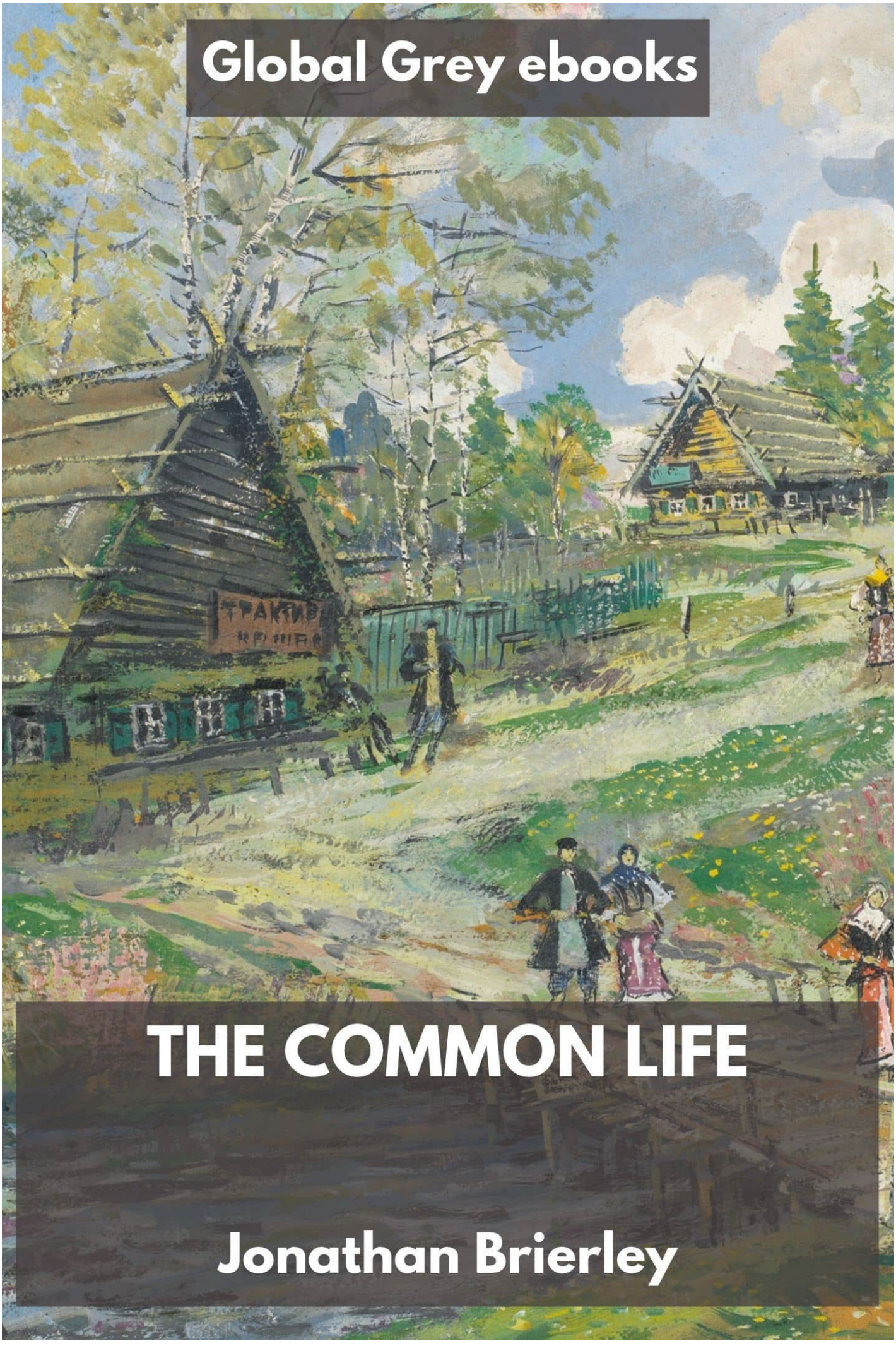
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THE COMMON LIFE

Jonathan Brierley

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JONATHAN BRIERLEY

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Contents

Preface
I. Life's Positives
II. Life's Unities
III. Life's Confusions
IV. The Religious Affections
V. Of the Exceptional
VI. Masters and Disciples
VII. Religion as Power
VIII. Religion as Experience
IX. What of Sunday?
X. Mystery
XI. Office and the Man
XII. The World's Happiness
XIII. Summits
XIV. The Ethics of Desire
XV. The Larger Reference
XVI. The World's Memory
XVII. Society and Solitude
XVIII. On Being Spiritual
XIX. The Feast of Faces
XX. On Points of View
XXI. Life's By-Products
XXII. Going on Pilgrimage
XXIII. Rest and Unrest
XXIV. Our Reading Life
XXV. Of Pulpit Silences
XXVI. Science and Conversion
XXVII. Interpreters of Christ
XXVIII. The New Incarnation
XXIX. The Prophet in Man
XXX. The Teaching of Emerson
XXXI. Vicarious Consecration

XXXII. The Touch of Tragedy
XXXIII. The Soul's Atmosphere
XXXIV. Of Self-Assertion
XXXV. The Soul's Athletics
XXXVI. The Human Paradise

Preface

In these Essays I have followed up a number of the varying phases of our common life in search of their verdicts. The religious thinker of to-day, in search of truth for himself and of a message for his fellows, can no longer, with his predecessors of earlier times, satisfy either himself or his audience by the quotation of ecclesiastical authorities. Those ancient findings have everywhere to be revised. The facts from which the old interpretations were drawn were neither so numerous nor so well authenticated as those we now know. And new and old alike have to be built into a larger synthesis. What I have here attempted is to rehandle the religious raw material as contained in the daily human experience. To pass by the accidents and to look into what is common to humanity; to catch, out of its myriad dialects the accents of a universal speech, and to note what that speech actually signifies, is what I have here endeavoured after.

Ours is perhaps not an age for building. It is one rather for gathering and testing. But we know where the material is to be found. It is out of the facts of the common life, out of what the history and consciousness of man really contain, that the religious thought structure of the future will rise.

But any view of life which is to be of value must include its highest levels. A singular philosophy has had its vogue among us which has sought to deal with everything human in terms of its origins. But the human problem can never be solved by a mere looking backward. An oak cannot be adequately studied in an acorn. The best proof of man's spiritual inheritance is that it exists. Its presence and work in man form an actuality which no criticism or inquiry into origins can really invalidate. These pages are written in the conviction that the common life, impartially and comprehensively studied, will yield to our children, as it did to our fathers, an irresistible argument for faith, hope and love.

J. B.

I. Life's Positives

There are times when most of us are inclined to cry out against the positive. There seems too much of it. Our neighbour carries a whole cargo of opinions which he is anxious to unload upon us. Every street corner has its church or chapel which shouts its affirmation at us—a whole string of affirmations. We travel to the ends of the earth, only to find the same thing. The present writer remembers the sensation with which, on sailing up the Dardanelles, he caught sight for the first time of the Mohammedan minarets which proclaimed him a Giaour, an infidel. It was with a similar consciousness that, in standing at the tomb of the apostles in St. Peter's, he suddenly called to mind that the church he was in, like the Turkish mosque, disposed in the most uncompromising manner of his future. We are all damned at least half-a-dozen times by the faiths we do not accept. Pondering these things the feeling, we say, comes over us that the thing has been a little overdone, and we are disposed to ask whether humanity might not, to the general advantage, stay its lust of affirmation and give its infallibility a rest. In such moods we fall in love with the undefined, and are disposed to say with Chamfort, "Il faut agir davantage, penser moins, et ne pas se regarder vivre." "Let us do more, think less, and not peer too closely into the business of living."

But is this really the conclusion of the matter? A nearer look into things shows us that, on the contrary, it is only a mood, an idea to be caressed a moment, and then put aside for what it is worth. While talk of this kind has a certain ground, it amounts neither to the condemnation of the positive, nor to the suggestion of a substitute for it. Granted that man has here pushed matters to excess, that his creeds are often a burden rather than a help, that his propositions are continually having to be revised or withdrawn; this does not prevent us from realising, on a deeper view, that in following this line he has, after all, not been mistaken, that his positive is really founded upon the general scheme of things.

Man makes his proposition, for one thing, by a necessity of his nature, and, for another, because he finds that Nature, before him, has already made hers. Life itself is crammed with the positive. Thoreau, in decrying the creeds, says somewhere that "the perfect God in His revelations of Himself has never got to the length of one such proposition as you His prophets state." We say, in reply, that the nature of things *has* made propositions and of a most startling kind. Is not the universe itself, as we find it, really a most extraordinary proposition? Whoever antecedently would have imagined a thing like this? That the cosmos should be so and no other is a puzzle beyond words. Mr. Picton, in his book, "The Religion of the Universe," tells of a little girl who asked what he describes as the most comprehensive question ever addressed to him: "Sir, please tell me why there was ever anything at all?" Exactly. That there *is* anything at all, and that the thing is such as we see, is, we repeat, the most tremendous of declarations. Here have you a reverberating, full-throated "yes," against which all the "noes" and negatives fight in vain.

And the cosmos, in its entirety so immense a positive, carries the element into every detail. There is a profound remark of Schopenhauer to the effect that what we call the quality of an object is as great a mystery as the soul of a man. Even a perfume is an affirmation. That it should be this one thing out of all the million possibles, that it

should be cut off by being just this from being all other, is in itself a wonder and a parable. Its assertion, like our own, is a limited one; it becomes narrowed down to almost nothing in making it; and yet life would be so much less rich without it! You too, my brother, in standing for some one thing, are cut off from that dozen other things you might be. Yet your "one" is wanted, and the cosmos were incomplete were it not there.

