whose universality some basis must be sought in the uniform nature of things. Cheats will not always and everywhere hit on the same plan, nor will the independent testimony of false witnesses

be found agreeing.

But if besides facts and appearances that science can really explain away, there be a residue which takes us into a region wherein science as yet has set no foot, then we may indeed be on our way to a confirmation of the usually accepted arguments for immortality by which the positivist may be met upon his own ground. In truth, metaphysical, moral, and religious arguments, however much they may avail with individuals who are subjectively disposed to receive them, cannot in these days influence the crowd of men who need some sort of violence offered to their intellect if they are to accept truths against which they are biassed. The temper of the majority is positivist; it will believe what it can see, touch, and handle, and no more. If then the natural truth of the independent existence of spirits can be inade experimentally evident—and *à priori*, why should it not?—men may not like it, but they will have either to accept it, or to deny all that they accept on like evidence. Such unwilling concession would of itself make little for personal religion in the individual; but its widespread acceptance could not fail to counteract the ethics of materialism, and so prepare the way for perhaps a fuller return to religion on the part of the many.

It is the belief, and perhaps the hope, of not a few men of light and learning that a comparison of the results of the S.P.R. investigations with those of anthropology touching the beliefs and superstitions of savages and ruder races, may point to an order of facts which, with reference to the admissions of existing science, are rightly called supernormal, and yet which are in another sense strictly normal, namely, with reference to that science of experimental psychology which, amid the usual storm of ridicule and jealousy, is slowly struggling into existence—ridicule from all devout slaves of the intellectual fashion of the times; jealousy from the neighbour sciences of mental physiology and neurology, which it declares bankrupt in the face of newly-discovered liabilities.

So far this gathered evidence seems, in the eyes of some of its interpreters, to point to a close connection, if not of being, at least of influence, between soul and soul, such as binds each atom of matter to every other; a connection which increases as we descend from the above-ground level of full consciousness, through ever lower strata of subconsciousness, to those hidden depths of unconscious operation from which the most unintelligibly intelligent effects of the soul proceed—as though, in the darkness, it were taught by God, and guided blindfold by the hand of its Maker. In other words, the individuation of souls is conceived to be somewhat like that of the separate branches of the same tree which, traced downwards, run into a common root, from whence they are differenced by every hour of their growth, yet not disconnected, as though each several consciousness sprang from some unconscious psychic basis common to all, wherein, like forgotten memories, the experiences of all are buried, at a depth far beyond the reach of all normal powers of reminiscence, yet through which terminus of converging souls thoughts can, in our intenser moments, pass from mind to mind,—reverberated as it were from the base, and thence caught by the one consciousness altogether resonant to that particular vibration. How far such an interpretation may favour pantheism, or imperil personality, or involve a doctrine of "pre-existence," or of innate ideas, is not for us here to discuss. If we are to judge it fairly, it must be simply as a provisional working-hypothesis explanatory of certain observations, and apart from all other psychological theories with which it may seem in conflict. Truth will in the end adjust itself with truth, but nothing is to be hoped from forced and premature adjustments.

Mr. Lang's second and principal contention is that even if we allow the animistic account of the belief in spirits, in no sense can we admit that process by which belief in God is supposed to be a later development of the belief in spirits, as though inequality among spirits had given rise to aristocracy, and aristocracy to monarchy.

By God here we understand: "a primal eternal Being, author of all things, the father and the friend of man, the invisible omniscient guardian of morality," a definition which, while it fixes the high-water mark of monotheism, yet only states with formidable distinctness what, according to Mr. Lang, is found confusedly in the apprehension of the rudest savages. There are two senses in which we can understand an evolution of this idea of God; first, as Mr. Tylor understands it, in the sense of a development by accretion from a simple germ, from the idea of a phantasm nowise a god, to that of a spirit still lacking divinity, thence to that of a Supreme Spirit in whom first the essential definition of God is somewhat fulfilled. Secondly, it can be understood strictly as a mere unfolding of the contents of a confused apprehension; so that there is an advance only in point of coherence and distinctness. Thus understood, the entire religious history of the race, as also of the individual, viewed from its mental side, consists in an evolution of the idea of God and culminates in a face-to-face seeing of God.

From the evidence amassed, or perhaps rather, sampled, by Mr. Lang it would seem that, what we account the lowest races are in possession of a confused idea of God, whencesoever derived, which is in substantial agreement with the reflex conception contained in the above definition; and that there is no existing series of intellectual stages whereby this can be seen, as it were, in the act of growing out of

previous simpler ideas. Evolution in the direction of greater clearness and distinctness is to be observed, as well as a downward process of obscuration and confusion: but for a substantial development of the idea of God from an idea of "not God" there is no proof forthcoming so far.

On the animistic hypothesis we should be prepared to find the notion of God, as above stated, to be of very late development and accepted only by races fairly advanced in culture. We should, *à priori*, deem it impossible to discover more among the lower savages than a rude religion of ghost-worship, without any consciousness of a moral Supreme Being, the father and friend of man. Whatever might seem to suggest the contrary, would be explainable by some infiltration of more civilized beliefs.

Armed with this hypothesis the eye is quick "to see that it brings with it the power of seeing," and to impose its own forms and schemata on the phenomena offered to its observation. The "animist" ill-acquainted with the savage's language and modes of thought; excluded from those inner "mysteries" which figure in nearly every savage religion; confounding the symbolism, the popular mythology, and also the corruptions, distortions, and abuses which are the parasites of all religion, with the religion itself, can easily come away with the impression that there is nothing but ghost-worship, priestcraft, and superstition, no conception whatever of a personal "Power that makes for Righteousness." If Protestants have almost as crude an idea of the religion of their Catholic fellow-Christians with whom they live side by side, and converse in the same language, if they are so absolutely dominated by their own form of religious thought, as to be as helpless as idiots in the presence of any other, can we expect that the ordinary British traveller, "brandishing his Bible and his bath," strong in the smug conviction of his mental, moral, and religious preeminence, will be a very sympathetic, conscientious, and reliable interpreter of the religion of the Zulu or the Andamanese?

The fact is that without a preliminary hypothesis he would see nothing at all except dire confusion. But an assumption such as that of "animism," has the selective power of a magnet, drawing to itself all congruous facts and little filings of probability, until it so bristles over with evidence that a hedge-hog is easier to handle.

But before discussing the relation of this assumption to existing facts and so bringing it to an *à posteriori* test, let us examine its *à priori* supports.

First of all, as Mr. Lang points out, it takes for granted that the savage can have no idea of the Creator until he conceive Him as a spirit. "God is a spirit," has been dinned into our ears from childhood; and hence we conclude that he who has no notion of a spirit can have no notion of God; and that the idea of God is of later growth than that of a ghost. In truth, he who ascribes to God a body does not know *all* about Him; but which of us knows *all* about God? The point is, not whether the savage can know the metaphysics of divinity, but whether he can conceive a primal eternal moral being, author of all things, man's father and judge—a conception which abstracts entirely from the question of matter and spirit. We ourselves, like the savage, necessarily speak of God and imagine Him humanwise,—although our instructed reason, at times, corrects the error of our fancy,—and perhaps only "at times,"—only when we leave the ground of spontaneous thought, to walk on metaphysical stilts—nor while that childish image remains uncorrected and we neither affirm nor deny to Him a body, can our notion be called false, however obscure it be and inadequate. If the savage has no notion of spirit, yet he may have, and often seems to have a very true, though of course infinitely imperfect, notion of God; nay, perhaps a truer notion than those who affirm, without any sense of using analogy, that God is a spirit. For if His spirituality is insisted on, it is rather to exclude from Him the grossness and limitation of matter, and to ascribe to Him a transcendental degree of whatever perfection our notion of spirit may involve, than to classify Him, or to predicate of Him that finite nature which we call a spirit. God is neither a spirit nor a body; but rather like Ndengei of the Fijians: "an impersonation of the abstract idea of eternal existence;" one who is to be "regarded as a deathless *Being*, no question of 'spirit' being raised;" so that the first intuition of the unsophisticated mind is found to be in more substantial agreement with the last results of reflex philosophical thought, than those early philosophizings which halt between the affirmation and denial of bodily attributes, unable to prescind from the difficulty and unable to solve it. The history of the Jews, nay, the history of our own mind proves to demonstration that the thought of God is a far easier thought and a far earlier, than that of a spirit. Our mind, oar heart, our conscience, affirm the former instinctively, while the latter does continual violence to our imagination, except so far as spirit is misconceived to be an attenuated phantasmal body. Not only, therefore, does the savage imagine God and speak of Him humanwise, as we all do; but if he does not actually believe Him to be material, he at least will be slow in mastering the thought of His spirituality.

Another assumption underlying the animistic hypothesis, and also borrowed from Christian teaching, is that the savage regards the soul or ghost as the liberated and consummated man, and that therefore he will place God rather in the category of disembodied than of embodied men. Yet not only the Greek and Roman, but even the Jew, looked on the shade of the departed as a mere fraction of humanity, as a miserable residue of man, helpless and hopeless, and withal disposed to be mischievous and exacting,

and therefore needing to be humoured in various ways. Nay, even Christianity with its dogma of the bodily resurrection, denies that Platonic doctrine which views the body as the prison rather than as the complement and consort of the soul; although it holds the soul to be of an altogether higher, because spiritual, order. But to the primitive savage, who everywhere regards death as non-natural, as accidental and violent, the surviving spirit, however uncertain-tempered and incalculable in its movements, however much to be feared and propitiated, does not command reverence as a being of a superior order. At best it is: "Alas! poor ghost!" Better a live dog than a dead lion; better the meanest slave that draws breath, than the monarch of Orcus. Surely it is not in the region of shadows that the savage will look for the great "all-father;" but in the world of solid, tangible realities.

Again, it is assumed that progress in one point is progress in all; that because we surpass all other races and generations in physical science and useful arts, we surpass them in every other way; and that they must be far behind us in ethical and religious conceptions, as they are in inventions and the production of comforts. To find our own theism and morality among savages is therefore impossible; for as the crooked stick is unto the steam-plough, so is the god of the savage unto the God of Great Britain. Yet when we consider how closely religious and ethical principles are intertwined, and how glaringly untrue it is to say that industrial civilization makes for morality,—for purity or self-denial, or justice, or truth, or honour: how manifestly it is accompanied with a deterioration of the higher perceptions and tastes, we must surely pause before taking it for granted that the course of true religion has been running smoothly parallel to that of commerce.

In a thoughtful essay, entitled *The Disenchantment of France*, Mr. F.W. Myers points out the goal towards which "progress" is leading us, through the destruction of those four "illusions" which formerly gave life all its value and dignity,—namely, belief in religion; devotion to the State—whether to the prince or to the people; belief in the eternity and spirituality of human love; belief in man's freedom and imperishable personal unity. "I cannot avoid the conclusion," he says, "that we are bound to be prepared for the worst. Yet by the worst I do not mean any catastrophe of despair, any cosmic suicide, any world-wide unchaining of the brute that lies pent in man. I mean merely the peaceful, progressive, orderly triumph of *l'homme sensuel moyen*; the gradual adaptation of hopes and occupations to a purely terrestrial standard; the calculated pleasures of the cynic who is resolved to be a dupe no more."

In other words, if we accept this very temperate and reluctant conclusion, we must confess that the one-sided progress, with whose all-sufficiency we are so thoroughly satisfied, is making straight for the extermination, not only of religion, but of morality in any received sense of the term.

But when Mr. Lang, who has no hypothesis of his own as to the origin of belief in God, brings the animistic theory to an *à posteriori* test, he finds it encumbered with still greater difficulties; for nothing is as, *à priori*, it ought to be.

While Mr. Tylor asserts "that no savage tribe of monotheists has ever been known," but that all ascribe the attributes of deity to other beings than the Almighty Creator, it appears in fact that many of the rudest savages "are as monotheistic as some Christians. They have a Supreme Being, and the 'distinctive attributes of deity' are not by them assigned to other beings further than as Christianity assigns them to angels, saints, the devil," &c. Catholics at least will readily understand how hastily and unjustly the charge of polytheism is made by the protestantized mind against any religion which believes in a Heavenly Court as well as in a Heavenly Monarch. "Of the existence of a belief in a Supreme Being" amongst the lowest savages, "there is as good evidence as we possess for any fact in the ethnographic region. It is certain that savages, when first approached by curious travellers and missionaries, have again and again recognized our God in theirs."

If, therefore, belief in God grew out of belief in ghosts, it must have been in some stage of culture lower than any of which we have experience so far; and at some period which belongs to the region of hypothesis and conjecture. There are no known tribes where ghosts are worshipped and God is not known, or where the supposed process of development can be watched in action. Nor is it only that links are missing, but one of the very terms to be connected, namely, a godless race, is conjectural. Still more unfortunate is it for the animists that evidence points to the fact that advance in civilization often means the decay of monotheism, and that the ruder races are the purer in their religious and ethical conceptions. Once more, all facts are against the theory that tribes transfer their earthly polity to the heavenly city; for monotheism is found where monarchy is unknown. "God cannot be a reflection from human kings where there are no kings; nor a president elected out of a polytheistic society of gods, where there is as yet no polytheism; nor an ideal first ancestor where men do not worship their ancestors." To the substantiating of these facts Mr. Lang then applies himself, and shows us how among the Australians, Red Indians, Figians, Andamanese, Dinkas, Yao, Zulus, and all known savages there lives the conception of a Supreme Being (not necessarily spirit) who is variously styled Father, Master, Our Father, The Ancient One in the skyland, The Great Father. He shows us, moreover, that this deity is the God of conscience, a power making for goodness, a guardian and enforcer of the

interests of justice and truth and purity; good to the good, and froward with the froward.

But surely, it will be said, all this is too paradoxical, too violently in conflict with what is notorious concerning the religion and morality of savages.