But the "nature of things" carries us much further than this in its insistence on the positive. It will not have our undefined at any price. It insists on committing us to this or that. Take a girl who has received an offer of marriage. In the tumult of her emotions she asks herself whether what she feels is really love or only a semblance. There are doubts, and who shall resolve them? She finds there is no supernatural revelation to her on the subject; her friends cannot inform her; she possesses no psychological code that can furnish authoritatively the answer. In these circumstances surely the proper thing is to remain uncommitted! "Let us live on our doubt and do nothing!" But the world, our maiden discovers, has not been built that way. By the sheer force of life's fact there before her, she is compelled to make up her mind. Her doubt will not serve. There must be here, sooner or later, a "yes" or "no," with all her fate hanging upon it. A thousand similar illustrations from practical life tell the same story. Nature insists that we shall be positive. She screws out of us our affirmation whether we will or no.

As we look further we discover how the law of man's moral progress compels him in the same direction. He must lay down his scheme in order that his soul may live. His doctrine precedes his life and is formative of it. It is as if a climber should throw a rope with a grappling iron to the crag above him and mount by that. Out of his innermost self man is ever projecting a something, a doctrine, an ideal, beyond his present level, which then becomes the goal of his striving. His religions are his ideal life—beyond his actual, yet helping to the final attainment. Wernle has a suggestive passage on this point in relation to early Christianity. Says he: "From the very first there was a sharp distinction between the Christianity that was actually lived in the Churches, and the Christianity which the teachers of the Church postulated in their writings. That which is called worldliness did not make its way into Christianity through decay from some high level of excellence. It came through the mission itself, as each new convert brought in a portion of the world along with him."

Another of Nature's hints here is in the authority and life-giving force with which she endows the expounders of the positive. A mysterious magnetism belongs to the man who with conviction affirms something. You may state negations in the most elegant and classic style. You state them and nothing happens. But let our prophet come, with a new mandate for the soul upon his lips, and though his word be in the dialect of a Galilean peasant, the whole world is changed. Here, indeed, is Nature's grandest positive, her man with a message. Men bow before Christ's religious imperative, because they feel that the Infinite is behind and in it. When He offers redemption, forgiveness, peace, joy, Divine empowerment, as gifts from His own spiritual wealth, they see that these things do actually belong to the inner universe, that they are attainable in the consciousness even as they formed part of Christ's own consciousness. Christianity is thus the highest positive of the spiritual life.

But where are we now? Does this line of argument lead us then to the din of the sects as its necessary consequence? Are we, in the name of the positive, to accept all the old creeds and all the new ones; to fall down, then, before the latest theological adventurer who has a novelty to offer? Modern inquiry, looking with clarified eyes

back on the long history of the past, is finding the answer to these questions. Nature, we find, will have her positive, even though the quality of it to begin with be of the poorest. She makes her man say "yes," even when his "yes" is half-full of error. But she never stops with that. Speedily to that too narrow affirmative comes the opposing negative, and the two wrestle with each other, till out of the conflict emerges, not destruction, but a new affirmative wider than that old one, wider also than its negative, containing in itself the truth of both. Man must, we say, have his positive, but he is on the way to ever better and richer ones.

Note as illustration of this what we are now learning about the true position of Christianity as a world teaching. When this new positive appeared the cultured classes opposed it as the example of all that was narrow, vulgar and, in the worst sense, exclusive. We remember the "*exitiabilis superstitio*" of Tacitus, the sneers of a Lucian and a Julian. And there have not been lacking Christian exponents of a later date whose interpretation offers abundant ground for these criticisms. But we are beginning to realise now how the Christian faith, properly viewed, justifies its position as a natural, inevitable part of the world's order. It is the culmination of a spiritual evolution, which has been as sure in its operation as that which works in a nebula or in a coal bed. It is most noteworthy here how the early Christian writers had glimpses of this, denied to many later ones. They saw how the Gospel fitted into the wider revelation of which all were partakers. Justin Martyr recalls the teaching of Empedocles, Pythagoras, Plato and Socrates as illustrating the Christian Eschatology; while Lactantius opens his "Institutes" with the argument that a belief in Divine Providence was the common property of all religions. The Alexandrian fathers were full of this doctrine; it is continually emerging, indeed, in the great Christian literature. What we now realise is that the Christian consciousness is, with an important reservation, part of the universal human religious consciousness. With a reservation, we say. For this universal is also a particular. As Sabatier has finely put it: "The Christian consciousness is not merely an accidental form or part of the general religious consciousness. It is a necessary and dominant part of it. . . . It is with the first term of this ideal as with the summit of a mountain. The summit is a part of the mountain, but it dominates all the other parts in their ascending stages from the depths of the valley to itself, and by that fact it embraces them all and assigns to each its place and rank in the whole."

A grasp of this theme should help the modern man through many perplexities. It should enable him for one thing to sympathise with his neighbour's positive, though it be at present repugnant to his own. Do not despise that other assertion, church, institution that seems opposed to yours! It also is needed to complete the final positive. The topic here becomes almost rudely personal. To that final you, too, my brother, have to make your contribution. Life expects your vote also. You are to stand for something.

The hours as they glide by seem at once an offer and an expectation. Time is in itself formless, in order that we may make of it everything or nothing. To a deep soul there is naught so awe-inspiring as this speechless appeal. All the past, its heroisms, its sacrifices, its crimes, its victories, are the positives that our fellows have created in response to this same offer. And here is to-day, silently waiting for us! It is ready to take all we have—our imagination, our industry, our learning, our love, our prayer—and weave it upon its loom. Or we may hand it nothing and let it pass, formless as it came. That we have this day, out of all the eternities, to make or mar by our positive or negative, is the most portentous present fact in the universe for you and me.

II. Life's Unities

We are governed by ideas, and chiefly by those which we know not how to put into words. The full-fledged ones, the formulas that is, are, by the very fact of being full-fledged, already on the way to decay. We see them yielding up their sceptre to those others, looming behind, which we cannot describe, but which we know to be greater than they. And of these the one which more and more compels us, which, while not fully recognised, we yet all feel to the marrow of our bones, is that of the essential unity of life and the world. That we are parts of a whole, that our personality is a tiny segment of a reality immeasurably greater than ourselves, this is the thought that in our time is illuminating history, that is opening new vistas to science, that forms the note of philosophy, that excites the enthusiasm of the social reformer, that is reshaping religion. Not that the idea is the special property of our generation. In a way it is as old as thinking man. Philosophy and poetry have said and resaid it, in language we could hardly improve on. Pope has made it a commonplace with his—

All are but parts of one stupendous whole
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.

And Thoreau has put the whole of mysticism into this one sentence: "I see, smell, taste, hear, feel that everlasting Something to which we are allied, at once our Maker, our abode, our destiny, our very selves."

And yet between our thought and that of the past, even of our immediate predecessors, there is a difference. Ours is after all a new perception, for fresh elements have entered into it. The unity we know is a closer one than that of a generation ago. A number of what seemed to our fathers great dividing lines have disappeared. What was two has become one. Where they talked of our separate personality we are asking whether we know where our personality begins or ends? What is, and what is not even our body, from one moment to another, is beyond our reckoning. Where and when does the air that plays on our lungs become part of us? In every breath I draw the "not me" becomes "me," and at each exhalation the "me" becomes "not me." And as it is with the physical so with the mental and moral. Our life is a perpetual commerce with the universe, a mysterious and incessant participation. Even that vast antithesis between matter and mind which philosophy hitherto has been so sure of, wears to-day another aspect. Molecular research is compelling the question whether what we have called matter is not in itself a form of life?

It is, however, in the directly human sphere that the sense of solidarity, to use the modern term, has in our time most asserted itself, and with which we wish here specially to deal. There are aspects of it which by their very familiarity are apt to escape our attention, but which when studied yield wonderful results. We talk, for instance, of Socialism—gingerly some of us, as though it were a dangerous theme. But has it occurred to us that over whole regions of life, and some of those the most important, an absolute Socialism already reigns? It is in the region of the spirit—fact in itself infinitely notable and suggestive—that man has already realised in its fullness the common life. In the kingdom of ideas there is a universal participation.

Language is a commerce in which there are no restrictions. Society is held together by those thought-signals we call words, and which are every man's property alike.

There are special occasions when this essential community of the human spirit is very wonderfully shown. When, for instance, an orator is in full possession of an audience we witness an extraordinary transfusion. At the beginning the assembly is a collection of units. A thousand minds are there occupied each with its separate interests. But when this speaker, charged with his theme, opens his own soul upon them, he breaks down the dividing walls. The units coalesce. The audience becomes one sentient being which thinks, laughs, weeps together. And note here the spiritual miracle that is being wrought. The one loaf feeds the five thousand. The one discourse passes undiminished, undivided at the same moment into all these minds. That the hundred souls on this side are fully feasted takes not one crumb from the banquet enjoyed by the others. Is it not sufficiently significant, prophetic of the infinity that veils itself behind the human, that here in our familiar life we have, on our spiritual side, the operation of a force that indeed "spreads undiminished, operates unspent"?

There are other directions also in which life presents itself as a vast unformulated socialism. Man has laboured with a huge and often misdirected industry to build himself off from his fellow, but his walls are not high enough for the business. What are the differences between prince and peasant compared with the unities of their life? What are the dividing lines of station and income as compared with the fact that you and I are born on the same planet, shone on by the same sun, are carried in the same movement from youth up to manhood, from manhood to old age; that around us is the same infinite and before us the same mystery of death and the beyond? It is, indeed, only as we enter into the common life of humanity that we become properly human. It is that which is given us as part of the universal lot—the common sunshine, the common joys and strengths and sorrows—that forms the spirit's really nourishing food. Tolstoy, after exhausting all that fashionable society could offer him, and finding there no solace, says it was "in entering into the real life of humanity I became convinced that despair cannot be the destiny of man."

One does not wonder that, urged by these hints from nature, and by the deep instincts of his soul, man should have dreamed of, and at times fiercely fought for, the realisation of a more definite social unity. Scheme after scheme has been formulated, from the Republic of Plato to the Utopia of Sir Thomas More, from the phalanstery of Charles Fourier to the socialism of Karl Marx and Ferdinand Lassalle. The attempts so far have been failures, but the failures carry in them the suggestion of something great yet to come. The adventurers so far in these spheres have had a plan of the edifice but no materials with which to build it. They have sought to gain by politics and electioneering what can only be secured by a spiritual evolution. Fourier's phalanstery came to grief because he failed to reckon with the human passions. A perfect social system can only arise in a generation that is spiritually trained. It is here that the subject of the common life brings us inevitably to the question of religion.

A true society, we have said, will come, not from sudden political or economical readjustments, but from a heightening of the type of the individual man. To effect that heightening is what religion is here for. And it is precisely here, in religion properly conceived, that we get the common life at once in its purest and its profoundest form. Schopenhauer, who, despite his extravagance, exhibits at times an insight which is almost weird, has put the whole matter in his pregnant remark that

"the true inner most being subsists in every living thing just as really as in my own consciousness." Religion really rests on this, the recognition of the innermost Highest Being in each soul of us. So is it that Christ is the true eternal Prophet of the common life. He appeals to the universal soul. As a modern theologian puts it; "In relation to the Law, He eliminated the Jewish and retained the human. The sum of His commandments is addressed to the man in the Jew, and to man in the general." True Christianity recognises that all religions are the dialects of one common speech. It holds its place as the crown and summit of the human consciousness, at the top of all the faiths, yet vitally and originally related to all. It sees its own beginnings in the dim aspirations of far-off times, and of what we once thought were alien cults. The early Church historian Socrates has put this in a memorable word, where, speaking of heathen literature, he says: "Wherever anything excellent is found it is the property of the truth." Abelard expresses this universality when, in his "Introduction to Theology," he daringly asks, "Quis enim nesciat et in Möyse, et in prophetarum voluminibus quædam assumpti de gentilium libris?" ("For who does not know that both in Moses and in the writings of the prophets certain things have been taken from the books of the heathen?") In this spirit Christ would certainly have recognised as a true though unperfected daughter in the faith that Egyptian lady who, ages before His day, wrote of herself: "My heart inclined me to the right when I was still a child, not yet instructed as to the Right and Good. And what my heart dictated I failed not to perform. And God rewarded me for this, rejoicing me with the happiness which He hath granted me for walking after His way."

It was eminently natural that a religion which, in its pure form, proclaimed as its vital principle the essential unity and brotherhood of humanity should, from the beginning, have striven to express this unity in a concrete way. That was the meaning of the community of goods in the apostolic age, of the monastic institutions, whose ideal, though fallen away from so grievously in later days, was originally so noble, of those mediæval brotherhoods, such as Gerard Groote's "Brotherhood of the Free Spirit" in the fifteenth century, and innumerable similar fellowships, which united asceticism of living with a communism of property. The spirit which wrought these developments in earlier times is to-day moving in the Churches as a mighty yet undefined force for a better organisation of society at large. We are as yet only at the beginnings of that movement, but along its dimly-outlined road man will march to his earthly paradise. The human future lies in this, that whenever a soul reaches a higher realisation, a new gift of the Spirit, its irresistible impulse is to share the boon. "Come and taste what I have tasted, take your portion of the new Divine satisfactions that I have found," is the cry of every great prophet, the impulse of every spiritual revival.

The truth of the common life reaches beyond our ken. Man on this earth is surrounded by invisible powers and personalities, and participates, in a thousand unknown ways, in the mightier life they have to communicate. And the mystery of death is doubtless the mystery of a larger participation. The question is continually asked to-day: "What, in that vast dissolving, will become of our separate personality?" It is the question we might imagine would be asked by the life of a separate germ cell when it is caught up to form the millionth part of some organic whole. It is there still, living and working, but part now of a vaster unity. Who can say into what roomier life we shall by-and-by be merged? Who can trace the limits of an infinite progression? Sufficient that we are on the road upward. Sufficient that every spiritual advance makes us surer of God and of eternal life.

III. Life's Confusions

The title of this chapter may seem in contradiction to the one that precedes. But if in this we are not following the order of logic, we are certainly following that of life. In our universe—so wide and so complex is it—we can never put down a thesis but we find lying close by its antithesis. In the last chapter we spoke of a growing sense of life's unity. But it is equally true to say that we are at the same time acutely conscious of life's confusions. In a number of directions we see a disorganisation which assumes ever greater and more bewildering dimensions. In these regions men have lost the sense of proportion, the sense of unity in their thoughts, feelings and actions. Their impelling motives start from quite different and apparently opposing centres. A man goes to church to satisfy his religious need. When he wants amusement he seeks a theatre. But the two, while appealing to what seem integral parts of his nature, have no common basis. They work independently and often opposedly. And their total effect upon our individual is a confusing one. He is unable himself to see, nor do these institutions help him to see, how these two separate things, which instincts common to his nature have sent him in search of, can relate themselves harmoniously to each other and to the ultimate end of his existence.

This illustration of what we mean is only one out of a thousand. From every side comes evidence of the tangle in which we find ourselves. Numbers of people to-day feel as though their inward nature were cut in two. They are like Jacobi, of whom it was said that "he was with his whole understanding a heathen, with his whole heart a Christian." The schism of vital order has, perhaps, reached its height in France, where a vast multitude of cultivated men are in a position so pathetically revealed in a recent letter of M. Jaurès, the eminent Socialist, in which he defends himself for allowing his daughters to have a religious education on the ground that, while himself a Freethinker, his wife is a Catholic, whose convictions he felt bound to respect. Here is an appalling chasm, going down not only to the deeps of personal feeling, but to the roots of family life! Yet what disharmonies, what breakdowns of every logical principle meet us on all hands in England! On Sundays we go to church, and pass a dozen public-houses on the way. The two institutions are integral parts of our national life, but how do they stand towards each other? Do we imagine that if as Christians we keep out of the public-house, or perhaps violently denounce it, that we have thereby contributed anything worth mentioning to the settlement of its question?

One could add endlessly to these examples. We have, in our religious standards, a supposed basis of life, but what do they amount to in the social organism of the time? How far is it true to say with Bagehot that "even in the present time few cultivated persons willingly think on the special dogmas of distinct theology. They do not deny them, but they live apart from them." Men at present make their life radiate from the queerest centres. With the younger generation the cricket or football club will often represent what they mainly know of social organism, of enthusiasm, of training and discipline. Animal appetites, the pursuit of wealth, sport, a horde of indiscriminate sensations, following on without any regulation, make up, with multitudes of people, the thing they call their life.

The condition of things here sketched, perturbing as it seems, would be much more so if we were unfurnished with any key to it. But we have a key. Our difficulties are, after all, the penalties of progress. History reveals to us humanity as perpetually moving from lower to higher unities, and in the process as having to face recurring periods of confusion. There have been times when both man as an individual and the social organism of which he formed part were alike harmonious. Amongst savage tribes to-day a man's religion, his passions, his amusements, his warrings, form together a complete whole which works without any jarrings of his inner consciousness. It is the inrush, to men in this condition, of new and higher elements that breaks the unity and puts them at issue with themselves. When a man, after years in which he has been satisfied with walking, begins learning to ride, he passes from the earlier harmony to an experience of blundering and awkwardness. That is humanity's story as well. Upward and upward it climbs, but floundering always with each new ledge it reaches. The world's robust health shows itself in the way it gets through these times of transition. When the Roman Empire broke up it seemed as though everything had come to an end. The interval between the downfall of paganism and the establishment of Christian belief was one of inconceivable inner and outer chaos. The Reformation was the breach of an old-established unity, and one that seemed to have brought ruin in its train. If anyone would understand the welter that immediately followed it, let him study the state of things in England during the Somerset protectorate, or the Peasants' War in Germany, or the later doings in France in Montaigne's time, or the Thirty Years' War of the following century. Yet in all these instances order came out of the chaos, and inestimable new elements were added to the world's treasure-store.

So, we do not doubt, will it be in the coming stage of the human future. But the encouragement which history here offers us is no reason why we should rest content with our own special hurly-burly, or why we should not endeavour after the establishment of some sort of social and religious coherency. We feel instinctively that the old tribal unity, where a man found no conscious breach between one part of his life and any other part, is the thing to be sought after, though on an infinitely higher level. The entire training of the modern man sets him on the stretch after harmony. It is a fundamental idea not only of his religion, but also of his science and of his art. Any failure to attain a complete rhythmic movement both of his inner and outer world reveals, he feels sure, a disease somewhere. What, however, we have to beware of are the ill-instructed attempts at the reorganisation of life that force the pace, that try short cuts, and that end by leaving out of their scheme the very things that most need to be included in it.

What, then, should the scheme contain? It is mere common-sense to say, at the beginning, that the highest place should be given to what in man *is* highest. The basis of society must be a spiritual basis, from the mere fact that man, when we get really at him, is spiritual. "God, Immortality, Virtue," says Jean Paul Richter, "are the three pillars on which the universe rests." Without them none of us can stand upright. Man is only truly himself when he is consciously in tune with the Infinite. On this the best thought of our time may be said now to be agreed. The late John Addington Symonds is strictly within the truth when, reviewing the progress of thought during the last fifty years, he says, "the great feature of it has been to restore the spiritual view of man and of the universe," and when, in the same article, he goes on to express the view that "it is the destiny of the scientific spirit to bring these factors, God, Law, Christian Morals, into a new and vital combination which will contribute to the durability and growth of rational religion." And here the Church, in whatever degree

it enters into the new reconstruction, must put its first emphasis. It must, with all its might, evangelise, and for the reason that no lasting unity can be reached until the spiritual in each individual, on which that unity alone can rest, has been reached and squared to use.