The reason of this seeming contradiction is, however, not altogether difficult. It is to be found partly in the fact that religion, like morality, being counter to those laws which govern the physical world and the animal man,—to the law of egoism and competition and struggle for existence; to the law that "might is right,"—tends from the very nature of the case towards decay and disintegration. The movement of material progress is in some sense a downhill movement. No doubt it evokes much seeming virtue, such as is necessary to secure the end; but the motive force is one with regard to which man is passive rather than active, a slave rather than a master, as a miser is in respect to that passion which stimulates him to struggle for gain. Religion and morality are uphill work, needing continual strain and attention if the motive force is to be maintained at all. Huxley, in one of his later utterances, allowed this with regard to morality; and it is not less but more true with regard to faith in the value of unseen realities. Even if belief in a moral God be as natural to man as are the promptings of conscience, it ought not to surprise us that it should be as universally stifled, neglected, seemingly denied, as conscience is. It is not usually in old age and after years of conflict with the world that conscience is most sensitive and faithful to light, but rather in early childhood. And similarly the sense of God and of His will is apparently more strong and lively in the childhood of races than after it has been stifled by the struggle for wealth and pre-eminence—

When yet I had not walked above
A mile or two from my first love:
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness. [2]

Degradation may almost be considered a law of religion and morality which needs some kind of violent counteraction, some continual intervention and providence, if it is to be kept in check. After all, this is only a dressing-up of the old platitude that a holy life means continual warfare and straining of the spirit against the flesh, of the moral order against the physical order, of altruism or the true egoism against selfishness or the false egoism. Of course an ideal civilization would help and not hinder religion; but the chances against civilization being ideal are so large as to make it historically true that, advance in civilization does not always mean advance in religion and morality, and often means decay.

Far from animism being the root of theism, more often it is rather the ivy that grows up about it, hides it and chokes it. Just because the demands of religion and morality are so burdensome to men, they will ever seek short-cuts to salvation; and the intercession of presumably corruptible courtiers will be secured to win the favour, or avert the displeasure, of the rigorously incorruptible and inexorable King, who is "no respecter of persons." Except among Jews and Christians, the Supreme Being is nowhere worshipped with sacrifice—that service of food-offering being reserved for subordinate deities susceptible to gentle bribery. The great God of conscience is naturally the least popular object of cultus; though, were the animists right, He should be the most popular, seeing He would be the latest development demanded and created by the popular mind. But contrariwise, He tends to recede more and more into the background, behind the ever-multiplying crowd of patron-spirits, guardians, family-gods; till, as in Greece and Rome, He is almost entirely obscured, "an unknown God ignorantly worshipped"—the End, as usual, being forgotten and buried in the means. All this process of degradation will be hastened by the corruption of priests whose avarice or ambition, as Mr. Lang says, will tempt them to exploit the lucrative elements in religion at the expense of the ethical; to whittle-away the decrees of God and conscience to suit the wealthy and easy-going; to substitute purchasable sacrifice, for obedience; and the fat of rams, for charity. We need only look to the history of Israel and of the Christian Church to see all these tendencies continually at work, and only held in check by innumerable interventions of Divine Providence, and of that Spirit which is always striving with man.

Scant, however, as may be the amount of direct worship accorded to the Supreme God, compared with that received by subordinate spiritual powers, yet it is *sui generis*, and of an infinitely higher order. The familiar distinction of *latria* and *dulia* seems to obtain everywhere; as also that between *Elohim* and *Javeh*, that is, between supernal beings in general, and the Supreme Being who is also supernal. Yet so excessive in quantity is the secondary cultus compared with the primary, that an outsider may well be pardoned for thinking that there is nothing beyond what meets the eye on every side. As has been said, the Supreme Being alone is usually considered above the weakness of caring for sacrifice, or for external worship in "temples made with hands." His name is commonly tabooed, only to be whispered in those mysteries of initiation which are met with so universally. Outside these mysteries He may only be spoken of in parables and myths, grotesque, irreverent, designed to conceal rather than to reveal. But rarely is there an image or an altar to this unknown God.

It is easy for those who recognize no other religion among savages behind the popular observances and cults which are so much to the front, to believe that early religion is non-ethical. For indeed, for the most part, all this secondary cultus is directed to the mitigation of the moral code and the substitution of exterior for interior sacrifice. It is the result of an endeavour to compound with conscience; and to hide away sins from the all-seeing eye. Again it is chiefly in the secrecy of the mysteries that the higher ethical doctrine is propounded—a doctrine usually covering all the substantials of the decalogue; and in some cases, approaching the Christian summary of the same under the one heading of love and unselfishness. As for the corrupt lives of savages, if it proves their religion to be non-ethical, what should we have to think of Christianity? We cry out in horror against cannibalism as the *ne plus ultra* of wickedness., but except so far as it involves murder, it is hard to find in it more than a violation of our own convention, while a mystical mind might find more to say for it than for cremation. Certainly it is not so bad as slander and backbiting. Human sacrifice offered to the Lord of life and death at His own behest, is something that did not seem wicked and inconceivable to Abraham. Head-hunting is not a pretty game; nor is scalping and mutilation the most generous treatment of a fallen foe; yet war has seen worse things done by those who professed an ethical religion.

But, chief among the causes why savage religion has been so misrepresented, is the almost universal co-existence of a popularized form of religion addressed to the imagination, with that which speaks to the understanding alone. As has already been said, man's imagination is at war with his intelligence when supersensible realities, such as God and the soul, are in question. Without figures we cannot think; yet the timeless and spaceless world can ill be figured after the likeness of things limited by time and space. This mental law is the secret of the invariable association of mythology with religion. Setting aside the problem as to how the truths of natural religion (*sc.* that there is a God the rewarder of them that seek Him) are first brought home to man, it is certain that if he does not receive them embedded in history or parable, in spoken or enacted symbolism, he will soon fix and record them in some such language for himself. Christ recognized the necessity of speaking to the multitude in parables, not attempting to precise or define the indefinable; but contenting Himself with: "The Kingdom of Heaven is *like*," &c. "I am content," says Sir Thomas Browne, "to understand a mystery without a rigid definition, in an easie and Platonick description," and it is only through such easie and Platonick descriptions that spiritual truth can slowly be filtered into the popular mind. Still when we consider how prone all metaphors are to be pressed inexactly, either too far, or else not far enough, how abundant a source they are of misapprehension, owing to the curiosity that will not be content to have the gold in the ore, but must needs vainly strive to refine it out, we can well understand how mythology tends to corrupt and debase religion if it be not continually watched and weeded; and how, being, from the nature of the case, ever to the front, ever on men's lips and mingling with their lives, it should seem to the outsider to be not the imperfect garment of religion, but a substitute for it. Yet in some sense these mythologies are a safeguard of reverence in that they provide a theme for humour and profanity and rough handling, which is thus expended, not on the sacred realities themselves, but on their shadows and images. Among certain savages God's personal name is too holy to be breathed but in mysteries; yet His mythological substitute is represented to be as grotesque, freakish, and immoral as the Zeus of the populace. We can hardly enter into such a frame of mind, though possibly the irreverences and buffooneries of some of the miracle-plays of the middle ages are similarly to be explained as the rebound from the strain incident to a continual sense of the nearness of the supernatural; and perhaps the *Messer Domeniddio* of the Florentines stood rather for a mental effigy that might be played with, than for the reasoned conception of the dread Deity. If we possessed a minutely elaborated history of the Good Shepherd and His adventures, or of the Prodigal's father, or of the Good Samaritan, interspersed with all manner of ludicrous and profane incidents, and losing sight of the original purport of the figure, we should have something like a mythology. Were it not stereotyped as part of an inspired record, the mere romancing tendency of the imagination would easily have added continually to the original parable, wholly forgetful of its spiritual significance.

It is part of the very economy of the Incarnation to meet this weakness, to provide for this want of the human mind; to satisfy the imagination as well as the intelligence. Here Divine truth has received a Divine embodiment, has been set forth in the language of deeds, in a real and not in a fictitious history. Sacrifice and sacrament, and every kind of natural religious symbolism, has been appropriated and consecrated to the service of truth and to the fullest utterance of God that such weak accents will stretch to. Here the channel of communication between Heaven and earth is not of man's creation but of God's; or at least is of God's composition. This is the great difference between the ethnic religions and a religion that professes to be revealed—that is, spoken by God and put into language by Him. The latter is, so to say, cased in an incorruptible body, its very expression being chosen and sealed for ever with Divine approval, and rescued from the fluent and unstable condition of religions whose clothes are the works of men's hands. Here it is that Catholic Christianity stands out as altogether catholic and human, adapted as it is to the world-wide cravings of the religious instinct; satisfying the imagination and the emotions, no less than the intellect and the will; and yet saving us from the perils of the myth-making tendency of our mind.

The same thought is pressed upon us when we view the collective evidence as to the universal demand for a mediatorial system—for intercessors, and patrons, for a heavenly court surrounding the Heavenly Monarch; a demand often created by and tending to a degradation of purer religion, yet most surely embodying and expressing a spiritual instinct which is only fully explained and satisfied by the Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints and souls in one great society, labouring for a conjoint salvation and beatitude. We Catholics know well enough that the degraded and superstitious will pervert saint-worship as they pervert other good things to their own hurt and to God's dishonour, but we also know that of itself the doctrine of the Heavenly Court is altogether in the interests of the very highest and purest religion. In all this matter, needless to say, Mr. Lang is not with us; but the affinities of Catholicism with universal religion, which he marks to our prejudice, are really in some sort proof of our contention that the Church is the divinely conceived fulfilment of all man's natural religious instincts, providing harmless and healthy outlets for humours otherwise dangerous and morbid; never forgetful of man's double nature and its claims, neither wearying him with an impossible intellectualism —a religion of pure philosophy—not suffering him to be the prey of mere imagination and sentiment, but tempering the divine and human, the thought and the word, so as to bring all his faculties under the yoke of Christ.

Mr. Lang's concern is with the universality of belief in God the Rewarder, not with its origin nor even its value; though he seems at times to imply that the solution may be found in a primitive revelation of some sort. For ourselves, accordant as such a notion would be with popular Christian tradition, we do not think that the adduced evidence needs that hypothesis; but is explained sufficiently by "the hypothesis of St. Paul," which, as Mr. Lang admits, "seem not the most unsatisfactory." The mere verbal tradition of a primitive "deposit" not committed to any authorized guardians would, to say the least, be a hazardous and conjectural way of accounting for the facts; nor is there any evidence offered to show that such religious beliefs are held, as the Catholic religion is, on the authority of antiquity, interpreted by a living voice. The substance of this elementary religion—the existence of God the Rewarder of them that seek Him—is naturally suggested to the simple-minded by the data of unspoilt conscience, confirmed and supplemented by the spectacle of Nature. That the truth would be borne-in on a solitary and isolated soul we need not maintain; for in solitude and isolation man is not man, and neither reason nor language can develop aright. Further we may allow that as Nature or God provides for society, and therefore for individuals, by an equal distribution of gifts and talents, giving some to be politicians, others poets, others philosophers, others inventors, so He gives to some what might be called natural religious genius or talent or spiritual insight, for the benefit of the community. Thus whatever be true of the individual savage, we cannot well suppose that any tribe or people, taken collectively, should fail to draw the fundamental truths of religion from the data of conscience and nature. In this sense no doubt they would become traditional—the common property of all—so that the innate facility of each individual mind in regard to them would be stimulated and supplemented by suggestion from without.

How far God can be said actually to "speak" to the soul through conscience or through Nature so as to make faith, in the strict sense of reliance on the word of another, possible, is for theologians to discuss. If besides expressing these truths in creation or in conscience, He also expresses in some way His intention to reveal them to the particular soul, we have all that is requisite. In what way, or innumerable ways He makes His voice heard in every human heart day by day, and causes general truths to be brought near and recognized and received as a particular message, each can answer best for himself.

But undoubtedly the results of comparative religion are, so far, almost entirely favourable to the doctrine of God's all-saving will; and in many other points confirmatory of received beliefs. Even where, for example, in the question of the origin and meaning of sacrifice, they seem to necessitate a modification of the somewhat elaborate *à priori* definition, popular in some modern schools (though not in them all), yet that modification is altogether favourable to the sounder conception of the Eucharistic Sacrifice as a food-offering complementary to the Sacrifice of the Cross. Above all it is in bringing out the unity of type between natural ethnic religions, and that revealed Catholic religion which is their correction and fulfilment, that the studies of Mr. Lang and Mr. Jevons are of such service. The militant Protestant delights to dwell on the analogies between Romanism and Paganism; we too may dwell on them with delight, as evidence of that substantial unity of the human mind which underlies all surface diversities of mode and language, and binds together, as children of one family, all who believe in God the Rewarder of them that seek Him, who is no respecter of persons. What man in his darkness and sinfulness has feebly been trying to utter in every nation from the beginning, that God has formulated and written down for him in the great Catholic religion of the Word made Flesh—

Which he may read that binds the sheaf
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

True, even could it be established beyond all doubt that belief in the one God were universal among rude and uncultivated races, this would not add any new proof to the truth of religion, unless it could be shown that it was really an instinctive, inwritten judgment, and not one of those many natural fallacies into which all men fall until they are educated out of them. Still, for those who do not need conviction on this point, it is no slight consolation to be assured that simplicity and savagery do not shut men out from the truths best worth knowing; that even where the earthen vessel is most corrupted, the heavenly treasure is not altogether lost; that it is only those who deliberately go in search of obscurities who need stumble. It was not the crowds of pagandom that St. Paul censured, but the philosophers. God made man's feet for the earth, and not for the tight-rope. Whatever be the truth about Idealism, man is by nature a Realist; and similarly he is by nature a theist, until he has studiously learnt to balance himself in the non-natural pose.

Will a man be excused for deliberately dashing his foot against a stone because forsooth he has persuaded himself with Zeno, that there is no such thing as motion; or with Berkeley, that the externality of the world is a delusion; or will he be pardoned in his unbelief because he could not justify by philosophy the truth which conscience and nature are dinning into his ears: that there is a God the Rewarder of them that seek Him?

Sept. Oct. 1898.

Footnotes:

[Footnote 1: "A hysterical fit indicates a lamentable instability of the nervous system. But it is by no means certain *à priori* that every symptom of that instability, without exception, will be of a degenerative kind. The nerve-storm, with its unwonted agitations, may possibly lay bare some deep-lying capacity in us which could scarcely otherwise have come to light. Recent experiments on both sensation and memory in certain abnormal states have added plausibility to this view, and justify us in holding that in spite of its frequent association with hysteria, ecstasy is not necessarily in itself a morbid symptom." (F.W.H. Myers, *Tennyson as a Prophet*.)]

[Footnote 2: *The Retreat*. By Henry Vaughan.]

XXII.

ADAPTABILITY AS A PROOF OF RELIGION.

Much as we may think of the abstract and objective value of the treatise *De vera religione*, which forms the usual introduction to those *cursus theologici* whose multiplication of late has been so remarkable, it can hardly be denied that its cogency is much diminished for the large number of those thinkers who repudiate the philosophical presuppositions upon which that treatise rests. As long as negation halted before that minimum of religious truth which is in some way accessible to reason,—before belief in God and in immortality; as long as the principles and methods of proof by which "natural theology" reached its conclusion were admitted even by those who denied those conclusions, an apologetic such as we are speaking of had an undoubted practical value—not indeed as sufficing to bring conviction to the unwilling or ill-disposed, not as a cause of faith, but as removing an obstacle which existed in the supposed incompatibility of revealed truth with these same rational principles and processes.