That this must be the centre all religious minds are agreed. Where they so disastrously differ is as to the width and inclusiveness of the circle that is to be struck from it. With some, the social problem is solved by ex-communicating the major portion of society. A small circle of "church interests" is sufficient to fill their minds, and all outside is taboo. Some of the greatest religious thinkers on this point offer us stones for bread. Augustine, in his "City of God," constructs the human scheme on the idea of an eternal and unbridgeable chasm between two classes of mankind, the elect and the non-elect. Bossuet's theory of the drama and its purveyors is given us in that terrible sentence of his upon Molière: "*Il passa des plaisanteries du théâtre, parmi lesquelles il rendit presque le dernier soupir, au tribunal de celui qui dit: 'Malheur a vous qui riez, car vous pleurerez.'*" This assuredly is not reconstruction, nor unity, but war to the knife. It is, for certain temperaments, the easiest of solutions to proclaim the world, with its art, its industries, its amusements, as wicked and hopeless, and to secure, as they imagine, their own salvation by a general repudiation. But this leaves the wicked world just where it was. It is not salvation but desertion.

If Christ came to London, what would He do with it? Would He put down its theatres and close all its public-houses? We do not think so. It was not His way. The way of the Master was to begin with things where He found them, and to develop them up toward His own level. He found, for instance, the Jewish people possessed by a Messianic idea which, as they held it, was of the lowest and coarsest description. But instead of crying "Away with it," He linked Himself to it, expanded, refined it, until the notion of a Jewish King who was to annihilate his foes became the doctrine of a Redeemer who should save the world. And the Christ that is to be, the Christ whose mission the Church is entrusted with, will deal on the same lines with the national life and the national prepossessions of our own land and time. The spiritual mind of the nation, working toward the long-lost unity, will have to annex and include in its sympathies all that belongs to the nation's life. That side of it especially which some religionists have dealt with by the mere brute force of repudiation will have henceforth to be taken in hand with understanding and sympathy. Christianity comes not to destroy, but to save. If the public-house and the theatre represent genuine aspects, and meet felt wants, of human nature, then they are a part of religion. As low a part, may be, as the crude Messianic idea, but a part that can be entered into and lifted up by the all-purifying Spirit.

Meantime, let us take courage. The present confusions are an inevitable part of the vastness of the human scheme. And they are working toward a higher order, which is already beginning to appear. We need not worry as though we were the architects. We are only the day-labourers. Behind the scenes incessantly works One who from the slime has lifted us to our present height, and who has yet to show us "greater things than these."

IV. The Religious Affections

The treatise of Jonathan Edwards "Concerning the Religious Affections" is, we suppose, little read to-day. Yet perhaps only in Augustine should we find mingled in the same proportions the spiritual intensity and the metaphysical acuteness of this work of the great American divine. But the modern writer would treat the subject differently from Edwards. The theme is still as vital as when he wrote of it. But the outlook both upon it and from it is quite other. We approach it from new standpoints; fresh factors are seen to belong to it; its implications, as seen in the light of modern research, are infinitely wider. The topic is specially worth our study, in view of the modern attack upon religion in general and Christianity in particular.

Perhaps the most wonderful thing in man, a thing which physiology and psychology have combined to reveal to us, is the reduplication in him of lower and higher forms, both of organism and of consciousness. Morphology shows us how the human structure, in all its details, is patterned on the lower animal structures, but always with something added. Our hand is the forefoot of the quadruped, with a special twist which the Artist has given it. Psychology is showing us the same thing in the mental interior. Our intellectual and moral qualities have resemblances which reveal their close kinship with the mentality of the lower animals. But these qualities in us are on another plane. They have been lifted, retouched, made to operate in a new and wider sphere. In the light of all this the study of what we call the religious affections assumes an aspect of quite fresh significance. We find in man a set of emotions, of appetencies, of what we may call passions, which, while intimately akin to similar things lower down in him, have here a new touch upon them and a different reference. We know a love, a fear, a hate, a gladness which belong to our animal nature, and which operate upon that plane. But along with these we are conscious of a reduplication higher up. We are so fully aware of their kinship with the lower, that we give these feelings the same names. They are still "love, hate, fear, gladness." But while akin, their quality is different, and so is their action and their outlook.

An initial difficulty in arguing thus from the religious affections is the fact that they exist in men in such widely-differing degrees, and that in large numbers of minds, and these not the least educated, they seem to have no existence at all. We may agree with Lecky, "that the religious instincts are as truly a part of our nature as are our appetites and our nerves is a fact which all history establishes, and which forms one of the strongest proofs of the reality of that unseen world to which the soul of man continually tends," but we have to agree with a reservation. There are people, and their numbers seem on the increase, who appear to have no religious sense. They interpret the universe without it. The awe, the faith, the reverence, the passionate love which religion calls forth have for them no objects, for there is no God to reverence, no moral perfection to aspire after, no unseen mysteries for faith to work upon. But while this is so, and has to be taken into account, what is equally certain is that human nature in immense numbers of instances, and in its highest types, does contain these faculties; and that their operation is so powerful as to shape the entire character and outlook upon life.

And here the argument surely must be from the positive fact; from the thing that is there, and not from the negation of it that is now and then to be met with. It is with

the religious sense as with other mental furniture. There are people who have no ear for music, and others who are without the colour sense. But with those who have these things, there is not the slightest doubt that the gift within represents an objective reality outside. And according to the vividness of the sense within will be the certitude of the answering fact. As Bagehot has it, "the criterion of true beauty is with those—they are not many—who have a sense of true beauty; . . . and the criterion of true religion is with those who have a sense of true religion."

Let us, then, contemplate this fact that there exists and has existed in numberless souls, the passions of love, of desire, of fear, of hope, so familiar to us all on the lower plane, transferred to another set of objects, and transformed into a new quality. In this new form the feelings may be described as a passion for an invisible Holiness, for a Divine Perfection; "that hunger for Eternity" which Lamb spoke of as in Coleridge; the swelling of a great love, fed by unseen contacts; hopes based on the unrealised; an eagerness to serve, to suffer, if need be, for the advancement of a spiritual kingdom. Augustine has put the thing for us in immortal words: "Where there shineth into my soul what space cannot contain and there soundeth what time beareth not away, and there exhaleth what breathing disperseth not; and there tasteth what eating diminisheth not, and there cleaveth what satiety dissolveth not, this is what I love when I love my God." Those who make little of this sense and its implications speak of it as vague, indeterminate, mystical. And it is all that. But to us the fact that it is so adds to the argument. The religious sense in man is vague and indeterminate, just as a nebula is vague and indeterminate. It is so because it is the beginning. The nebula is only a mist, but the mist is the beginning of a world.

What, then, is this "mist" in the soul, and what does it portend? Is not this also the beginning of a world? The Haeckel school have their explanation of religion, an explanation which invariably argues backwards. Evolutionists in all other directions, eager there to note how out of the lower comes ever something higher, they oddly reverse their method when it comes to this weightiest of all the judgments upon life. They determine the nature of religion, not by the immanent possibilities of that nebula floating in the mind's uppermost realm, but by what they find in the mud under their feet. It is the fetich, the worship of a Mumbo Jumbo, and not the love of a St. Francis, the sacrifice of a Henry Martyn, which they take as their measuring line. It is a singular perversity, as contrary to true science and philosophy as it is to the soul's deepest instinct. It is the nebula yonder, and not the dust-heap below, that counts in this business. What now exists as aspiration will condense in time into new organs and new powers. The desire to fly will transform itself presently into wings.

But when we speak of the religious affections, as we know them to-day, we have to be specific. We perforce bring Christianity into the reference, for it is Christianity that has developed them into a form and a quality not recognisable elsewhere. Ritschl is unquestionably right in his contention that what we know as the Christian experience is a new and distinctive development, answering to a new and unique factor that Christ introduced to the human consciousness. It is, indeed, this addition to the world's inner life, this new power of being and feeling, with all it implies, that constitutes the one claim to-day of the Christian Gospel. We say that this element is unique. We know what had existed before it, and outside. We know the heights to which a Bhagavad Gita rises in the East, and to which a Seneca and an Epictetus attained in the West. The level they reached was perhaps never better expressed than in the utterance which Antoninus Pius, on the night he died, gave to the tribune who asked him for the password, "Æquanimitas."

When from these regions of thought and feeling, worthy as they were, we come to the New Testament, we are in a new world. A fresh vocabulary has to be coined to express the style of inner life which has now commenced. A phase of being, dropped as it seemed out of the heavens, had settled into human souls, a phase which the recipients described as "love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, temperance, faith." The new state gave birth to new acts. *Operari sequitur esse.* "Doing follows being." There was a wonder in heaven and upon earth. Men began to love each other. As Augustine says of St. John, "Much has he said, but it is almost all about love." It is these new soul-states of which it gives account that makes the early Christian literature such good reading. How well we understand Gregory Thaumaturgus, when, speaking of his fellowship with Origen, he declared, "And, to speak in brief, he was Paradise to us." Out of the realm of the Christian affections what deeds also have come, what sacrifices, what heroisms, what suffering for the common good! The story of an old saint who, seeing his Lord in a vision, asking what reward he desired, replied, "Lord, that I might suffer most," has been again and again repeated. One wonders, indeed, from where, with this force of the religious affections eliminated from man, the future great deeds would come. With their disappearance the heroic age would cease. The human story would become too sordid to be told.

It is in this sphere, we repeat, that the true credentials of the Gospel are to be sought. When science and criticism have said their last word the powers vibrating in man's uppermost realm, that derive historically from Christ, will remain as His sufficient witness.

More. It is in the existence of these powers and affections that we find the surest argument for a life beyond. Who shall say that these spiritual forces are not weavers, and that what they weave is not our spiritual body? At least, as surely as the organ of vision in us points to an answering visible outside, so, according to all analogy, do these finer organs demand also their answering reality. There is a wonderful passage in Walter Pater's "Appreciations," where, speaking of Sir Thomas Browne's famous "Letter to a Friend," he deals with his account of the dissolution of a deeply spiritual man of his acquaintance. Says he: "The spiritual body had anticipated the formal moment of death; the alert soul, in that tardy decay, changing its vesture gradually, and as if piece by piece. The infinite future had invaded this life perceptibly to the senses, like the ocean felt far inland up a tidal river." Truly in this uppermost sphere of us are wonderful things contained, worthy of all our investigation. This nebulous cloud that floats in our sky is the portent of a heavenly world.

V. Of the Exceptional

We have all heard of Babbage's arithmetical machine, one of whose functions was to produce, at rare intervals, after a long succession of even numbers, an odd number. He used it as an illustration of the possibility of what we call the miraculous. The machine worked strictly according to law, yet its continuity of result was every now and then broken in upon by what seemed to outside observation something contradictory and inexplicable. On the line of things here opened our age seems to have something of its own to contribute. It fights shy, indeed, of the miraculous, but we are not bound to that term. The word might well have a rest. It has been for years in bad company, allied with all manner of superstitions, frauds and ignorances. The religious thought of to-day could get on excellently well without it. In its stead we will use here a term that is strictly scientific, that has no sinister associations, and yet which, properly looked into, seems to contain all of really vital that belonged to the other. We will study a little the implications of "the exceptional."

The cosmic scheme, so far as we can make it out, contains in all its departments two orders of movement, what we may call the ordinary and the extraordinary. When we study the life of an island or a continent we see, going on through ages so vast that they seem to constitute an absolute permanence, the operation of the ordinary. Day follows day in ordered sequence; century after century the hills and valleys offer substantially the same appearance; changes there are, but of the most gradual and imperceptible character. The lands are being steadily worn down by the action of rains and frosts, by the movements of glaciers, by the wash of rivers carrying enormous masses of deposit to the sea. But all is so quiet and ordered that men think of their country, as they see it, as practically eternal. And then in a moment all may be changed. The odd number turns up in the machine. Geology offers us the history of convulsions that in a day have created mountain ranges, turned plains into inland seas, and wiped out the old configuration as though it had never been. On a smaller scale we have seen these things accomplished in our own time.

When we lift our eyes to the heavens we seem to discern a similar condition on a vaster scale. Astronomers report to us ever and anon the phenomenon of a star, known to them aforetime as, perhaps, of the twelfth magnitude, suddenly augmenting in its brilliancy, until for a time it shines as of the first magnitude, and then by-and-by dwindles back to visual insignificance. What has occurred? Is this a world—a solar system on fire? We have no telegraphic communication as yet with our universe. We can only vaguely guess at some tremendous happening. Far away yonder in those stellar depths, after measureless ages of the ordinary, the machine has again produced the odd number, and all is changed. What has happened there may happen elsewhere. Who knows to what bourn our sun is rushing, in that tremendous movement in which he is carrying ourselves and the rest of the planets with him? The temperature at his surface is to-day something like three million degrees, or fourteen thousand times more than that of boiling water. We all live to-day and go about our daily work because our heating apparatus registers that amazing figure. But do we suppose that will go on for ever?

In every field of observation we choose the same rule presents itself. We look at the sea rolling in upon the beach. One wave follows another of the same height and

substance,—and then “a ninth wave,” a giant which towers above and seems to swallow up the rest. The principle asserts itself in our careers. This week is very much like last, and the steady humdrum has continued maybe for years. But an event is waiting for us behind the corner yonder which will give our world a new aspect. The commonest mortal of us, with a birth at one end and a death at the other of his history, finds that, with his average experience, a significant enough exceptional is mingled.

Now, that the heavens and the earth, the movement of suns and of our own lives tell everywhere the same story is surely a broad cosmic hint which it behoves us to examine and to riddle out if we may! It is intensely interesting to note how man has dealt with it. His way to truth has been generally a zigzag to extremes on this side and on that, the discovery of the said extremes aiding him finally to strike the middle and right course. It has been so here. In the religious solution which he sought of his problem, man began by making the exceptional the chief feature. He exaggerated it beyond all bounds. God could only be properly apprehended through the marvellous. Men could only be sure of Him when they found Him apparently contradicting His own laws! In mediæval times the miraculous was the only profitable reading. St. Francis is to us beautiful and inspiring for his spiritual character, his self-sacrifice, his lovableness. But his biographers, to ensure his reputation as a saint, must stuff their accounts with marvels. Bonaventura’s narrative is a tissue of wildest fables. The monks gave circumstantial accounts of the resurrection of Francis, and of the miraculous preservation of his body. There is a story of him seeing the Saviour with the Virgin Mary, while the latter, addressing her Son as “Altissime omnipotens Deus,” begs Him to be mindful of the saint’s prayers.

It was entirely natural that, from this attitude towards the exceptional, people should fly off later to the opposite extreme. We have accordingly had the spectacle of educated men accepting a view of things which makes a clean sweep, not only of stories of this character, but of all departures whatever from what they deem the established order. Thus in the eighteenth century we see Condorcet affirming “there is not a religion that does not rest on ignorance of natural laws,” while, in the nineteenth, one at least of the evolutionary schools declares that their doctrine of development spells the ruin of supernatural Christianity.

We are recovering somewhat in our day from this too easy cocksureness. We have found out that evolution, instead of explaining everything, explains very little; is, indeed, in itself sorely in need of explanation. It offers us no light on beginnings or endings. Darwin himself was incessantly telling people that his discovery offered no information on the ultimate mystery of variation. Tyndall confessed there was in it no bridge across the gulf between the physical and the mental. At its utmost it has something to say simply on the “How.” As to the “Why,” the “Whence” and the “Whither,” it has no word.

To the history of religion we are bringing to-day a method of study different alike from the credulity of the Middle Age and from the barren negativism of the encyclopædists. It is a method which, on strictly scientific grounds, recognises the “ninth wave” and the “odd number.” Man’s religion, we see, is primarily a matter of psychology, and the facts in this sphere—facts of the present day, and not merely those recorded of millenniums ago—are many of them, in their wonder and mystery, beyond all our present attempts at scientific systematisation. A book like that of F. W. H. Myers, on the “Human Personality and its Survival of Physical Death,” offers evidence enough on that head. It is when we approach Christianity through this

psychological avenue that we begin to understand the New Testament—its story, its phraseology and its point of view. Wernle has put all this for us in a striking sentence. Speaking of the early Christians, he says: “They have experienced something altogether abnormal in Jesus, but in order to express it their own words fail them. So they turn to the Jewish categories nearest at hand, and attempt to confine the indefinable within these definitions.”

In this view, Christianity is seen as harmonising with the general system of things, as we see it in every department of life. Christ is the exceptional in history as the burning of a star is the exceptional in astronomy. Strange would it have been indeed if, in the sphere of the soul—that highest thing which the universe has so far disclosed—there should have been no wonder, no break in upon the average from the inner depths, such as are offered us on the inferior planes of stars and continents! Men have been occupied ever since in trying to put into language what the break was and meant. The language was, of course, always the language of the time. It was, perhaps, inevitable that it should come finally to a Trinitarian formula, for that formula was one of the oldest in the world, and is found not only in almost every religion, but in almost every philosophy, from Neo-Platonism to Hegel. The point for us is that, however related to human language, the wonder was there. In Jesus, as Marheinecke has magnificently put it, “God knew Himself man, and man knew himself God.” In Christ humanity finds its “ninth wave,” and it was to this height that it rose.

If the world history, including Christianity, offers us on this scale its doctrine of the exceptional, it is surely for more than a merely speculative purpose. Its hint is that if we be wise we shall, in shaping our own lives, take seriously into account the exceptional as well as the ordinary. We shall give each its due place, the place they take in the cosmic scheme. We cannot afford to be merely ordinary. The Universe we live in is not built and not run in that way. We are in a scene where the commonplace has been continually broken up by the vast happenings. When all has seemed at a stand, from the Unseen a fresh note has been struck and a new era opened. The whole suggestion is of events, resources, possibilities, waiting to be disclosed that are more wonderful still.

In such a world we cannot, we repeat, afford to be merely parochial. You and I are related not only to what happened yesterday, but also to the beginning and the finish of things. Our story is to be not a mere bread-and-butter history, a weaving, a bartering, an amusement history, but one of spiritual culminations, according to the scale on which we are built and on which the universe is built. But who knows what the scale is, either of the one or the other? One thing is certain—that the purer our aim in life the more constantly shall we be met with the surprises of spiritual riches that open to us. To us will come many a time and oft experiences such as that which James Russell Lowell describes when, to quote his words, “I never before so clearly felt the Spirit of God in me and around me. The whole room seemed to me full of God.” At such times we obtain glimpses of the ultimate meaning of things. May we not say that the exceptional—visible in the universe, in history and in our own lives—is one combined prophet utterance speaking to us of final destinies such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor hath entered the heart of man to conceive?

VI. Masters and Disciples

In the long, wonderful history of the human spirit there is, perhaps, nothing more worthy of study than the relation, perpetually renewed within it, of the leader and the follower. One finds there the whole story of religion. The ceaseless recurrence of this relation, in every age and amongst every form of the inward life, marks it as one of the elemental laws of the soul. The mass of men live spiritually on what a few elect natures have seen and felt. To these last has it been given to rescue something from the viewless realm of universal life, and to make it visible as a treasure embodied in their own personality. To their fellows they teach the secret of this conquest. Explorers of the immeasurable kingdom of the Unseen, they light on its richest spots, and show the way to them. It is an illustration of the essential loyalty of humanity to the highest that every teacher with something genuine in this kind to communicate finds always his band of disciples. And that new teachers continually arise and that new groups form ever around them is, to the discerning, an evidence at once of the hunger of the human heart for inner good, and of the inexhaustible treasures of it that are yet to be disclosed.