Apart from this preparation of the intellect, to which perhaps the name "apologetic" should be more strictly reserved, a prior and more important need was the disposing of the will and affections to the acceptance of the truth. For, in a very real sense, love is the root of faith; and the wish that a thing should be true, not only stimulates the mind to inquire and investigate, but also creates a fear of self-deception and a spirit of incredulity which is the fruitful parent of intellectual difficulties.

Such an appeal to the affections is really outside the province of theological science and belongs rather to the rhetorician, the poet, or the prophet. Yet it was a work at all times needful for the extension and maintenance of the faith, in even a greater degree than the more dispensable preparation of the intellect. For the great multitude of men who are innocent of any really independent thought, who professedly or unconsciously take all their beliefs from some individual or society, there is really no need of scientific apologetic—the sole need being to win or maintain their confidence, their loyalty, their reverence, in regard to some teacher or leader, to Christ or the Church.

It was only towards the close of last century when scepticism was beginning to reach the very root

from which the Christian apologetic sprang, and the former philosophic methods had themselves fallen in disrepute, that the necessity of accommodating the remedy to the disease began to be recognized here and there, and of framing an argument that would appeal to the perverse and erratic mind of the day, rather than to an abstract and perfectly normal mind, which, if it existed, would "need no repentance." That a given medicine is the best, avails nothing if it be not also one which the patient is willing to take. If a man has closed his teeth against everything that savours of scholasticism, we must either abandon him or else see if there be any among the methods he will submit to, which may in any wise serve our purpose. And, indeed, among the jangle of philosophies there is surely in all something that is a common heritage of the human mind, a unity which a little skill can detect lurking under that diversity of form which unfortunately it is the delight of most men to emphasize. To suppose that Christianity is pledged to more than this common substratum which none deny, except through verbal confusion, that there is no road to faith but through what is peculiar to scholasticism, or that my first step in converting a man to Christ must be to convert him to Aristotle, is about as intelligent as to suppose that because the Church has adopted Latin as her official language she means to discredit every other.

It was then with a view of meeting the exigencies of the world as it is, not as it might or ought to have been, that such a work as the *Génie du Christianisme* strove to find an apologetic in what previously had been regarded as outside the domain of theology and more properly the concern of the preacher. The beauty, the solace, the adaptation to our higher needs of Christian teaching had been one thing; its truth, quite another. By dilating eloquently on the first, men might be won to the love of such an ideal, to wish that it might be true; and then disposed to profit by the distinct and independent labours of the apologist whose theme was, not the utility or beauty of the Catholic religion, but solely its truth.

But now that the "scholastic" [1] apologetic was in disgrace with all but those who stood least in need of it, some more acceptable method had to be sought out, and amongst many others there was that of Chateaubriand, which strove to find an argument for the intellect in the very appeal which Christianity made to the will and affections. Because a religion is fair and much to be desired, because, if true, it would give unity and meaning to man's higher cravings, and turn human life from a senseless chaos into an intelligible whole, therefore, and for this reason, it *is* true.

It is hardly wonderful that such a method should incur the charge of sentimentalism. "It would be so nice to believe it, therefore it must be true," sounds like a shameless abandonment of reasonableness. The fact that a belief is "consoling," quite independently of its truth or falsehood, creates a bias towards its acceptance. That it is pleasant to believe oneself very clever and competent will incline one to that belief until something important depends, not on our thinking ourselves so, but on our being so. Before an examination, the wish to succeed will make me sceptical about my prospects, much as I should like to think them the brightest; afterwards, when self-deception can only console and can do no harm, I shall be credulous of any flattery that is offered me. In one case, my interest depends upon the facts, and therefore the wish to believe makes me critical and even sceptical; in the other, on my belief concerning the facts, and the wish to believe, makes me uncritical and credulous.

It was seemingly a bold and hazardous venture to justify this same credulity, and to affirm that an argument could be drawn from the wish to believe in just those cases where its influence would seem most suspicious; yet this was practically what the new apologetic amounted to. It was an argument from the utility of beliefs to their truth; from the fact that certain subjective convictions produced good results, to the correspondence of such convictions with objective reality. The advantages to the individual and to society of a firm belief in God the righteous Judge, in the sanction of eternal reward and penalty, in the eventual adjustment of all inequalities, in the reversible character of sin through repentance, in the divine authority of conscience, of Christianity, of the Catholic Church, are to a great extent independent of the truth of those beliefs. No amount of hypnotic suggestion will enable a man to subsist upon cinders, under the belief that they are a very nutritious diet; for the effect depends upon their actual nature, and not wholly upon his belief concerning their nature; but the salutary fear of Hell or hope of Heaven, depends not on the existence of either state, but on our belief in its existence. The fact that the denial of these and many similar beliefs would bring chaos into our spiritual and moral life, that it would extinguish hopes which often alone make life bearable, that it would issue for society at large in such a grey, meaningless, uninspired existence as Mr. F. W. Myers prognosticates in his admirable essay on "The Disillusionment of France," [2] all this and much more makes it our interest, if not our duty, to cling to such convictions at all costs. "If these things are not true, it might be said, then life is chaos; and if life be chaos, what does truth matter? Why may not such useful illusions and self-deceptions be fostered? If we are dreaming, let our dreams be the pleasantest possible!"

Nor can it be urged that though some part of our interest thus depends on the beliefs, rather than on their being true, yet the consequences of self-deception are so momentous, as to create a spirit of criticism to balance or over-balance the said bias of credulity. For though the consequences of denial are disastrous if the beliefs are true, yet if they are false, the ill-consequences of belief are almost

insignificant. It is sometimes said too hastily that if religion be an illusion, then religious people lose both this life and the next; and it is assumed that an unrestrained devotion to pleasure would secure a happiness which faith requires us to forego. But unless we take a gross, and really unthinkable view of the homogeneity of all happiness, and reduce its differences to degree and quantity, the shallowness of the preceding objection will be apparent. It is only through restraint that the higher kinds of temporal happiness are reached, and as confusions are cleared away in process of discussion, it becomes patent that such restraint finds its motive directly or indirectly in religion. When the religious influence with which irreligious society is saturated, has exhausted itself, and idealism is no more, the unrestrained egoistic pursuit of enjoyment must tend to its steady diminution in quantity, and its depreciation in kind. The sorrow and pain entailed by fidelity to the Christian ideal is, on the whole, immeasurably less in the vast majority of cases than that attendant on the struggles of unqualified selfishness, while the capacities for the higher happiness are steadily raised and largely satisfied by hope and even by some degree of present fruition. Even vice would be in many ways sauceless and insipid in the absence of faith. Who does not remember the old cynic's testimony (in the "New Republic") to the piquancy lent by Christianity to many a sin, otherwise pointless. If the moralist distinguishes between actions that are evil because they are forbidden, and those that are forbidden because they are evil, the libertine has a counter-distinction between those that are forbidden because they are pleasant, and those that are pleasant because they are forbidden. St. Paul himself is explicit enough as to this effect of the law.

Look at it how we will, even were religion unfounded our life would on the whole gain in fulness far more than it would lose, by our believing in religion. Hence some of our more thoughtful agnostics, however unable themselves to find support in what they deem an illusion, are quite willing to acknowledge the part religion has played in the past in the evolution of rational life, and to look upon it as a necessary factor in the earlier stages of that process whose place is to be taken hereafter by some as yet undefined substitute. If indeed Nature thus works by illusions and justifies the lying means by the benevolent end, it is hard to believe in a moral government of the universe, or to hope that an "absolute morality"—righteousness for its own sake—will be the outcome of such disreputable methods. But till the illusion of "absolute morality" is strong enough to take care of itself, and has passed from the professors to the populace, it is plainly for the interest and happiness of individuals and of society to hold fast to religion.

Undoubtedly then the advantages resulting from a belief in religion, whether valid or illusory, are such as to incline not only the higher and more unselfish minds, but even those which are more prudential and self-regarding, to wish to hold that belief—to be unwilling to hear arguments against it. But among the former class will be found many intellectually conscientious and even scrupulous persons, whom the recognition of this inevitable bias will drive to an extreme of caution. Not so much because the facts believed-in are of such intense moment, but rather because the belief itself, whether true or false, is so consoling and helpful, that there seems to them a danger of self-deception just proportioned to their wish to believe.

It were then no small rest and relief to such, could it be shown that what they deem a reason for doubt, is really a reason for belief; that the welcome which all that is best in them gives to a belief, affords some sort of philosophical justification thereof.

This particular argument had undoubtedly a more favourable hearing in the age of Chateaubriand, when unbelief stopped short at the threshold of what was called "Natural Religion," and the apologist's task was confined to the establishment of revelation. "It is now pretty generally admitted," says the author of *Contemporary Evolution*, "with regard to Christianity and theism that the arguments really telling against the first, are in their logical consequences fatal also to the second, and that a *Deus Unus, Remunerator* once admitted, an antecedent probability for a revelation must be conceded."

Given an intelligent and benevolent author of the universe, it is not perhaps very difficult to show that any further religious belief approximates to the truth in the measure that it satisfies the more highly developed rational needs of mankind. It is not seriously denied any longer that religion is an instinct with man, however it may be lacking in some individuals or dormant in others. We have savages at both ends of the scale of civilization, but man is none the less a political creature; nor does the existence of idiots and deaf mutes and criminals at all affect the fact that he is a reasoning and speaking and ethical animal. As soon as he wakes to consciousness, he feels that he is part of a whole, one of a multitude; and that as he is related to his fellow-parts—equals or inferiors—so also is he related to the Whole which is above him and greater than all put together. Religion, taken subjectively, in its loosest sense, is a man's mental and moral attitude in regard to real or imaginary superhuman beings—a definition which includes pantheism, polytheism, monotheism; moral, non-moral, and immoral religions; which prescinds from materialist or spiritualist conceptions of the universe. And by a religion in the objective sense, so far as true or false can be predicated of it, we mean a body of beliefs intended to regulate and correct man's subjective religion. It is to such systems and their parts that we think the above test of "adaptability" maybe applied as we have stated it.

We must of course assume that our distinction of higher from lower states of rational development is valid; that we can really attach some absolute meaning to the terms "progress" and "decline;" that there is some vaguely conceived standard of human excellence which such terms refer to. Else we are flung into the very whirlpool of scepticism. Measured back from infinity it may be infinitesimal, but measured forward from zero, the difference of mental and, partly, of moral culture between ourselves and the aborigines of Australia is considerable, and is really to our advantage. Now if a given religion or religious belief suggests itself more readily, or when suggested commends itself more cordially in the measure that men's spiritual needs are more highly developed; if, furthermore, it tends to make men still better and to raise their desires still higher so as to prepare the way for a yet fuller conception of religious truth, it may be said to be adapted to human needs; and it is from such adaptability that we argue its approach to the truth. We say "its approach," for all our ideas of the Whole, of the superhuman, of those beings with which religion deals, are necessarily analogous and imperfect. What is admitted by all with regard to the strict mysteries of the Christian faith is in a great measure to be extended to the central or fundamental ideas of all religion. They are at best woefully inadequate, and if the unity between the parts of an idea be organic and not merely mechanical, they must be regarded as containing false mingled with true.[3] Still some analogies are less imperfect, less mingled with fallacy than others, and there is room for indefinite approximation towards an unattainable exactitude. For example, assuming theism, as we do in the argument under consideration, it is evident that man conceives the superhuman object of his fear and worship more truly as personal than as impersonal; as spiritual than as embodied; as one or few than as many; as infinite than as finite; as creator than as maker; as moral than as non-moral or immoral; as both transcendent and immanent than as either alone. If then it appears that as man's intelligence and morality develop in due proportion, he advances from a material polytheistic immoral conception of the All, to a spiritual and moral monotheism, it may be claimed that the latter is a less inadequate conception. And similarly with regard to other dependent religious beliefs which usually radiate from the central notion. It will be seen that we do not argue from the self-determined wishes or desires of any individual or class of individuals to their possible fulfilment,—to the existence in Nature of some supply answering to that demand; we do not argue that because many men or all men desire to fly, flying must for that reason alone be possible. We speak of the needs of man's nature, not of this individual's nature; of needs consequent on what man is made, and not on what he has made himself; of those wants and exigencies which if unsatisfied or insatiable must leave his nature not merely negatively imperfect and finite, but positively defective and as inexplicable as a lock without a key—not necessarily, of needs felt at all times by every man, but of those which manifest themselves naturally and regularly at certain stages of moral and social development; just as the bodily appetites assert themselves under certain conditions not always given.

Now there is one form in which this argument from adaptability is somewhat too hastily applied and which it is well to guard against. Were we to find a key accommodated to the wards of a most complicated lock, we should be justified in concluding, with a certainty proportioned to the complexity of the lock, that both originated with one and the same mind; and so, it is urged, if a religion, say Christianity, answers to the needs of human nature, we may conclude that it is from the Author of human nature with a certainty increasing as it is seen to answer to the higher and more complex developments of the soul.

Now if, like the key in our illustration, the religion in question were something given *in rerum natura* independent of human origination in any form, this argument would be practically irresistible. That besides those beliefs which lead man on to an ever fuller understanding of his better self, and stimulate and direct his moral progress, Christianity imposes others more principal, of which man as yet has no exigency, and which hint at some future order of existence that new faculties will disclose—all this, in no wise makes the argument inapplicable. The whole system of beliefs is accepted for the sake, and on the credit, of that part which so admirably unlocks the soul to her own gaze. "Now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be;" if besides satisfying our present ideal of religion, Christianity hints at and prepares us for such a transition as that from merely organic to sensitive life, or from this, to rational life, it rather adds to than detracts from the force of the argument.

Yet all this supposes that Christianity is something found by man outside himself, with whose origination he had nothing to do; but, if this be established, its supernatural origin, and therefore, supposing theism, its truth, is already proved, and can only receive confirmation from the argument of adaptability. If the Book of Mormon really came down from Heaven, my conviction that polygamy is not for the best, would seem a feeble objection against its claims. That the Judaeo-Christian religion is supernatural and is from without, not only with respect to the individual but to the race; that it is an external, God-given rule, awakening, explaining, developing man's natural religious instinct, correcting his own clumsy interpretations thereof, is just what gives it its claim to pre-eminence over all, even the most highly conceived, man-made interpretations of the same instinct.