But in this matter of leading and following a number of questions arise which, for our well-being as individuals and as communities, need to be carefully thought through. Half the confusions and animosities of the ecclesiastical world have arisen from the fact that on these subjects people, including often enough the leaders themselves, have not got down to the bottom principles involved. What is our call to be a leader or a follower, and to what extent are we to lead or to follow, and for what end? Be it observed at the beginning that the answer to these questions is not the same in the sphere of religion as in that of external affairs. In military operations, for example, the end to be gained requires a large suppression of individuality. When an army has the happiness to be commanded by a man who knows his business, everybody under him realises that the one thing required is to obey orders. The subordinate feels here the truth of Horace Walpole's *mot* in speaking of Cromwell, "And to be sure if we must be ridden 'tis some satisfaction when the man knows how to ride." Even in religion, in what concerns its external administration, the question of leading and following has no great complications. The mass of men will be safe in yielding themselves to the man who sees best and quickest what is wanted. The German reformers followed a true instinct in rallying in these matters to Luther because, as Melancthon said of him, "in the midst of uncertainties he alone saw what was to be done."

It is when we come from matters external to matters internal, to religion's inward and vital side, that the complications begin. Problems the most puzzling spring themselves upon us from all sides, and it becomes the easiest thing possible to lose our way. In this sphere, for instance, the ethics of the leader seem at some important points to contradict those of the follower. A devout Methodist, for example, in asking himself in what way he is a disciple of Wesley will, if given to analysis, find himself knee-deep in difficulties. Should he follow his orders or his spirit? One of the early injunctions of the society was, "do not mend our rules, but keep them." But did the leader become what he was by keeping other people's rules? Was it not in breaking through rules and conventions, in obedience to an irresistible inward pressure, that

he gave a revived religious life to his time? A man who is laboriously following out the details of a life-scheme laid down by a master may be doing as well as it is in him to do, but precisely in proportion to the slavishness with which he follows is he alien from the real spirit of him who leads. The one is initiative, the other is mechanism. The disciple has his eye fixed on a man, his ear takes in articulately-uttered instructions, his courage is maintained by the crowd who are with him in his observance. The master, alone in front, has nothing before him but an Infinite across which he has to find the track, nought to guide but a formless, voiceless inspiration, whose dim, awful meaning he strives ceaselessly to spell out and understand. It seems at first sight impossible to escape the paradox here presented; impossible to avoid the conclusion that the more strictly we follow a man the further are we really away from him.

When, however, we look more closely into the matter the confusion disappears. It is only by a misapprehension of the end which religion is working towards by its relation of master and disciple that our seemingly hopeless contradictions arise. There is no impassable gulf fixed between the mental and moral states of leader and follower, for the simple reason that, in a proper and healthy spiritual evolution, the conditions are temporary and are continually being transposed. It is here we have to recognise the essential difference between the ends sought in a religious community and those of an external organisation such as an army. While the latter seeks an object outside itself, the former seeks one within itself, namely, the moral freedom and inner development of its members. And from this it follows that the relation of master and disciple must be partial and temporary; often, in fact, reversible. It is with the true teacher as with the mother who leads her child in its first steps. She leads in order that the child may by-and-by dispense with leading. The master who is of any use to us is he who shows us how to find ourselves. He helps us, not by cutting steps in each of which we must place our feet, but in training us to cut our own. Wesley, to cite our illustration once more, will have his best followers in those who, like him, have the insight to discover the religious needs of the age they live in, and the courage to use its spirit and its materials in supplying them.

In the ideal spiritual community each member will combine in himself the functions of master and of disciple. He will be a master, for if he has developed the inner possibilities of his nature as God meant him, he will have won from life and have garnered into his personality a something of Infinite made visible in his finite, which all who behold may study, and delight in, and learn from. And for this something which every true disciple gains, the greatest will sit at the feet of the humblest, and each will learn from every other. It is here we find humanity's true and only priesthood. In that one tiny sphere which each true learner has made his own by possession and experience, he is a priest to his fellow; from it he communicates to him of mysteries whereof God has made him special custodian. Whatever our ecclesiastical position or pretensions, it is only as we stand in this one spot of spiritual territory where God has specially met and dealt with us that we can exercise any effective priesthood.

It is wonderfully instructive here to note how in life these relations of master and disciple interchange. Often is it that while we are at the farthest remove from a man's thought we are the heartiest disciples of his feeling. The late Dr. Martineau assured the present writer that he had gained much of his richest spiritual nutriment from the old Evangelical teachers. It was a discipleship of feeling rather than of opinion which led M. Taine, himself a Positivist, to place his children under the care of a

Protestant pastor. The loftiest form of mastership is, indeed, always of character. There is no supremacy comparable to that of holiness. The remarkable saying of Aristotle that "it is the characteristic of the good neither to commit faults themselves nor to suffer their friends to commit them," translated into Christian language expresses the moral compulsion of the saint. What a superb illustration of this have we in that visit of Catherine of Siena to Gregory XI. at Avignon, when she, the dyer's daughter, clothed with no authority but that of her sanctity, made the Pope and his corrupt Court tremble at her words, and caused the spiritual autocrat of Christendom to humbly follow her to Rome to attempt there a reformation!

It is to be observed, also, that every true leading is, on its upper side, always a following. The iconoclast in breaking through conventions and authorities that are visible, does so at a bidding more imperative within. There is a look on the faces of the great spiritual leaders which tells that of all men they are most under orders. Only the orders are such as have never yet been written on the world's statute-books. When Luther declared at the Leipsic Disputations: "I will give myself into the hands of no authority, be it that of a Council, or the Emperor, or the Universities, or the Pope," the words seemed to those whom he opposed as the very madness of intellectual libertinism. What they really expressed was the inner pressure upon a spirit in which was struggling a sense of truth and life to which none of these authorities had yet arrived.

To lead is often the saint's duty, but his truest joy is in following. It will be his attitude for ever. Always in his upward progress will there be a sense of something yet to be developed, of a good that still waits to be disclosed. It is his happiness to realise that however far he gets there is always something above him. As Goethe said to Eckermann, "We are not freed by refusing to recognise anything higher than ourselves, but rather by reverencing something that is above us. For in reverencing it we bring to light the consciousness that we ourselves bear the possibility of this Higher in us." It was this Higher made visible to men in the life of Jesus that gave the world the grandest exhibition of discipleship it has yet seen. Nothing in history, so far, has been comparable to that Divine compulsion of love which has glowed generation after generation in human hearts, and which finds fitting expression in the words of the Church's first historian: "We who are converted to Him know Him not only with the voice and sound of words, but with all the affections of the mind; so that we prefer giving a testimony to Him even to the preservation of our own lives."

VII. Religion as Power

What may be called the Whitsuntide or Pentecost theology comes to our generation with a special significance. And this because it is that side of Christianity which connects it with psychology. For it is precisely along this line that thinkers of all schools are investigating religion. The story at the beginning of Acts, and the passages relating to it which we find in the Epistles, supply us with the data from which we can study the dynamic element in Early Christian history. Here have we a doctrine of forces. The suggestion is of Christianity as above all things a reservoir of powers that strangely stirred human souls. Men are inquiring now with a new eagerness what those powers were, and how they stand related to the whole religious question of to-day.

And it is well the inquiry should take this turn, for, if we mistake not, it is just here that the vindication of Christianity, and its continuance and extension as a system of religious faith, will find place during the stormy years that are coming. Stormy years, we say, for those who study the signs of the times see clearly that the Church is about to witness an attack upon the fundamental Christian positions to which previous history furnishes no parallel. That conflict will effect enormous changes, not so much in the faith itself as in the forms it will take, and the reasons in men's minds for holding it.

On the Continent this campaign is already in full career. In France, a scientific writer expresses the mind of many of his compatriots in the phrase, "*L'hypothese Dieu s'elimine.*" Père Hyacinthe tersely sums the French situation in the sentence: "In France the Jesuits are masters of the Church and the Atheists are masters of the Republic." *The Chrétien Français* some time ago sketched a scene at the Trocadéro, where, on a wet Sunday which had emptied the churches, the vast hall, with a seating accommodation of five thousand, was packed to the doors, the occasion being an atheistic demonstration in which the speakers poured scorn on "the dead God on whom the priests live," while saluting justice, the moral idea and the social order.

We have not yet reached that point in England, but a set of influences, starting from far removed sources, are converging towards it. There is a new propaganda of Agnosticism, with money behind it, amongst the working classes. In cultured circles, criticism, as much within the Church as outside it, is riddling almost every one of the earlier theological conceptions. Alongside the New Testament records of the supernatural is placed that vast accumulation which modern research has unearthed of similar stories belonging to the other early world faiths. We have a philosophy of the myth and of the religious legend. We are reminded how the biographers of St. Francis, within a generation or so of his death, as in the Fioretti, and the Life of Bonaventura, crowded their record with miracles. The legend of Gautama is unearthed from the Buddhist literature, with its miraculous birth, its temptation in the wilderness, where angels afterwards ministered, and its ascension. We are bidden remember how Plato, in the generation immediately following his death, was credited with birth from a virgin. Our own generation is called in as witness on this theme. The Bâbists, the followers of the young Persian religious leader, who was executed within the lifetime of many of us, are quoted as relating of him endless marvels, including a transfiguration. In short, the religious annals of the world are

ransacked to exhibit to us the fact that the characteristics of Christianity as a supernatural religion are precisely paralleled in almost every one of the rival faiths that have claimed the allegiance of mankind. In this view, Christ's miracles are developments, according to a well-known mythopœic law, of simple occurrences; the resurrection faith was the result of neurotic trance states in the minds of Peter and Paul; and the whole theology, built on this history, compounded as it is of utterly unscientific conceptions of the universe falls inevitably to the ground.