Yet though claiming to be a God-made interpretation, it is confessedly through human agency,

through the human mind and lips of the prophets and of Christ that this revelation has come to us. Moreover, it involves, though it transcends, all those religious beliefs of which human nature seems exigent and which are, absolutely speaking, attainable by what might be called the "natural inspiration" of religious genius. Viewing the whole revelation in itself, its adaptability is evident only in respect to that part which might have originated with those minds through which it was delivered to us. If the beliefs proposed seem to have anticipated moral and intellectual needs not felt in the prophet's own age or society, this might be paralleled from the inspiration of genius in other departments, and could not of itself be regarded as establishing the *ab extra* character of the revelation.

Plainly, then, so far as a religion claims to be from outside, its adaptability to our religious and moral instincts may confirm but cannot establish its Divine origin, which, given theism, is equivalent to its truth. For to show that it is from outside, is to show that it is from God.

It is only therefore with regard to man-made interpretations of our spiritual instincts, to the natural inspirations of religious genius, to the intuitions and even the reasoned inferences of the conscientious and clean-hearted, that the argument from adaptability can have any independent value. It is now no longer as one who argues from a comparison of lock and key to their common authorship; but rather we have a self-conscious lock, pining to be opened, and from a more or less imperfect self-knowledge dreaming of some sort of key and arguing that in the measure that its dream is based on true self-knowledge there must be a reality corresponding to it—a valid argument enough, supposing the locksmith to act on the usual lines and not to be indulging in a freak.

Such, in substance, is the argument from adaptability founded on the assumption of theism and applied to the criticism or establishment of further religious beliefs. It is indeed somewhat stronger when we remember that the self-consciousness, with which we fictitiously endowed the lock, plays chief part in the very design and structure of man; that his self-knowledge, his moral and religious instincts, his desire and power of interpreting them, are all from the Author of his nature.

Of this difference Tennyson takes note in applying the argument from adaptability to the immortality of the soul:

> Thou wilt not leave us in the dust;
> Thou madest man, he knows not why;
> He thinks he was not made to die,
> And Thou hast made him, Thou art just.

But so far as the argument presupposes theism it cannot be made to support or even confirm theism. If, then, we want to make the argument absolutely universal with regard to religious beliefs—theism included and not presupposed—and so to make it available for apologetic purposes in regard to those whose doubt is more deep-seated, we must inquire whether any basis can be found for it in non-theistic philosophy; whether, prescinding from Divine governance and from an intelligent purpose running through nature, the adaptability of a belief to the higher needs of mankind can be considered in any way to prove its truth. So far we have only shown that such a conclusion results from a clearer insight into the theistic conception. Can we show that it springs, co-ordinately with theism, from some conception prior to both?

II.

If what is usually understood by "theism" be once granted as a foundation, it is easy to raise thereon a superstructure of further religious beliefs by means of the argument drawn from their adaptability to the higher needs of mankind. However individuals may fail, yet it must be allowed that on the whole the human mind progresses, or tends to progress, from a less to a more perfect self-knowledge, to a fuller understanding of its own origin, its end and destiny, and of the kind of life by which that end is to be reached,—that is, if once we admit that man is a self-interpreting creature, and the work of an intelligent Creator. So far however as the Christian creed exceeds man's natural exigencies and aspirations, it plainly cannot be subjected to this criterion; and so far as it includes (while it transcends) the highest form of "natural religion," the argument from adaptability holds of it only if we suppose Christianity to be a natural product of the human mind, thus destroying its claim to be from without and from above. But if from other reasons we know Christianity to be a God-made and not a man-made religion, then, though its divinity and truth is already proved, yet it is in some sort confirmed and verified by its adaptability to the demands of our higher nature. In a word, this particular argument holds strictly only for man's own guesses at religious truth,—for "natural" religions; but for Christianity, only so far as we deny it to be supernatural as to its content and mode of origination.

But so far as this argument presupposes theism, it cannot be made to support or even confirm theism; if then we wish to make it available for apologetic purposes in regard to those whose doubt is

more deep-seated, we must now inquire whether, prescinding from divine governance and from finality in nature, the adaptability of a belief (say, in God, or in future retribution) to the needs of mankind, can be considered in any way as a proof of its truth; whether that argument can find any deeper mental basis than theism; whether it can be rested on anything which in the order of our thought is prior to theism so as to support or at least to confirm theism itself.

Our present endeavour is to show that though this argument rests more easily and securely on theism, yet it need not rest upon it; but springs, co-ordinately with theism, from *any* conception of the world that saves us from mental and moral chaos. Hence it confirms theism and is confirmed by theism; but each is strictly independent of the other and rests on a conception prior to both; they diverge from one and the same root and then intertwine and support one another.

By prescinding from theism I do not mean to exclude or deny it; for it is, as I have just said, bound up with the same conception from which the "argument from adaptability" is drawn. I only mean that I do not need to build upon it as on a prior conception; that I can put it aside. Indeed, of these two off-shoots, theism is less near to the common root, as will appear later.

Our limited mind cannot take in at once all the consequences or presuppositions of a thought; for this would be to know everything; but as with our outward eye we take in the circle of the horizon bit by bit, so with our mind when we turn to one aspect of an idea we lose sight of another. Hence in studying some complex organism or mechanism I may be clear about the bearing of any part on its immediately neighbouring parts, and yet may have no present notion of the whole; or may prescind entirely from the question of its origin or its purpose. Thus our thoughts are always unfinished and frayed round the edges, and we do not know how much they involve and drag along with them. We can think of the mechanism, and the organism, and the design, without thinking of the mechanist, or the organizer, or the designer; and so in all cases where two ideas are connected without being actually correlative. What is commonly called a philosophical proof consists simply in showing us the implications of some part of the general conception of things that we already hold. It is to force us either to loosen our hold on that part or else to admit all that it entails by way of consequences or presuppositions; and so to bring our thoughts into consistency one way or the other. But until something sets our mind in motion it can rest very comfortably in partial conceptions, without following them out to their results.

Now as we can understand a mechanism to the extent of seeing the bearing of part upon part, and even of all the parts upon the work it does, without going on to think about the designer or his design; and without explicitly considering it as designed; so we can and do think of the world and recognize order in it, and see the bearing of part upon part without going back to God or forward to God's purposes. Indeed, so far as we use the argument from design to prove the existence of God, it means that we first apprehend this order and regular sequence of events, and then, as a second and distinct step, put it down to design. For although God is the prior cause of design and of all creation, yet design and creation is the prior cause of our knowing God, The conception of a rational and moral world leads us to the conception of a rational and moral origin, i.e., to theism. Further, it is plain that this same order and regularity is recognized by many who refuse to see design in it, and who invent other hypotheses to account for it; and of one of these hypotheses we shall presently speak at length.

Now, if I take any single organism and study it carefully, simply as a biologist or physiologist, I shall recognize in it certain regularities of structure and function and development, upon which I can found various arguments and predictions. I can argue from its general characteristics, to the nature of its environment and habits and modes of life; or from its earlier stages, to what it will be when more fully developed; and these arguments will be quite unaffected by any theory I may hold as to the origin of these changes, and as to the causes of these adaptations. The order and regularity on which my predictions are based is an admitted fact. Theism or materialism are only theories by which that fact is explained. Now, for mind in the abstract, theism is really as much a presupposition of that fact, as the predicted truth is a consequence of it. Both are logically connected with it, and yet neither is derived from it through the other.

If, however, we cannot thus observe and calculate on certain regularities and tendencies in the world as we know it, then, not only is the appearance of design and finality an illusion, not only is that particular argument for theism cut away, but with it goes all scientific certainty, all that stands between us and the most hopeless mental and moral scepticism.

It is not our immediate concern to prove the value of the "argument from adaptability," but simply to show that it is logically (though not really) unaffected by the question of theism and finality and design. As long as we admit those same effects and consequences of which design is one explanation, but of which others are *prima facie* conceivable; as long as we hold that the world works on the whole as though it were designed; that the present anticipates and prepares for the future; that the future and absent can be predicted from the present, so long do we hold all upon which the "argument of

adaptability" is strictly based. And indeed, as has been said, if once it be admitted that the general progressive tendency on the part of living things is towards a greater harmony and correspondence with surrounding reality, then that argument is a more immediate inference from the existence of an orderly world, than is theism.

Though both are strictly independent deductions from the same principle (i.e., from an orderly world), yet theism and the argument from adaptability when once deduced, confirm one another. For it is not hard to show that theism is better adapted to man's higher needs, than atheism or polytheism or pantheism; while if theism be once granted, then, as we said in the last section, the argument from adaptability is much more easily established.

There have been at various times several philosophies or attempted explanations of the world, which have either denied or prescinded from theism and finality. These two conceptions may be considered as one; for by finality we mean the intelligent direction of means towards a preconceived end; and therefore to admit a pervading finality, is to imply a theistic origin and government of the universe.

Perhaps, the best and most finished attempt to explain the world independently of finality is the philosophy of Evolution, so widely popularized in our own day; and since it is in the region of organic existence, that finalism looks for its chief basis, it is especially by Darwinistic Evolution that its force is supposed to be destroyed.

Any form of "monism" gets rid of finality more easily than does any form of dualism; and again, any form of materialism, more easily than idealism; and therefore as monistic and materialistic (at least in some sense of the term), popular Evolutionism is the best plea for non-finalist philosophy. We propose therefore briefly to examine this philosophy, so far as it claims to be such, and to see whether it in any way touches the validity of the argument from adaptability.

Evolution may be considered both as an empirical fact and as an aetiological theory or philosophy. Considered as a fact, it is the statement of observed processes, and belongs to positive science like the observed courses of the planets, or any other observed regularities and uniformities. Science professes to have found everywhere as far as its experience has extended—in astronomy, geology, physiology, biology, psychology, ethics, sociology—a uniform process of change from the simple to the complex, from the indefinite and unstable to the stable and definite; and with this statement, so far as it can be verified, the positivist should rest content, seeking no theory, and drawing no generalization. But, the mind cannot hold together such collected facts without some binding theory, nor even observe a single fact without some preconception to give meaning to its suggested outlines: for what we really get from our senses bears but a slight ratio to what we fill in with our mind. Hence, answering to this supposed, but far from proven, universality of Evolution as a fact,[4] we have a certain philosophy of Evolution which takes us out of the sphere of facts into that of hypotheses and generalizations, and tries to give meaning and unity to the positive information that physical science has collected and classified; to finish, as it were, the suggested curves; to fill up the lacunae of observation; to extend to the whole world what is known of the part; and perhaps to erect into a cause what is only an orderly statement of facts. Undoubtedly it is this last fallacy that makes it more easy for evolutionists to dispense with or ignore finality. Law in its first sense is an expression of effectual human will. Call Evolution a law and the popular mind will soon vaguely conceive it as a rule or uniformity resulting from some kind of unconscious will-power at the back of everything; and this Will-Power stops the gap created in our thought by the exclusion of theism and finality. This confusion is furthered still more by not distinguishing between the cause of a fact and the cause of our knowledge of the fact. If I act in willing conformity with the civil law, I also act in obedience to it, in some way coerced by its authority and its sanctions. The law is really a cause of my action; because it represents the fixed will and effectual power of the ruler. But when this conception and name is transferred by analogy to physical uniformities of action, an event which conforms to the observed law or regularity of sequence, is not really caused by the law unless we suppose that law to be representative of something equivalent to a fixed will from which it originates. Yet we say loosely, such an event happens *in consequence of* the law of attraction; meaning only, *in conformity with* the law, so as to verify the law, to follow from it logically. Thus again the law comes to be mistaken for an effectual power of some kind, whereas it is merely a sort of regularity that might result either from an intelligent will or from something equivalent. But in thus adroitly slipping-in the conception of a governing force or tendency, or even in openly asserting it, with Schopenhauer or Hartmann, and in explaining the graduated resemblances of species by the origin of one from the other, and in extending this mode of Evolution in all directions from the known to the unknown so as to make it pervade the universe, we at once cease to be faithful positivists and, becoming philosophers, must submit to philosophic criticism, since these problems cannot be settled merely by an appeal to facts. Thus when Professor Mivart speaks of Evolution as "the continuous progress of the material universe by the unfolding of latent potentialities in harmony with a preordained end," the latent potentialities, the preordained end, the procession of one species from another, the extension of this law to every difference of time and place—all are matters of hypothesis or

intuition; but by no means of exterior observation.

The most that observation gives us is the very imperfect suggestion of the track that such a movement would have left behind it, not unlike the scraps that boys litter along the road in a paper-chase. Similarly, if in the case of organic Evolution we deny all latent potentialities and preordained ends and throw the whole burden on accidental variations and natural selection; if we regard the whole process as no more intelligent or designed than that by which water seeks and finds its own level; yet as in the case of water we must perforce introduce "a gravitating tendency," so in the case of living organisms a "persisting" or "struggling tendency," as an hypothesis to give unity to our facts or to account for their uniformity. But these tendencies are as little matter of observation as the aforesaid latent potentialities or preordained ends. In fine, Evolution, whatever form it take, gets rid of theism and finality only by slipping into their place some tendency or indefinable power which it considers adequate to account for the facts to be explained.

Let us now see if there be room in this philosophy for our argument from adaptability, and whether it will allow us to infer that because belief in theism and in future retribution are beliefs postulated by our higher moral aspirations, therefore they answer to reality more or less approximately; whether, in short, under certain conditions (specified in our last essay) the wish to believe may be a valid reason for believing.

Now Evolution as a philosophy or explanatory hypothesis owes its popularity to its apparent simplicity. Wrapped in its wordy envelope, the notion as formulated by Spencer needs no subtilty of apprehension, but only a dictionary. Nor is the Darwinian theory of Natural Selection more difficult.

Other things equal, the simpler hypothesis is to be preferred to the less simple where no proof can be had of either. But none the less, the simpler may be false and the other true. Cheapness is no proof of goodness. We are naturally impatient of troublesome and complex theories; but what we gain in the simplicity of an hypothesis, we commonly lose in the difficulty of getting the facts to square with it. It is a simple theory that circular motion is the most perfect, and that the planets being the most perfect bodies must move with the most perfect motion; but so many epicycles must be introduced to explain apparent exceptions that the modern astronomical hypothesis, however more complex in statement, is on the whole welcomed as a simplification. So we are disposed to think it is with regard to the popular form of Evolutionism. Its simplicity in statement is more than cancelled by its difficulty in application; and at last we are driven to conceive it in a form which at once deprives it of its title to popularity. So far as it is simple it is fallacious and proves incoherent on closer inspection, when we try to translate its terms into clear and distinct ideas; but when we get it into intelligible form it is no simpler than the theistic hypothesis which it wants to displace, except inasmuch as it prescinds from the question of origin and last end. But in this, its only intelligible form, it leaves the argument from adaptability intact, and even requires theism as its rational complement.