That is where, according to a host of largely accredited teachers, we are at present. And when all this has been said, what? For many the logical sequel is that Christianity is on the point of extinction. Said a man of letters the other day to the present writer: "In fifty years your Christianity will have died out." The odd thing is that this same prediction has been made with equal confidence generation after generation, and somehow never gets itself fulfilled. Butler, in his Analogy, tells us how the fashionable society of his time were convinced that the Gospel was dead, and that they would now take their revenge on it for having so long interfered with the pleasures of the world. But the corpse turned out to be a remarkably lively one. Directly after Butler wrote, there arose in England, under Whitefield and Wesley, one of the greatest and most far-reaching religious revivals Christendom has seen. And to those who look beneath the surface of things it would, despite present appearances, come as no surprise if a similar revival, on a yet greater scale, were to burst on the world of to-day.

For the writers who, from the considerations just sketched, argue the approaching downfall of the Christian Church, overlook the capital circumstance of the situation. What, indeed, are those considerations in themselves? Is it a blow to faith to learn that peoples outside Christianity have reached their religion along parallel roads; that they too have divinised their great teachers, and lifted their careers to the plane of miracle? Some of us see quite other than an agnostic argument in the discovery that men, the world over, have traversed similar paths in their spiritual ascent; that the soul everywhere in its climb has found the same kind of supports—the kind adapted to its stage of development; that, as it put forth its tendrils, here at hand was always some natural stock ready, round which they could entwine themselves; that, finally, the soul, everywhere assured of a Divine immanence of which it partook, recognised most plainly that Divine in the great Masters in whom the Eternal Spiritual was so clearly revealed.

Moreover, this whole side of things, argued to its utmost extent, is, after all, a huge irrelevance. It leaves, as we have said, the capital point untouched. Christianity does not stand or fall by this or that conception of miracle, by this or that theory as to the way in which God manifested Himself in Christ. The essential theory in the Gospel is that it is a dynamic. It offered itself to the first age, as it offers itself now, as a power to change men's characters for the better. The apostles preached Christ as a power of God to salvation, and they pointed to results as a proof of the fact.

It is precisely here that the whole question hinges. The central problem for people on this planet is not an affair of criticism or of definitions, but of how to realise the best life. "How can I secure the highest states of the soul? What is the way to the noblest feeling and character? How shall I fill my nature with the energies of love, of justice, of purity, of self-sacrifice? How shall I reach the finer realms of the spiritual, of the heavenly, the fair world of devotion and of immortal hope? How can I attain to a character which I can myself respect, and offer as an example to my neighbours, and to my children after me?"

This is the issue. There is a modern thinking which meets it with a simple answer. In the name of philosophic materialism it denies the possibility of human moral improvability. Says Schopenhauer, voicing here a widespread opinion: “The wicked man is born with his wickedness as much as the serpent is with his poison fangs and glands; nor can the former change his nature a whit more than the latter.” If that were true then indeed would religion have received its death blow. It would have lost its every credential, and its very reason for being. But if there is one thing certain in this world it is that the Schopenhauer dictum is a false one. It supposes a man’s structure is the whole, whereas it is only the half. The other half is the sum of forces that are playing on him. It is here that religion comes in, as representing the whole upper range of powers that are incessantly shaping our race towards finer issues. We read in California of a new force generator, of which the prime motor is the sun. The solar rays, collected upon a vast reflecting surface, produce an energy which is to be used on a great scale in industries and manufactures. Religion, in its purer forms, might also be expressed as a sun generator, operating on a finer reflecting surface. Related to that Sun which is behind the sun it pours upon the soul energies whose source and whose results are alike spiritual.

When we open our New Testament, we are conscious of something other than the questions, numerous enough, which lend themselves to criticism. Beneath and beyond all, there is the evidence of the work of our sun generator. Here is an immense energy, producing in the far-off time which it records, and producing to-day, precisely those inner soul-states of which we are in search. Out of these pages leap on us powers that generate love, devotion, self-sacrifice, purity, hope, and trust. Nowhere else do we get the like in such profusion, in such fineness of quality. The people who live by this rule become the core of a nation’s private and civic life. They reach the best working philosophy of living. They find strength to live and strength to die. When Bishop Westcott lay on his death-bed, on his last day on earth, the nurse, stealing quietly in, heard him repeating to himself the hundred and third Psalm, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.” It says something after all for a philosophy of life which enables a man, at the very end, to sum up his experience in those words of rapturous joy and of adoring gratitude.

The Christian Church, as we said at the beginning, has stormy days in front. It will in those days be searched and tried as by fire. It will come through all victoriously precisely as it realises itself as a power, a force of spiritual renovation. Christ by His earthly career and work helped men to be good. He has been helping men ever since to be good. The Gospel is essentially an affair of character-building, and in that *rôle* nothing can destroy it or stay its progress. The force that worked at Pentecost came out of those heavens which contain still the immeasurable treasures that await man’s future. Immense changes are before us, but man’s spiritual heritage is beyond assault. Faith falls but to a greater rising.

I lay in dust life’s glory dead
And from the dust there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

VIII. Religion as Experience

The phrase “religious difference” is one with which we in England are all too familiar. But our definition of it is commonly a surface definition. As we use the term the picture before our minds is of the clash of theologies, the quarrels of the rival churches, the dispute between the believer and the man who does not believe. All this, however, while real enough in its way, is not the root of the matter. The deepest religious difference lies elsewhere. We are nearer the central fact when we ask, “Why is it that religion should be to some of us the greatest conceivable weariness, the utmost extremity of boredom, while to others it means a veritable ecstasy? Why is it that one man finds religion a galling yoke, an endless series of restrictions upon liberty, while another knows it as a glorious freedom, a sense of limitless expansion?” It is here we strike the real “religious difference.” The question lands us on the high watershed, the “great divide,” both of religion itself and of man as the subject of it.

For it is at this point we discover that the word “religion” covers two quite different things. It stands at the same time for a reality, and also for a report of that reality. And when we talk of religion as spelling a conscious expansion, the soul’s innermost thrill, it is, we find, always of the first of these definitions we are speaking, while the sense of boredom and irksome restraint belongs always to the second. The two things may be otherwise classed as religion at first-hand and religion at second-hand, or, again, as the religion of experience *versus* that of tradition. We are most of us so immersed in the second-hand product, that we have the greatest difficulty in looking beyond it. And yet, unless we comprehend that first-hand that lies behind our second-hand, we shall never reach sure ground, either for mind or heart.

Whatever may be its after fortunes, religion has its rise always as a free movement of the soul. Its starting-point is an experience. All the religion at present in sight, that contained in Bible, in Church institutions, in theology, began here. The grittiest formularies are the petrifactions of what was once volatile and flowing; they are visibles congealed from an invisible breath. Religion comes first to great souls as an obsession, an answering thrill to the call of the Infinite. Theology is the oft-repeated, manifold attempt to put this primitive thrill into words. It is the endeavour to translate into forms of the intellect the mind’s emotion as it opens to that spiritual world of which it finds itself a part. The Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is the stratified formation, rising layer upon layer, of these deposits from the unseen. Or, to put it differently, its contents are the harvests from that all-surrounding ocean of the spiritual, whose tides beat incessantly on this islet of our human life.

The tides from the Infinite flow in first upon selected and prepared souls. These do their best to mediate to others of what they have received. But it is only a partial transmission. What has really passed in the minds of the spiritual leaders is always their own secret. They could not reveal it if they would, because there are no words available. What has determined them to their great choices has been rarely a process of argument. Our logic mills make their noisy revolutions in everybody’s sight and hearing, but the soul’s decisive operations take place deeper down. We talk, for instance, of the “Christian religion,” but does the phrase help us to understand what religion was in the bosom of Christ Himself? We know His words and deeds, and the

forces He set going in the world; but who will ever fathom the mystery of His own interior self-consciousness?

The great leaders, we say, have always themselves been affected, in the first place, in a way beyond argument. Their career began in an experience which they could never fully interpret to others. It was of various kinds. An event, waiting for them from all eternity on life's highway, was with some the evangelist. Or it was a dream, or a trance, or a voice sounding in the ear. An Augustine hears the *tolle lege*, a Paul is overwhelmed by a vision of the Crucified. With some a new faculty seems to have suddenly opened. Al Ghazzali, a Persian Sufi of the eleventh century, discourses thus of prophetism: "As there are men endowed only with the sensitive faculty, who reject what is offered them in the way of objects of the pure understanding, so there are intellectual men who reject now the things perceived by the prophetic faculty." He argues that for men to deny the perceptions of this faculty is the same as for the blind to deny the visible world. In a line with this mediæval Mohammedan is the Catholic Madame Guyon, who says of her sojourn at Grenoble: "I felt myself on a sudden invested with the apostolic state, and discerned the conditions of the souls of such persons as spoke to me." With some there is a sudden inrush of what is felt to be Divine. Jacob Behmen thus describes his experience at Görlitz: "There came a blessed peace or Sabbath of the soul that lasted seven days, during which I was, as it were, inwardly surrounded by a Divine light. The triumph that was then in my soul I can neither tell nor describe."

It is the fashion in certain circles to-day to disparage such experiences in the name of pathological science. We have a medical materialism which will describe you St. Paul's vision on the Damascus road as "a discharging lesion of the occipital cortex, he being an epileptic"; will dismiss St. Teresa as a case of hysteria, and Francis of Assisi as a "hereditary degenerate." But all this is too amusingly superficial. It is on a line with Lombroso's definition of genius as a form of disease. If we granted him his definition would it in the least diminish our obligations to genius, or the value of its products? The things which genius perceives in art, or music, or science, are they the less real because of the physical disabilities of the seer? A Mozart surely does not the less truly open for us the world of music because a pathologist proves to us that he was a neurotic? And in religion, as in art or science, we judge by the quality of the products, by their "worth for life," and not by the physical qualities of the transmitter. Were we to accept the data of these modern brain-sifters we should by-and-by have no realities to report at all, for does not all our knowledge come through the brain, and is there a brain in the world of which some imperfection may not be reported?