This is what we must now endeavour to show. We cannot illustrate our contention better than from the popular simplification of Ethics introduced by Bentham. Taking pleasure as a simple and ultimate notion he affirms that our conduct is always determined by a balance of pleasure on one side or the other. The problem of practical ethics is to construct a calculus of pleasures, a sort of ready-reckoner whereby men may be able to invest in the most profitable course of action. "When we have a hedonistic calculus with its senior wranglers," says Mr. Bain, "we shall begin to know whether society admits of being properly reconstructed." [5] It is assumed that pleasures differ only in quantity, i.e., in intensity, extent, and duration, just as warmth does, which may be of high or low temperature; diffused over a greater or less extent of body; and that, for a shorter or a longer time. On this assumption pleasure is every bit as mathematically measurable as is warmth, the whole difficulty being due to its subjective and therefore inaccessible nature. Simple in statement, this theory proves in application infinitely complex, and indeed on closer inspection breaks up into a mere verbal fallacy—as Dr. Martineau, amongst others, has shown in his *Types of Ethical Theory*. For "pleasure," though one simple word, has an endless variety of meanings, not indeed wholly disconnected, but bound together only by a certain kind of analogy. The eye, the ear, the palate, the mind, the heart, have each their proper pleasure; which is nothing else than the resultant of their perfect operation in response to the stimulus of some all-satisfying object—a fact which may be expressed differently by different philosophies, but with substantial identity of meaning. But not till we find some common measure for sound and colour and flavour and thought and affection, will it be possible to compare in any hedonistic scales the pleasures they produce. Yet colour is to the eye what music is to the ear; and therefore the one word pleasure is used not unreasonably of both.

Quite similar seems to us the fallacy to which Evolution owes its seeming simplicity and its popularity. The word "existence" or "life" (which is the existence of organic beings, about which we are chiefly concerned), is taken as having one homogeneous meaning, like "heat" or "warmth;" the only difference being quantitative—a difference of intensity, of breadth, of duration; not a difference of kind

such as would destroy all common measure. Life is something which we predicate of the most diversely organized beings, and therefore would seem to be something the same in all, which they secure in a diversity of ways.

Thus Darwin defines the general good or welfare which should be the aim of our conduct as "the rearing of the greatest number of individuals in full health and vigour with all their faculties perfect;" upon which Mr. Sidgwick remarks[6] with justice: "Such a reduction of the notion of 'well-being' to 'being' (actual and potential) would be a most important contribution from the doctrine of Evolution to ethical science. But it at least conflicts in a very startling manner with those ordinary notions of progress and development" in which "it is always implied that certain forms of life are qualitatively superior to others, independently of the number of individuals, present or future, in which each form is realized.... And if we confine ourselves to human beings, to whom alone the practical side of the doctrine applies, is it not too paradoxical to assert that 'rising in the scale of existence' means no more than 'developing the capacity to exist'? A greater degree of fertility would thus become an excellence outweighing the finest moral and intellectual endowments; and some semi-barbarous races must be held to have attained the end of human existence more than some of the pioneers and patterns of civilization." Nor is it only in the region of ethics but in every region that this false simplification is fertile in paradoxes; and yet if it be disowned, the charm to which Evolution owes its popularity is gone.

It would be indeed a short cut to knowledge if we might believe life to be, as this theory imagines it, a simple, self-diffusing force with an irrepressible tendency to spread itself in all directions, like fire in a prairie. True we should not have altogether got rid of innate tendencies, but we should have reduced them to one, namely, to the struggling, or persisting, or self-asserting tendency; a simplification like that offered by the matter-and-force theory of Buchner.

This flame of life once kindled (we are told) endeavours to subdue all things to itself, and all that we find in the way of variety of organic structure and function has been shaped and determined by its struggle—much as a river channels a way for its waters in virtue of its own onward force, checked and determined by the nature of the obstacles it has to encounter. Every organism is related to life as the candlestick to the candle; it is simply a device for supporting and spreading as much life as is possible with the surrounding conditions. Often, when conditions are favourable, the simplest contrivance will be more effectual, more life-producing than the most complex in less favourable conditions. Where food is not present the animal that can move about in search of it will survive, and the stationary animal perish; and likewise those that can escape their foes will live down those rooted in one spot. And if to motion we add perception and intelligence, and associative instincts and the rest, we increase the appliances for dealing with difficulties; and therewith the means of survival when such difficulties exist. Still, in the hypothesis we are dealing with, all these contrivances—movement, consciousness, intelligence, will, society—are distinct from life and ministerial to it; they are instruments by which it is preserved, increased, and multiplied—like those contrivances by which heat or electricity is generated, sustained, and transmitted; with this difference, that no one has designed these life-machines, but they are simply the result of life's innate tendency to struggle and spread. A great deal of the form and movement of the inorganic world is due simply to the stress of gravitation and not to design, and so we are asked to believe that the human and every other organism has been shaped and quickened by the action of as blind a power; that it is in some sense a casual result.

Now if seeing and hearing and thinking do not constitute life, but are only chance discoveries helpful to life; if we do not live in order to eat and to see and to think, but only think, see, and eat in order to live, we ask ourselves, what then is this life which is none of these things and to which they are all subordinate? And when once we begin subtracting those functions which minister to life and which life has selected for its own service, we find there is absolutely nothing left to serve. Taking the very earliest forms, if we subtract movement, nutrition, growth, generation, we find there is nothing over called "life" distinct from these. This is the first and fundamental incoherence of the theory; life has simply no meaning apart from those functions which we speak of as ministering to life; unless we mean by life the mere cohering together of the bodily organism—an end more effectually secured without any such complex apparatus, by a stone or by an elementary atom.

If existence in that sense, be the force or principle whose persistence and self-assertion is the cause of all evolution, it is impossible to conceive how primordial atoms, which are assumed to be indestructible and constant in quantity, should trouble themselves to struggle at all; since the amount of that kind of existence can neither be lessened nor increased. And as motion is also assumed to be a constant quantity, it is plain that what struggles to be and to multiply, must be some special collocation and grouping of atoms with some correspondingly particular determination of motion, called "life;" but what "life" is, apart from the means it is supposed to have selected for itself, does not appear.

Another difficulty attendant on this false simplification is the complete subversion of that scale of dignity or excellence upon which we range the various kinds of living creatures, putting ourselves at

the top—not merely in obedience to a pardonable vanity, but, as has hitherto been supposed, in obedience to a trustworthy intuition which, without attempting to apply a common measure to things incommensurable, judges life to be higher than death; consciousness than unconsciousness; mind than mere sensation; and in general, what includes and surpasses, than what is included and surpassed. We see that the organic world presupposes the ministry of the inorganic; and the animal world, that of the plant world; and that the human world depends on the ministry of all three; and our whole conception of this world as "cosmos" is simply the filling in of this hierarchic framework. Yet this old structure falls to pieces under the new simplification. If "life" (as vaguely conceived) be the first beginning and the last end (or rather result) of the whole process of evolution, if it be the *summum bonum*, then the "highest" creature means, the most life-producing.

Now if we put "money" instead of "life," and begin to classify men by this standard, we see how it inverts the old-world ideas of social hierarchy. True it is, the man of letters or of high artistic gifts can produce a certain amount of money, but has little chance against the inventor of a new soap or a patent pill. Honesty at once becomes the worst policy, and a thousand other maxims have to be reformed. Yet this is a trifling *boule-versement* compared with that which would have to be introduced into our scientific classification were "life-productivity" (in the vague) taken as the criterion of excellence.

For we cannot any longer determine the rank of an animal by its organic complexity, since, *ceteris paribus*, this is a defect rather than otherwise.

To secure life more simply is better than to secure the same amount by means of complex apparatus. Of course when the favouring conditions are altered, then any apparatus that makes life still possible is an advantage; but till that crisis arises it is only an encumbrance. When life can be secured only at the cost of greater labour and exertion and cunning, it is well to be capable of these things, but surely those animals are more to be envied that have no need of these things. It is only on the hypothesis of an unkindly environment that complexity of organization is an excellence.

Furthermore, although these accidental variations allow certain creatures to survive in crises of difficulty, yet they also make the conditions of their survival more complicated and hard to secure. All that differentiates man from an amoeba has enabled him to get safe through certain straits where the lower forms of life were left behind to perish; but it has also made it impossible for him to live in the simpler conditions he has escaped from; like a parvenu whose luxurious habits have gradually created a number of new necessities for him, which make a return to his original poverty and hardships quite impracticable. If the development of lungs has allowed animals to come out of the water into the air, it has also prevented their going back again. Furthermore, a considerable amount of vital energy is consumed in the production, support, and repair of all this supplementary, life-preserving apparatus; just as, much of the national wealth for whose protection they exist is absorbed by a standing army and other military preparations. And in fact of two countries otherwise equal in wealth, that is surely the better off which has no need of being thus armed up to the teeth. Thus man's superior organization may be compared to the overcoat and umbrella with which one sets out on a threatening morning; very desirable should it rain, but a great nuisance should it clear up.

It seems, then, that the highest organism is that which produces or secures the greatest quantity of life in the simplest manner, and at the cost of the least complexity of structure and function; while the lowest is that which yields the least quantity at the greatest cost; and between these two extremes organisms will be ranked by the ratio of their complexity to their life-productivity—life being measured mathematically (as something homogeneous) by its vigour, by its duration, and by the amount of matter animated, whether in the individual or in its progeny. It is obvious how, at this rate, our zoological hierarchy is turned topsy-turvy; and how difficult it will be to show that man is a better life-machine than, say, a mud-turtle with its centuries of vital existence.

It would be a monstrous allegation to say that any evolutionist would defend these conclusions in all their crudity; but is only by thus pushing implied principles to their results, that their incoherence can be made plain. Once more, if this simple uniform thing called life be the sole cause, determining organic Evolution and selecting accidental variations, just in so far as they favour its own maintenance and multiplication, then every organ, appliance, and faculty by which man differs from the simplest bioplast, is merely a life-preserving contrivance. To speak human-wise, Nature in that case has but one end—animal life; and chooses every means solely with a view to that end. She does not care about pain or pleasure, or consciousness, or knowledge, or truth, or morality, or society, or science, or religion, for their own sakes; she cares for life only, and for these so far as—like horns and teeth and claws—they are conducive to life. Evolution therefore is governed by a blind non-moral principle—as blind and ruthless as gravitation. This being so, the mind is for the sake of the body, and not conversely. Evolution is not making for truth and righteousness as for greater or even as for co-ordinate ends; but simply for life, to which sometimes truth and righteousness, but just as often illusion and selfishness, are means. There is nothing therefore in this process of Nature to make us trust that our mind really

makes for truth as such, or that it has any essential tendency to greater correspondence with reality, beyond what subserves to fuller animal existence. The fact that a certain belief makes animal life possible is no proof of its truth, but only of its expediency. The extent to which many pleasures depend on illusion is proverbial; and pleasure is almost the note of vital vigour, according to this philosophy.

Plainly, our argument from the adaptability of a belief to man's higher moral needs, vanishes into thin air as soon as the key to the order of nature is thus sought in a blind non-moral tendency, and when that which is lowest is put at the top, and everything above it made to minister to it.

But then it is not only this particular argument that perishes, but all possibility of arguing at all, all faith in our mental faculties, except so far as they minister to the finding of food and the propagation of life. Thus the very attempt to prove such a system of Evolution is a contradiction, since it cuts away all basis of proof. On this I need not dwell longer, since it has been worked out so fully and clearly by others. We get rid of the argument from adaptability, by a conception of the order of Nature that reduces us to mental and moral chaos.

In its semblance of simplicity this form of Evolution-philosophy shows itself kin to those other old-world attempts to dispense with a governing mind, and to educe the existing cosmos from the blind strife of primordial atoms. It has indeed a more plausible basis, seeing how many things, too quickly attributed to design in a theological age, can really be explained by the struggle for existence. But in trying to make an occasional and partial cause universal and ultimate, it has undertaken the impossible task of bringing the greater out of the less; which really means bringing their difference out of nothing —and this is creation with the First Cause left out; that is, spontaneous creation. It is from first to last an "aggregation" theory, and has to face the insupportable burdens which such a theory brings with it. Haunted by a false analogy drawn from the political organism whose members are intelligent and self-directive, and who put themselves under an intelligent government to be marshalled and directed to one common end—haunted by this anthropomorphic conception, it tries to explain how independent and indestructible units, void of all intelligence, come together into polities with no assignable government; and how these groups or polities, which are nothing separate from the sum of their components, are aggregated to one another in like manner; until at last we come to the highest organism, which again is only the sum of its ultimate atoms, and its activity the sum of their activities—the whole distinction between highest and lowest organism being such as exists between a society of two and a highly complex civilized state. And all this political life is the spontaneous work of unintelligent units; that is to say, we have results exceeding the highest ever attained by human intelligence, long before intelligence or sentience has yet been evolved.

Nobody will care to support "Pangenesis" as a theory of generation. To suppose that there is a mysterious power which breaks a little fraction off each of the bioplasts of which we are asserted to be the sum; that having collected these fractions it arranges them all in the right order within the compass of a single germ, and from that germ reproduces the parent organism, is an hypothesis compared with which the creation of the world in its entirety six thousand years ago, including the fossils and remains of aeonian civilizations, is lucid and intelligible. This is no hyperbole. For if once we allow creation at all, the creation of the world at any stage of Evolution is just as conceivable as the creation of primordial atoms. If any living thing were now created (e.g., a grain of corn or a full ear) it would bear in itself the apparent evidence of having *grown* to its present state *ab ovo*; or the *ovum* itself would seem to ground a similar false inference of having come from a parent. Strange as such an idea may be, it is easy and pellucid compared with the hypothesis of Pangenesis—still more when we remember that this complex germ, which is a lion or a horse in small—itself the elaboration of aeons of Evolution—can replicate itself with ease and rapidity, reproducing in adjacent pabulum a "cosmos" which differs in degree, not in kind, from that described in the story of the Six Days. Yet the more we look into it, the more clear is it that Pangenesis (and not Polarigenesis or Perigenesis) is the inevitable outcome of the aggregation-theory of life.

And therefore to return to our former assertion, whatever we seem to gain in simplicity of statement by this form of the Evolution theory, we pay for dearly when we come to its application; nay more, as soon as we attempt to translate the words into clear and distinct ideas, we are left with nothing coherent that the mind can get hold of; and it is only at this price that we can cut away the basis of the "argument from adaptability," and with it the basis of all reason and morality. We must therefore go on to examine if there be any alternative form of the same philosophy more bearable.

I have forborne all criticism of the supposed *facts* on which Evolution is based; as others have dealt frequently with their various weaknesses. Nor do I think it necessary to deal with the extravagant subordinate hypotheses by aid of which facts are forced under the main hypothesis, e.g., those which explain how the horse grew out of the hipparion. The crudest finalists have been everywhere out-stripped by Evolutionists in dextrous application of the argument *a posse ad esse*.

III.

Assuming still that the facts collected and arranged by experimental science in favour of the hypothesis are such as to demand some kind of Evolution-philosophy; assuming that the very imperfect serial classification of living things according to their degree of organic definiteness, coherence, and heterogeneity not merely represents a variety which has always coexisted since life was possible on this earth, but rather traces out or hints at the genetic process by which this variety has been produced, let us see if there be any other governing principle directing the process, more intelligible than the persistence of that mere organic life which cannot even be thought of as distinct from those appliances and functions which it is supposed to have evolved for its own service by "natural selection."

Let us admit, what is really evident, that life is nothing distinct from the sum of those functions which minister to the preservation of life; and that therefore it is not the same thing in a man and in a mud-turtle. Man's superior faculties are not merely a more complicated machinery for producing an identical effect which the mud-turtle produces more simply and abundantly, but rather by their very play *constitute* an entirely different and higher kind of life. When Hume, in his *Treatise on Human Nature*, says: "Reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them," he implies that the exercise of reason is no constituent factor of human life, but something outside it, subordinate to it, whereas that life itself consists in passion, or pleasurable sensation, of which man, in virtue of his reason and other advantages, secures more than do his fellow-animals. This is just the conception of life which we have seen to be incoherent on close inspection; and if it be so, then the evolutionary process is a struggle not for bare life or existence, but for the prevalence of the *higher kinds* of life and existence; and intelligence and morality are not only co-operative as instruments in maintaining and extending human life, but are themselves the principal elements of that complex life. True, the mind does minister to the body and preserve it; but still more does the body minister to the mind; or rather, each ministers to that whole in which the play of the mind is the principal function and the play of the body subordinate. If, then, we hold to the verdict of our common sense, and regard our mental life not as subordinate to our sensitive and vegetal life, but as co-ordinate and even superior, we must (so to speak) view it as no less "for its own sake," as no less an "end in itself" than they are, but rather much more; we must regard evolution as making for the life of truth and the life of righteousness even more principally than for bare existence or animal vitality. It is now no longer mere life that tries to assert itself, and in the struggle shapes things to what they are; but it is the very highest kind of life, that is trying to come to the birth. Nature inherently tends to the higher through the lower forms of life, and these minister to the higher and receive in return from them the means of a yet more efficacious ministry.

In this conception, every function of the organism has two aspects, under one of which it is its own end and exists for its own sake as an element of the life of the whole; under the other it is ministerial, serving other functions above and below it, as it in return is served by them. Correspondence with the environment is, similarly, not merely a condition of life, but also that wherein vitality principally consists. "Living" is spontaneous self-adaptation to surrounding reality, taken in the very widest sense. The more diverse and multiform this adaptability, the fuller and higher is the life; and thus our ordinary common-sense classifications are justified. Each new manifestation of life means some new correspondence with surrounding reality as we piss from mere vegetation, and then add local movement, and one sense after another, till we come finally to intelligence and the life of reason and right-doing, which again, consists in self-conformation to things as they really are. In all this we are in agreement with common sense and common language, which identify the fullest life with the fullest activity; all activity being of the nature of response to stimulus, that is, correspondence to reality. As soon as consciousness supervenes on the lower forms of life it is evident that the pleasures of sight, hearing, taste, mind, and affection all depend on, and consist in, the consciousness of this successful accommodation of the subject to the object; and that all pain and disease is simply the felt failure of such adaptation. What was anciently and very wisely called the "natural appetite" of living creatures is in this view nothing else but their response to the modifying attraction exerted upon them by the objective Reality which presses upon them on every side, and tends to draw them into conformity with itself so far as they have latent capacity for such a correspondence. It is the light that makes (or rather elicits) sight; and it is sound that develops the sense of hearing: and it is the ideas embodied in Nature that call our intellect into play. Hence it follows that, desire for truth and justice, for society and for religion, which assert themselves as invariably in the soul of man at certain stages of progress, as the desire for mere life asserts itself from the first, is simply the felt result of the as yet unsuccessful endeavour of Nature to draw man into a fuller kind of correspondence with herself.

Thus conceived, the course of evolution is comparable, not as before, to the gradual unveiling of a blank canvas, revealing simply a greater extent of the same appearance, but to the gradual unveiling of a picture whose full unity of meaning is held in suspense till the disclosure is completed. We do not now interpret the higher by the lower, but the lower by the higher; the beginning by the end. This may seem

perilously near to finalism, yet it is no more necessarily so, than the process of photography; we only need a self-adaptive tendency in life-matter responsive to the stimulating-tendency of the environment. Not, of course, that this bundle of words really explains anything, but that like other formulae of the kind, it prescinds from the question of ends and origins, by making a statement of what happens serve as a cause of what happens, and calling it a Law or a Tendency, or a Latent Potentiality—thus filling the gap which mere agnosticism creates in our thought.

With this conception of Evolution our ordinary estimates of "higher" and "lower" are saved; also the value of our mental processes upon which rests whatever proof the theory may admit of; while the "argument from adaptability" is provided with a firm basis independent of finality. All our "natural," as opposed to our personal and self-determined appetites or cravings,—those which are, so to say, constitutional and inseparable from our nature in certain conditions, are evidence of the influence of some reality outside us seeking to draw us into more perfect correspondence with itself, and whose nature can be more or less dimly conjectured from the nature of those cravings. What are called "natural religions" represent man's self-devised attempts to explain the reality answering to his religious and moral cravings. Revelation is but a divine interpretation of the same; as though one with dim vision were to supplement his defect by the testimony of another more clear-sighted.

It may be practically admitted that no philosophy allows of strict demonstration, since, being a conception of the totality of things, it modifies our understanding of every principle by which one might attempt to prove or disprove it. Eventually it is its harmony with the totality of things as we perceive them that determines us to accept it, and no two of us perceive just the same totality, however substantial an agreement there may be in our experience; yet I think it can hardly be denied that this conception of evolution is far more in agreement with the world as most of us know it, and commonly think and speak of it, than the former; that it not merely satisfies our intellect, but offers some satisfaction to our whole spiritual nature. "Is it certain," asks Mr. Bradley, in a fairly similar connection, "that the mere intellect can be self-satisfied if the other elements of our nature remain uncontented?" And, again: "A result, if it fails to satisfy our whole nature, comes short of perfection: and I could not rest tranquilly in a truth if I were compelled to regard it as hateful.... I should insist that the inquiry was not yet closed and that the result was but partial. And if metaphysics" [for which we may substitute: any philosophy, such a& that of Evolution] "is to stand, it must, I think, take account of all sides of our being. I do not mean that every one of our desires must be met by a promise of particular satisfaction; for that would be absurd and utterly impossible. But if the main tendencies of our nature do not reach consummation in the Absolute, we cannot believe that we have attained to perfection and truth."[7] From this point of view there can be no doubt as to which of these conceptions of Evolution is the more rational and satisfactory; that which would explain it by a simple tendency in living matter to persist and spread, and would see in all organic variety only the selected means to that somewhat colourless end; or that conception which would explain it by a tendency in living matter to come into ever fuller correspondence with its environment, seeing in such spontaneous correspondence the very essence of life, and not merely a condition of life.

We need only add a few criticisms on this second conception.

1. It is true that every creature struggles more intensely and vigorously for the lower kind of life, or for "mere life," as we might say, than for any of those things which alone would seem to make life worth the having. But this only means that to live at all is the most fundamental condition of living well and fully and enjoyably. The higher life cannot stand without the lower, which it includes, but the lower is not therefore the better, nor is it the end for whose sake the higher is desirable; but conversely. Not until men have got bread enough to eat will they have leisure or energy to spare for the animal grades of vitality. When the means of bodily subsistence grow scarce, then the faculties that were previously set free to seek the bread of a higher and fuller life are diverted to the struggle for bare animal existence, and progress is thrown back; but when there is abundance for all, secured by the labour of a few from whom the remainder can buy, then fuller life becomes once more possible for that remainder. The struggle for bodily food gives an advantage to, and "selects" naturally, those mental and other powers which facilitate its attainment; but just as man does not only eat and labour in order to live, but also (however it may shock conventional ethics) lives in order to eat and labour; so the new energies called forth by competition do not merely secure that grade of life in whose interests they are evoked and perfected, but extend the sphere of vitality, in so much as their own play adds a new element to life and gives it a new form.

The part played by struggle and competition in this process of Evolution is naturally exaggerated by those who deny any latent tendency other than that of mere persistence in being; who repudiate an internal expansiveness towards fuller kinds of existence, drawn out or checked by the environment.

Competition plays a prominent part when there is question of the lower grades of life, in so far as these depend on a pabulum that is limited in quantity. In such cases competition, within certain limits,

will secure the bringing-out of latent powers by which the lower level of life is maintained and a higher level entered upon; the lower being secured by the superimposition of the higher.

But how does it do so? Not by creating anything, but by giving the victory to those individuals who already were ahead of their fellows in virtue of a fuller development of their nature from within; in clearing the ground for them and letting them increase and multiply.

2. Again, we should notice that development in one direction may be at the cost of development in another. The struggle for any lower form of existence than that already attained, is inevitably at the cost of the higher. The degrading effects of destitution are proverbial. Craft, cruelty, selfishness, and all the vices needed for success in a gladiatorial contest are often the fruits of such competition. Also, commercial progress seems on the whole to be at the expense of progress in art and the higher tastes, sacrificing everything to the production of the greatest possible quantity of material comforts. If it sharpens the wits and sensibilities in some directions, it blunts them in others.

Now, the first sense suggested to us in these days by the word "progress," is material progress—all that came in with steam; and this narrow conception vitiates much of our reasoning. It is in this realm undoubtedly that competition is such a factor of rapid advance; but we forget that the food of what the best men have ever considered the best life, is not limited or divisible; but like the light and air is undiminished how many soever share it. Whatever advance there has been in the life of the mind and of the higher tastes and sensibilities, cannot directly be explained by competition, but simply by the quiet upward working of Nature's inherent forces. We look with scorn at the unprogressive East, satisfied that there can be no progress, no life worth living, where there is no rush for dollars. But I think we have yet to learn the meaning of *ex Oriente lux*.

Much of our immorality and our social evil comes from the fact that those who have developed the faculties of a higher grade of life, seek the lower as an end in itself, and not simply so far as it is a condition of the higher and no further. The Gospel precept, as usual, enunciates only the law of reason and nature, when it bids us to "Seek first the Kingdom of God and its justice," that is, to put our best life in the front, and to make it the measure and limit of any other quest. The neglect of this principle gives us high living and plain thinking, instead of "high thinking and plain living;" and takes the bread out of the mouths of the poor. The competition for pleasures and luxuries and amusements, may indeed develop certain industries and cause progress in certain narrow lines, but it is at the cost of the only progress worth the name.

The conflict between this "struggle-theory" and ethics has been freely acknowledged by Professor Huxley and others; every attempt to educe unselfishness from selfishness has failed. The moral man even in our day has rather a bad time of it; what chance would he have had of surviving to propagate his species in the supposed pre-moral states of human society? Who can possibly conceive mere rottenness being cured by progress in rottenness; or a man drinking himself into temperance? On the other hand, it is at least conceivable that in the wildest savage there is some little seed of a moral sense —weak, compared with the lowest springs of action, just because it is the highest and therefore only struggling into being; and that in the slow lapse of time events may here and there prove that honesty is the best policy; and that honesty once tasted may be found not only useful for other things, but agreeable for itself, and may be cherished and strengthened by social and religious sanctions.

There is, however, a reaction on foot which tends to reconcile the breach between ethics and evolution, by reducing the part played by competition within reasonable bounds, and making it subservient to the survival, not of the most selfish, but of the most social individuals. Definite variations from within, modified between narrow limits by accidental variation from without, is coming to be acknowledged as the chief factor of progress. But we should not forget that to allow an internal principle of orderly development is, not merely to modify the popular evolution theory by a slight concession to its adversaries; it is rather to make it no longer the supreme explanation of development, but at most a slight modification of the more mysterious theory which it was its boast and merit to have supplanted. According to Geddes and Foster and others of their school, it is the species-subserving qualities that Nature selects; and these, in the higher grades of life, are equivalent to the altruistic, social, and ethical qualities. It is in virtue of the parental and maternal instincts of self-sacrifice, self-diffusion, self-forgetfulness in the interests of the offspring, that species are preserved and prevail. Selfish egoism leads eventually (as we see in some modern countries where *laizzez-faire* liberalism prevails) to social disruption, decadence, and chaos; and this is the universal law of life in every grade. At first indeed the unit struggles to live, for life is the condition of propagation; but the root of this instinct is altruistic; it is the whole asserting itself in the part; and all "self-regarding" instincts are to be likewise explained as subordinate to the "other-regarding" instincts. As soon as this sub-ordination is ignored in practice, regress takes the place of progress. The transit, we are told, from the unicellular to the multicellular organism cannot be explained by individualism, but implies a diminution of the competitive, an increase of the social and subordinative tendency. The argument from economics to

biology and back again, is said to be nearing exposure; the "progress of the species through the internecine struggle of its individuals at the margin of subsistence," is the outgoing idea. Yes, and with it goes out all that made Evolution a simple and therefore popular explanation of the world; and there comes in that "organic" conception of the process which clamours for theism and finalism as its only coherent complement.

3. But though Evolution so conceived makes the "argument from adaptability," as well as the arguments for theism, stronger rather than weaker; we must not shut our eyes to the difficulty created by the fact (too little insisted upon by Evolutionists) that there is no solid reason for thinking that progress is all-pervading. We have already said that progress in commerce may be regress in art or in religion or in morality. Also, progress in benevolence may co-exist with regress in fortitude and purity; progress in one point of morality with regress in another; progress in ethical judgment with regress in ethical practice. And in every realm, growth and decay, life and death, seem so to intertwine and oscillate that it is very gratuitous to designate the total process as being one or the other. Spencer confesses that the entire universe oscillates between extremes of integration and disintegration. Why we should consider the universe at present to be rising rather than falling, waxing rather than waning, one cannot say. The easier presumption is that it is equally one and the other, and always has been. Even were we rash enough to pronounce progress to be on the whole prevalent within the narrow field of our own experience, surely it were nothing but the inevitable "provincialism" of the human mind to pass *per saltum* from that, to a generalization for all possible experience. Our optimism, our faith that right, truth, and order will eventually prevail, can find only a delusive basis in actual experience, and must draw its life from some deeper source.

Why then should we so presume that our moral and religious ideas are really progressive and not regressive, as to regard their interpretation as approximating to the truth? The answer is simply that our argument from adaptability does not require the assumption in question, but only that we should be able to distinguish higher from lower tendencies, progressive from regressive movements, without holding the optimistic view that on the whole the forward tendency is at present prevailing. It is not because we live in the nineteenth century that we consider our moral perceptions truer than those of the ancient Hebrews, but because we at once comprehend and transcend their ideas (in some respects), as the greater does the less. In many points surely the relation is inverted and we feel ourselves transcended (or may at least suspect it), by those who lived or live in ruder conditions than our own. David has perhaps taught us more than we could have taught him; and there are other vices than those proper to semi-barbarism. It is not by reference to date or country, or grade of material progress, that we assess the value of moral judgments, but by that subjective standard with which our own moral attainments supply us in regard to all that is equal or less, similar or dissimilar. To deny this discernment is to throw the doors open to unqualified scepticism; to admit it, is all that we need for the validity of our inference.

4. If Evolution is really of this oscillatory character; if at all times much the same processes have been going on in different parts of this universe as now—one system decaying as another is coming into being; is it not more reasonable to imagine (for it is only a question of imagining) that the primordial datum was not uniform nebula, but matter in all stages of elaboration from the highest to the lowest—the same sort of result as we should get from a cross-section at any subsequent moment in the process? What reason is there for assuming primordial homogeneity, since every backward step would show us, together with the unravelling of what is now in process of weaving, a counter-balancing weaving of what is now in process of disintegration? Were this earth all, we might dream of universal advance by shutting our eyes to a great many incompatible facts; but when our telescopes show us the co-existence of integration and disintegration everywhere, what can we conclude but that in the past as in the future, no alteration is to be looked for beyond the shifting of the waves' crest from side to side of the sea of matter—the total ratio of depressions to elevations remaining exactly constant.

Were the other view of an original universal homogeneity correct, how conies it that we have still co-existent every stage of advance from the lowest to the highest, and that there is not a greater equality? —a difficulty which does not exist if we suppose things to have been *on the whole,* as they are now, from the very first. But whichever view we take; whether we suppose all things collectively to oscillate between recurring extremes of "sameness" and "otherness;" or every stage of the wave of progress from crest to trough, to be simultaneously manifested in the universe at all times, the old difficulty of "the beginning" will force itself upon us. A process *ab aeterno* is at least as unimaginable as the process of creation *ex nihilo;* if it be not altogether inconceivable to boot. And the alternative is, either a primordial state of homogeneous matter which contains the present cosmos in germ, and from which it is evolved without the aid of any environment—such a germ claiming a designer as much as any ready-made perfect world; or else, a primordial state of things like that which we should get at any cross-section of the secular process, in which every stage of life and death, growth and decay, evolution and involution, is represented as now. This would include fossils and remains of past civilizations which (in

the hypothesis) would never have existed; and would be in all respects as difficult as the crudest conception of the creation-hypothesis. And if this absurdity drives us back to primordial homogeneity, as before, we must remember that here, too, though not so evidently, we should have all the signs of an antecedent process that was non-existent. Life and death, corruption and integration, are parts of one undulatory process. Cut the wave where you will its curve claims to be finished in both directions and suggests a before as well as an after. If, in the very nature of things, the pendulum sways between confusion and order, chaos and cosmos, each extreme intrinsically demands the other, not only as its consequent, but as its antecedent; and the first chaos, no less than any succeeding one, will seem the ruin of a previous cosmos. Therefore we are driven back upon a process *ab aeterno* with every stage of evolution always simultaneously represented in one part or other of the whole. Whatever mitigation such a conception may offer, surely we may be excused for still adhering to that simpler explanation which involves a mystery indeed, but nothing so positively unthinkable as a process without a beginning.

5. This same conception of a process without beginning, favours the notion that since life was possible on our globe all species may well have co-existed in varying proportions. From the sudden spread of population through almost accidental conditions, we can imagine how certain species might have been so scarce as to leave no trace in geological strata, whereas those which enormously preponderated at the same time would have done so. A change of conditions might easily cause the former to preponderate, and their sudden appearance in the strata would look as though they had then first come into being. In a word, we can have good evidence for the extinction of species, but scarcely any for their origination.

This supposition is not adverse to the derivation of species from a common stock, but rather favours the notion that as in the case of the individual the period of plasticity is short compared with that of morphological stability, so if there was such an arboreal branching out of species from a common root, it took place rapidly in conditions as different from ours as those of uterine from extra-uterine life; and that the stage of inflexibility may have been reached before any time of which we have record.

But in truth when we see in the world of chemical substances an altogether similar sedation of species where there can be no question of common descent as its cause, we may well suspend our judgment till the established facts have excluded the many hypotheses other than Evolution by which they may be explained.

As long as Evolution claims to be no more than a working scientific hypothesis, like ether or electric fluid—a sort of frame or subjective category into which observed facts are more conveniently fitted, it cannot justly be pressed for a solution of ultimate problems; but when it claims to be a complete philosophy and as such to extrude other philosophies previously in possession, it must show that it can rest the mind where they leave it restless; or that it has proved their proffered solutions spurious. This, so far, it has absolutely failed to do. At most it may determine more accurately the way in which God works out His Idea in Creation. It can stand as long as it is content to prescind from the question of ends and origins; but then it is no longer a complete philosophy. As soon as it attempts to solve those problems it becomes incoherent and unthinkable. Its true complement is theism and finality, which flow from it as naturally, if not quite so immediately as the "argument from adaptability." *Deus creavit* is so far the only moderately intelligible, or at least not demonstrably unintelligible, answer given to the problem of *In principio*.

We have then in this second and soberer form of the philosophy of Evolution, an attempt to explain the order of the universe without explicit recourse to the hypothesis of an intelligent authorship and government of the world: that is to say, independently of theism and finality; and so far as this explanation admits all the effects and consequences of an intelligent government, without ascribing them to that cause, it admits among their number the value of the "argument from adaptability," and allows us to infer that the postulates of man's higher moral needs correspond approximately to reality, of which they are in some sense the product; and that the "wish to believe" is less likely to be a source of delusion in proportion as the belief in question is higher in the moral scale.

But it is also clear how unsuccessful this attempted philosophy is in many ways; and with what difficulties and mysteries it is burdened. At best it can prescind from finalism by a confession of incompleteness and philosophical bankruptcy; by resolutely refusing to face the problem of the whole—of the ultimate whence and whither. If it would positively exclude theism or finalism it must ascribe all seeming order and adaptation to the persistence of some blind force, subduing all things to itself, to "existence," or to "life" striving to assert and extend itself. It is this conception that seems best to bring the mystery of the universe within the comprehension of the popular mind, and is more in keeping with those "aggregation theories" of our day which regard dust as the one eternal reality whose combination and disguises delude us into believing in soul and intelligence and divinity. But on closer examination the words "life" and "existence" answer to no simple reality or force which can be regarded as

governing nature, and from this radical fallacy of language a whole brood of further absurdities spring up which make the popular form of Evolution-philosophy utterly incoherent.

June, Aug. Sept. 1899.

Footnotes:

[Footnote 1: This will perhaps be the most convenient term. In the *Summa of Aquinas*, the elaborate treatise *De vera religione*, called into existence by more recent exigencies, had no place. Still, in so far as it is constructed roughly on the same scheme and presupposes the same philosophy, and (were it not a deepening of the roots rather than an extension of the branches) might almost be regarded as a development of scholasticism, it may rightly be called "scholastic" to distinguish it, say, from such a work as the *Grammar of Assent*.]

[Footnote 2: *Science and a Future Life*, By F. W. Myers.]

[Footnote 3: i.e., If an object be adequately and exhaustively conceived under the predicates A.B.C.D., it is inadequately conceived as A.B.x.x. But if each of these properties be permeated and modified by the rest, then A in this object is not as A in any other combination, but is A as related to and modified by B.C.D.; and similarly, the other properties are each unique. Hence any part is somewhat falsely apprehended till the whole be apprehended, when we are dealing with organic as opposed to mechanical totalities.]

[Footnote 4: Not that the transmutation of one species into another has yet been detected in any instance, or perhaps, even were it a fact, could be detected; but that such a serial graduation has been observed as might be commodiously explained by that supposition,—and also by fifty others.]

[Footnote 5: *Mind*, 1876, p. 185.]

[Footnote 6: *Mind*, 1876, p. 9.]

[Footnote 7: *Appearance and Reality*.]

XXIII.

IDEALISM IN STRAITS.

"Can any good come out of Trinity?" is a question that has been asked and answered in various senses during the recent Catholic University controversies in Ireland; but for whatever other good Catholics might look to that staunchly Elizabethan institution, they would scarcely turn thither for theological guidance. Yet all definition is negative as well as positive; exclusive as well as inclusive; and we always know our position more deeply and accurately in the measure that we comprehend those other positions to which it is opposed. The educative value of comparing notes, quite apart from all prospect of coming to an agreement, or even of flaying our adversaries alive, is simply inestimable; we do not rightly know where we stand, except in so far as we know where others stand—for place is relative.

The Donnellan Lecturer for 1897-8 [1] took for his subject the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity in relation to contemporary idealistic philosophy. The scope of these lectures is, not to prove the doctrine of the Trinity philosophically, but to show that the difficulty besetting the conception of a multiplicity of persons united by a superpersonal bond, is just the same difficulty that brings idealistic philosophy to a dead-lock when it endeavours (1) to escape from solipsism, (2) to vindicate free-will,(3) to solve the problem of evil. He naturally speaks of Idealism as "the only philosophy which can now be truly called living," in the sense in which a language is said to live; that is, which is growing and changing, and endeavouring to bring new tracts of experience under its synthesis; which is current in universities of the day. Of the Realism which survives in the seminaries of the ecclesiastical world he naturally knows nothing; addressing himself to a wholly different public, he speaks to it on its own assumptions, in its own mental language; and indeed he knows no other. But having weighed idealism in the balance of criticism, he finds it far short of its pretensions to be an adequate accounting for the data of experience; he finds that it leads the mind in all directions to impassable chasms which only faith can overleap. It does not demand or suggest the mystery of the Trinity, but reveals a void which, as a fact that doctrine alone does fill. The convinced Realist will not be very interested about the problem of solipsism which for him is non-existent, but the proposed relief from the difficulties of free-will and of the existence of evil may be grateful to all indifferently; or at least may suggest principles adaptable to

other systems. In his Trinitarian theology Mr. D'Arcy is in many points at variance with the later conclusions of the schools; and in some instances his argument depends vitally on this variance; but not in the main. For his main point is that as our own personality—the highest unity of which we have experience—takes under itself unities of a lower grade; so the doctrine of the Trinity implies what the hiatuses of philosophy require, namely, that personal unity is not the highest; that, beyond any power of our present conception, the personally many can be really (not only morally or socially) *one thing*. "A wonderfully unspeakable thing it is," says Augustine, "and unspeakably wonderful that whereas this image of the Trinity" *(sc.,* the human soul), "is one person, and the sovereign Trinity itself, three persons, yet that Trinity of three persons is more inseparable than this trinity" (memory, understanding, and will) "of one person." This "superpersonal" unity is of course a matter of faith and not of philosophy, yet it is a faith without which subjective philosophy must come to a stand-still; it is as much a postulate of the speculative reason as God and immortality are of the practical reason.

"If man is to retain the full endowment of his moral nature, we must make up our minds to accept for ourselves an incomplete theory of things." A philosophy which should unify the sum-total of human experience, including the supernatural facts of Christianity, is impossible; but even excluding these facts there is always need of some kind of non-rational assent, which, however reasonable and prudent in the very interests of thought, is not necessitated by the laws of thought—is not, in the strictest sense philosophical. Idealism, like other philosophies, "is not satisfied with an imperfect knowledge of the greatest things. It must rise to the Divine standpoint and comprehend the concrete universal," and so, of course, it breaks down. "But it would surely be a hasty inference," says Mr. D'Arcy, "that philosophy must needs be exhausted because idealism has done its work and delivered its message to mankind," that is, has explored another blind alley, and has arrived at the *cul de sac*. In fact, if idealism is a living philosophy, it is nevertheless showing signs of age and decay. Ptolemaic astronomy, as an explanation of planetary movements, proved its exhaustion by a liberal recourse to epicycles as the answer to all awkward objections; and philosophies show themselves moribund in an analogous way, by a monotonous pressing of some one hackneyed principle to a degree that makes common-sense revolt and fling the whole theory to the winds—chaff and grain indiscriminately. But philosophy must be distinguished from philosophies, as religion from religions. The imperfection of the various concrete attempts to satisfy either spiritual need, may make the desperate-minded wish to cut themselves free from all connection with any particular system; but the desire and effort to have a knowledge of the whole (*i.e.*, a philosophy) is as natural and ineradicable as the desire to live and breathe. In this general sense, philosophy "takes human experience, sets it out in all its main elements, and then endeavours to form a plan of systematic thought which will account for the whole. It has one fundamental postulate, that there is a meaning, or, in other words, that there is an all-pervading unity." This "faith" in the ultimate coherence and unity of everything is the presupposition and motive of the very attempt to philosophize or to determine the nature of that unity. It is not, therefore, itself a product of philosophy; it is an innate conviction that can be denied only from the teeth outwards, but can neither be proved nor disproved by the finite mind.

To "explain" is in one way or another to liken the less known to what is better known; and thus every philosophy is an attempt to express—by means of sundry extensions and limitations—the universe of our experience in the terms of some totality with which we are more familiar; plainly, it is also an endeavour to express the greater in terms of the less, and must therefore be almost infinitely inadequate even at the best. At one time the Whole has been conceived as the unity of a mere aggregate—of a heap of stones; at another, as a mere sand-storm of fortuitous atoms; there has been the egg-theory, and the tortoise-theory, and many others, no less grotesque to our seeming. But, leaving fanciful and poetical philosophies aside, and considering only those which pretend to be strictly rational, we find the objective philosophy and the subjective confronting one another; the former likening the universe to the works of men's hands; the latter likening it to man himself; the former taking its metaphors from the artificer shaping his material according to a preconceived plan for a definite purpose; the latter, from the thinking and willing self considered as the creator of its own personal experience.

There is enough uniformity of plan throughout the animal body to make any one part of the organism a likeness of the whole—the eye, the heart, or the hand. And so, presumably, there is hardly any unity we can think of in our own little corner of experience that does not offer some similitude of the universal unity. But to take this as an adequate explanation; to force the metaphor to its logical consequences, to the exclusion of every other reasonable though non-rational assent, is the commonest but most fatal form of intellectual provincialism and narrowness. Our mind is essentially limited not merely in that it cannot know everything, but in that its mode of knowledge is imperfect and analogical in regard to all that is greater than itself. It is broad only when conscious of its narrowness.

The first difficulty into which idealism gets itself is that of solipsism. According to its rigidly argued principles, "mind is separated from mind by a barrier which is, not figuratively, but literally impassable.

It is impossible for any *ego* to leap this barrier and enter into the experience of any other *ego*." It is not an abstract self-in-general, but my one solitary concrete self for which all experience exists. There is no room for any other person. But this philosophy does not account for our common-sense belief in Nature as existing independently of self and of other selfs; or in those other selfs with their several and distinct spheres of experience.

The unification it effects when treated rigorously as a complete philosophy leaves out of account the best part of what it was bound to account for. In spite of idealism, the idealist goes on *believing* in other persons or spheres of experience, and in Nature as the experience of a Divine Person. But since, on his principles, persons are mutually exclusive, and none can enter the sphere of another's experience, to see with his eyes, or to feel with his nerves, since,

> Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe
> Our hermit spirits dwell and range apart,

we are thrown back on a disconnected plurality of beings, and God Himself, viewed as personal (in this sense) is but one among many. Albeit immeasurably the greatest, He cannot be regarded as the ground of the possibility and existence of all the rest—the home and bond of union of all other spirits which in Him live and move and have their being.

The belief in the personality of God is all-essential for the satisfaction of our religious cravings, as a presupposition of trust, love, prayer, obedience, and such relationships; as bringing out the transcendence in contrast with the all-pervading immanence of the deity; as checking the pantheistic perversion of this latter truth by which, in turn, its own deistic perversion is checked. God is not only in and through all things; but also outside and above all things; just as Christ is not only the soul of the Church, but also its Head and Ruler. Between these two compensating statements the exact truth is hidden from our eyes.

But it is not to the conception of the Divine personality and separateness that we are to look for the missing bond by which the head and members are to be knit together, and the essential disconnection of these "spheres of experience" overcome. The ultimate unity is a mystery; in a word, philosophy, as a quest of that unity, breaks down. The solution is suggested only by the revelation of a superpersonal unity in some sense prior to the multiplicity of Divine Persons, a unity in which they being many are one, and in which we too are, not merged, but unified without prejudice to our personal distinctness.

Hence, the writer concludes: "Materialism, when its defect is discovered and understood, points on to idealism. Idealism, when its defect is disclosed, points to Christian theism." For those who have not come to Christian theism by this thorny and circuitous path, the mode in which the idealist extricates himself from his self-wrought entanglement may seem of little interest; but inasmuch as they take for granted the existence of that same multitude of mutually impenetrable personalities which he, by a revolt of his common-sense against his philosophy is forced to confess, the problem of the ultimate unity exists for them also.

If in its endeavour to vindicate the spirituality of man against the materialist, idealism tumbles into the slough of solipsism and needs to be fetched out by the doctrine of the Trinity, it fares much the same way in its attempted defence of free-will against necessity. That freedom from determination by the "not-self" which idealism vindicates, can belong only to the all-inclusive Spirit, outside whose self nothing exists; it belongs to me only on the supposition that I am the all-inclusive; and this, as before, is the point at which common-sense revolts. "Free-will is based on man's consciousness of his moral nature. It represents not any speculative theory, but one of the great facts which every theory of things must explain or perish." If we ascribe freedom to the Absolute and to other spirits (whose existence is forced on us in spite of Idealism), it is because we first find it in ourselves as the very essence of our spiritual nature. But if we accept our freedom as a fact which it is the business of philosophy to explain and not to deny; on just the same testimony we must accept the fact of the manifold limitations of our liberty of which we are continually conscious. Now here it is that the Idealist defence of liberty against materialism fails by a deplorable *nimis probat*. It can only save our liberty by denying our limitations; or at least it leaves us facing a problem which can be solved only by an assumption for which Idealism offers no philosophical warrant. Hence we are brought back to the world-old dilemma "between a freedom of God which annihilates man, and a freedom of man which annihilates God." Idealism has really contributed nothing to the solution of the difficulty which is persistent as long as God is known only as a Sovereign and Infinite Personality among a multitude of finite personalities, and until revelation hints at the possibility of a higher "unity which transcends personality, by which He is to be the reconciling principle and home of the multitude of self-determining agents." "Final reconciliation of the Divine and human personality is in fact beyond us."

Similarly, in dealing with problems of moral evil, Idealism leads to an *impasse*. As long as we keep to the notion of one all-inclusive Spirit, the Subject of universal experience, it is easy to show that sin is

but relatively evil, that it is, when viewed absolutely, as much a factor of the universal life as is righteousness; yet surely this is not to account for so large and obstinate a part of our experience, but to deny it. Nor can the ethical corollaries of such a view be tolerated for a moment. That sin is an absolute, eternal, in some sense, irreparable evil is a conception altogether fundamental to that morality with which Christianity and modern civilization have identified themselves. It is but another aspect of the doctrine of freedom and responsibility. Of physical and necessary evil it is possible to assert the merely negative or relative character; we can view it as the good in process of making; or as the good imperfectly comprehended; but if this optimism be extended to sin it can only be because sin is regarded as necessitated, *i.e.*, as no longer sin. Hence the view in question does not account for, but implicitly denies the existence of sin.

Furthermore, the whole tendency of more recent idealism is to explain moral evil as an offence against man's social nature by which he is a member of an organism or community. It is the undue self-assertion of the part against the interests of the whole. Of course the idealist explains this organic conception with a respect for personality which is absent from socialistic and evolutionary doctrines of society. But the notion of sin as a rebellion of one member against all, is common to both. The latter consider the external life and activity of the unit as an element in the collective external life of the community—as part of a common work; the former considers the unity as a free spiritual agency, an end for itself—whose liberty is curtailed only by the claims of other like agencies, equal or greater. But by what process, apart from faith and practical postulates and regulative ideas, can subjectivism pass to belief in other free agencies outside the thinking and all-creating self? The result of Mr, D'Arcy's criticism of the matter is that "it is because the man exists as a member of a spiritual universe, and must therefore so exert his power of self-determination as to be in harmony or discord with God above him, and with other men around him, that the distinction between the good self and the bad self arises. But in this very conception of a universe of spirits we have passed beyond the bounds of a purely rational philosophy. Such a universe is not explicable by reference to the vivifying principle of the self;" and accordingly we are driven back as before upon the alternative of philosophical chaos, or else of faith in such a superpersonal unity as is suggested by the doctrine of the Trinity.

We have but hinted at the barest outlines of Mr. D'Arcy's argument which, as against Idealism, is close-reasoned and subtle; and now we have left but little space to deal with the more really interesting chapter on the "Ultimate Unity." It is not pretended that we can form any conception of the precise nature of that unity, but merely that some such unknown kind of unity is needed to deliver us from the antinomies of thought. As we could never rise to the intrinsic conception of personal unity from the consideration of some lower unity, material or mechanical; so neither can we pass from the notion of personal to that of superpersonal unity or being.

This is only a modern and Hegelian setting of the truth that "being" and "unity" are said analogously and not univocally of God and creatures. That there are grades of reality; that "substance is more real than quality and subject is more real than substance," that "the most real of all is the concrete totality, the all-inclusive universal"—the *Ens determinatissimum*, is not a modern discovery, but a re-discovery. That our own personality is the highest unity of which we have any proper non-analogous notion; that it is the measure by which we spontaneously try to explain to ourselves other unities, higher or lower, by means of extensions or limitations; that our first impulse, prior to correction, is to conceive everything self-wise, be it super-human or infra-human, is of course profoundly true; but for this reason to make "self" the all-explaining and only category, to deny any higher order of reality because we can have no definite conception of its precise nature, is the narrowness which has brought Idealism into such difficulties. It is probably in his notion of Divine personality that Mr. D'Arcy comes most in conflict with the technicalities of later schools. If, as he says, modern theology oscillates between the poles of Sabellianism and Tritheism, he himself inclines to the latter pole. Father de Regnon, S.J., in his work on the Trinity, shows that the Greek Fathers and the Latin viewed the problem from opposite ends. "How three can be one," was the problem with the former; "How one can be three," with the latter. These inclined to an emptier, those to a fuller notion of personality. Mr. D'Arcy's Trinitarianism is decidedly more Greek than Latin. The more "content" he gives to Divine personality, the more he is in-danger of denying identity of nature and operation; as appears later.

Plainly, the word "person," however analogously applied to God, must contain something of what we mean when we call ourselves "persons," else "we are landed in the unmeaning." When Christ spoke of Himself as "I," the selfness implied by the pronoun must have had some kind of resemblance to our own; just as when He called God His Father He intended to convey something of what fatherhood meant for His then hearers. That He intended to convey what it might come to mean in other conditions and ages seems very doubtful; and so if the word "person" has acquired a fuller and different meaning in modern philosophy, we are not at once justified in applying this fuller conception to the Divine persons, unless we can show that it is a legitimate development of the older sense.

He argues that if the Trinity be the ultimate truth, the Unitarian suppositions and conclusions of the

"natural theologian" are bound to lead to antinomies and confusions; and he sees in those harmonious interferences and variations of universal import (which are no less an essential factor in the evolution of the world than the groundwork of uniformity and law), evidence of a multi-personal Divine government, of a division of labour between co-operant agencies. This, of course, goes beyond the doctrine of "appropriation;" and amounts to a denial of the singleness of the Divine operation *ad extra*. It seems, in short, to imply a diversity of nature in each of the persons, over and above the principle of personal distinctness. Indeed, while it offers a plausible solution of some minor perplexities, it rather weakens the value of the general argument. For the notion of a superpersonal unity is needed chiefly as suggesting a mode in which many mutually exclusive personalities or "spheres of experience" or lives, may be welded together into a coherent whole. Even could I reproduce most exactly in myself the thoughts and feelings of another, it were but a reproduction or similarity. I can know and feel the like; but I cannot know his knowing and feel his feeling; for this were to be that other and not myself.

That God's knowledge of our thoughts and feelings should be of this external, inferential kind is as intolerable to our mental needs of unification as it is to our religious sense, our hope, our confidence, our love. In Him we live and move and think and feel; and He in us. That we can say this of no other personality is what constitutes the burden of our separateness and loneliness. Our experience exists for no other; but at least it is in some mysterious way shared by That which lies behind all otherness, not destroying, but fulfilling. "We know not why it is," says St. Catherine of Genoa, "we feel an internal necessity of using the plural pronoun instead of the singular." Perhaps it was that she saw in a purer and clearer light what we only half feel in the obscurity of our grosser hearts.

But if God knows our knowing, and feels our feeling, not merely by a similitude but in itself, it is not because He is transcendent and "personal," as we understand the word, because He is immanent and "superpersonal," whatever that may mean. But it is just because revelation tells us that in God there are three selves or Egos, for each of whom the experience (i.e., the thought, love, and action) of the other two exists, not merely similar, but one and the same—the same thinking, loving, and doing, no less than the same thought, love, and deed—that we can believe in the possibility of our personal separateness being at once preserved and overcome in that mysterious unity.

That God is love; and that love, which as an affection, produces an affective unity between separate persons, can as the subsistent and primal unity produce a substantial and ineffable union of which the other is a shadow, is a view towards which revelation points. That the mere affection of love, the moral union of wills, is an insufficient unification of personalities is implied by the fact that love always tends to some sort of real union and communication; and still more, that it springs from a sense of inexplicable identity.

It is almost a crime in criticism to deal with such a multitude of deep problems in so brief and hasty an essay. But if we have roughly indicated the main outlines of the author's position, we shall have done as much as can be reasonably expected of us; though it is with great reluctance that we pass over many points, and even whole chapters, bristling with interest.

Perhaps the most important feature of the book is the prominence it gives to the difficulties and insufficiencies of idealism. With those of realism we are all familiar enough, but so far, idealism has been looked at one-sidedly as evading, if not solving, some of the antinomies of the earlier philosophy, while its own embarrassments have been condoned in hopes of future solution. The solution has not come, and now the hopes are dead or dying. What we need is a higher synthesis, if such be possible for the human mind, or else a frank admission that faith, in some sense or other, is a necessary complement of every philosophy. One thing is clear, that reconciliation can be effected, if at all, only by a fair-minded admission of difficulties inseparable from either system, and by a conscientious criticism of presuppositions. No one can deal effectually with the idealist position to whom it is simply "absurd" or "ridiculous;" who has not been to some degree intellectually entangled in it; whose realism is not more or less of an effort. Else he is dealing with some man of straw of his own fancy, and will be found, as so often happens, assuming the truth of realism in every argument he brings forward. Plainly the best minds of modern times have not been victimized by a fallacy within the competence of a school-boy. And a like intellectual self-denial is needed on the part of the idealist, who is apt to dismiss all realism as crude, uncritical, or barbaric. We have all our antinomies, our blind alleys, our crudities; and we have all to fill up awkward interstices with assumptions and postulates.

However much we may dissent from Mr. D'Arcy's theology in certain details; however little we personally may labour under the difficulties of idealism, we cannot too strongly commend the endeavour to meet the modern mind on its own platform; to speak to the cultivated in their own language. Belief is caused by the wish to believe; but it is conditioned by the removal of intellectual obstacles, different for different grades of intelligence and education. To create the "wish to believe" is largely a matter of example, of letting Christianity appear attractive and desirable, and correspondent to the deeper needs of the soul. It is also to some extent a work of exposition. But when this all-

important wish has been created, the intellect can hinder its effect. It is much to know and feel that Christianity is good and useful and beautiful; "But some time or other the question must be asked: *Is it true*?" And to liberate the will by satisfying the intellect is work of what alone is properly called apologetic. Unless we fall back into quietism which would tell us to read a Kempis and say our prayers and wait, we must address ourselves first of all to making Christianity attractive; and then to making it intelligible. And if we do not find it against Gospel simplicity to address ourselves, as we continually do, to the intelligence of the semi-educated, we cannot allege that scruple as a reason why we should not address ourselves to the fully educated,—to those who eventually form and guide the opinions of the many.

Feb. 1901.

Footnotes:

[Footnote 1: *Idealism and Theology*. By Charles D'Arcy, B.D. Hodder and Stoughton, 1900.]

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