These first-hand experiences then, borne in on the consciousness of elect souls, are for the world the origin of its religious life. But from the very beginning they commence to take on new forms. Working on the first recipients with an extraordinary energy, they issue from them as winged words, as mysterious influences, as startling activities. Sympathetic natures are drawn together who feel the reflex of the new power, and begin to work as its instruments. When the founders of the movement have died a secondary stage begins. It is the stage, not so much of the reality, as of report of the reality. We are here again at the "great divide" between life and tradition. In Christianity we have the turning-point clearly marked close on to the apostolic age. Gospels are being produced, in which is treasured every word and deed that reflected the marvellous Life. Men are living on memories. We have a Papias who feeds on the recollections of survivors of the first circle. "I do not know,"

says he, “that I derived so much benefit from books as from the living voices of those that are still surviving.” The process has reached a further stage when, at the close of the second century, we have Tertullian resting everything upon the apostolic tradition and succession. “Let them,” says he, as a complete refutation of heretics, “produce the original records of their churches; let them unfold the roll of their bishops running down in due succession from the beginning in such a manner that their first bishop shall be able to show for his ordainer and predecessor one of the apostles or apostolic men.”

What now of this secondary religion? Are we to condemn a Tertullian’s conservatism for the tradition, for the exact succession of doctrine and institution, as something contrary to the free spirit of the first experience? That would be a hasty procedure. For these gleaners and custodians, who so eagerly gathered and so religiously guarded all that had come down to them from the great creative age, showed, at any rate, by their zeal, their sense of the priceless value for mankind of those first original experiences. They saw, in what the apostolic time had to offer, an incoming to the human sphere of Divine treasures of fact, thought and life which it would be high treason to the race to let slip. They were “the honest brokers” of the spiritual, and have laid us under eternal obligation by what they have transmitted.

And the best men of those ages never forgot that, in faithfully handing down what they had received, they were most effectively helping succeeding generations to a first-hand religious consciousness of their own. In the words of Christ and of His apostles they recognised the spiritual laws, by obeying which the soul became sensitised for the reception of new light and power. It is while on the roads marked out by the ancient leaders that the modern pilgrim gets his vision. It is on this account that the Scriptures remain the eternal treasure-house of the soul. So often in studying them has the illumination come which, for the reader, for ever transformed his world.

We have here, then, the true relation between first-hand and second-hand religion. The one is the record of the other, and the road to it. But the second is of no use without the first. There is no divorce so tragic as the one between these two. *Corruptio optimi pessima*. No disgust equals that of a good thing gone bad. The world’s immense yawn over the conventional service is Nature’s verdict upon a violation of her highest law. The Church of to-day loses the whole lesson of its past if it fails to find in tradition its own leaping-point to the upper sources.

A favourite theme of romance is the finding of buried treasures. But none of these stories equals, for intensity of feeling and the sense of boundless wealth, the history of men who, to-day as yesterday, reach, on the ways of common life, their moments of revelation. The whole world has become their treasure. Men talk of the evils inflicted by a misguided religionism. But oh! the happiness of the real thing! No one has given us that story, for it cannot be put into words—the moment when men have seen clearly the Eternal Love shining upon them, and when what before was an outlook on poverty and failure and utter despair has been changed into the bliss of a Divine assurance! There are humble people to-day, weaving at the loom, working in pits, on death-beds, who, because they have that experience, are happier than kings. When preachers carry this experience to their pulpit the churches thrive. They cannot tell all they know, but the sight of them handling this treasure, and calling their brethren to share it, is in itself an irresistible appeal.

IX. What of Sunday?

The winds of criticism are beating upon all our institutions to-day. An American writer has just been asking Anglo-Saxondom what it candidly thinks of the English Monarchy. In like manner we are asked to revalue that ancient asset the English Sunday. The Church by various signs shows it is not entirely satisfied with it, and the world is in a not less critical mood. A large and, as it seems, increasing section of the population has frankly given the religious tradition of it the go by. To foreigners our Sunday is an astonishment. A Parisian some years ago said that London on Sunday was about as lively as the bottom of a well. But while one side regards the day as too Sabbatical, the other finds it not Sabbatical enough. Religion has in almost every age deplored its too feeble hold upon the day. We hear Chrysostom, in language that might be of yesterday, lamenting the sparse attendance at church as compared with the crowding at popular entertainments. It is a curious echo of this to hear Sir Nicholas Bacon in 1572, in opening Parliament, asking: "Why the common people in this country universally come so seldom to Common Prayer and Divine Service?"

Whatever our standpoint, the topic here raised is one to be looked into candidly and carefully. Few questions touch weightier issues, or come closer home to us all, than this: What has our Sunday to say for itself, in view of the national consciousness of the time? Our own generation is, of course, not the first to raise that question. At the time of the French Revolution Sunday was one of the first objects of the attack. It was abolished by the National Convention, and in its place a public holiday decreed every tenth day. But it was not quite so easily to be got rid of, not even in free-thinking France. The new calendar did not work. The ten day arrangement, after a few years of existence, dropped out and for a century France has had again her seventh day and shows no disposition to part with it.

The incident is significant as showing the deep roots which the day and its observances have struck into the life of the world. There are things that are bred in the blood, and this is one of them. Sunday is one of the oldest things that man brings with him. We do not know how old it is. The statements of Philo and Josephus may be exaggerated as to its universal diffusion amongst the ancient peoples, but it does go back a long way. We find seven to be a sacred number everywhere and everywhere has it an application to the week. More than a thousand years before Abraham's time there was Sabbatical observance in the Babylonian plains, and in connection with religious services of a peculiarly elevated character. With all the Semitic peoples it has been from the dawn of history an unbroken tradition. Humanity has, in fact, been brought up on the idea of devoting a day, at regular and shortly-recurring intervals, for the cessation of labour, for the recovery by each individual of his personal freedom, and for the consideration of his relation with the unseen. If the doings of humanity could be chronicled by the inhabitant of some outside planet he would find in them probably nothing more striking than this.

Christianity, on its appearance, took over this great religious asset. It changed the date of Sunday in the week, and gave to its observances a flavour of its own. It is, indeed, precisely in connection with these observances that the whole modern question of Sunday comes up. The early Christian services were not popular. There was nothing spectacular about them. How different the gatherings which Justin

Martyr pictures for us, or those which Pliny describes in his letter to Trajan, from the gorgeous religious festivals which paganism was familiar with! Culture has always been struck with the difference here. It has been expressed for us in imperishable words in that immortal sonnet in which Keats dedicated his poems to Leigh Hunt:

Glory and loveliness have passed away;
For if we wander out in early morn,
No wreathed incense do we see upborne
Into the East to meet the smiling day;
No crowd of nymphs, soft-voiced and young and gay,
In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
Roses and pinks and violets to adorn
The shrine of Flora in her early May.

Christianity was indeed in this respect the most daring of innovations. Religion, which in that old pagan time had been associated with everything that was gay and voluptuous, had now to the popular mind become the mentor who scathed the world with its condemnation, while robbing it of its cherished delights. The Church itself later began to ask whether those early enthusiasts had not, in their zeal, put, in this matter, too great a strain upon average humanity. We witness next accordingly an interesting evolution. In numberless places the old heathen festivals reappeared, baptized into Christian forms. Names of saints took the place of the classic divinities. The Catholic cult of the Virgin, there is abundant evidence to show, was a direct carrying over to the Church of the old worship of Astarte, the Queen of Heaven. It seemed, we suppose, to the theologians of those times, that the gold of the Gospel needed, for its proper working, to be mixed with some alloy of humanism.

The same thing has occurred later. Puritanism was the endeavour to get back the primitive Christian feeling and the primitive Christian life. Its leaders had tasted the indescribable joy which, to the souls who find it, lies treasured in the Gospel. They realised, as the first Christians did, that in all the world there was nothing like it, or to be compared with it. Here lay the key to life's enigma, the satisfaction of the heart's deepest thirst, the dignifying to an immeasurable degree of the human status, work and outlook. At all costs must this treasure be preserved pure and undiluted. The vessels that held it must be secured against leakage. One of these was the Sabbath, and the Sabbath was accordingly to be rigorously safeguarded. It was devoted wholly to religion, and to a certain form of it. The services were denuded of the sensuous, and supercharged with the spiritual. We read of diets of worship which lasted, with little intermission, from nine in the morning till five in the evening. And the worshippers could stand it. A robust and slow-moving people, bred in the open-air, unfed by nervous excitement, remote from the age of railways, of telegraphs, of the half-penny press, they found in the Sunday worship the one great stimulus of the week. The church was temple, theatre, lecture-hall, press and literature in one.

Yet the Puritan had not reckoned entirely with human nature. The world at large was a wider one than his. The attempt to starve the eye and the ear in the interests of pure spiritual perception was not well founded. Eye and ear, he might have remembered, are God's creation as much as the innermost soul furniture, and not to be neglected with impunity. What a significant remark is that quoted in the Anglican Homily on "The Place and Time of Prayer," made by a woman to her neighbour: "Alas! gossip, what shall we now do at church, since all the saints are taken away, since all the goodly sights we were wont to have are gone, since we cannot hear the like piping, singing, chanting and playing upon the organs that we had before!" The

Puritan, in short, did not in his calculation strike the human average, and his system suffered accordingly. His own children revolted. Some of the greatest reprobates of the Restoration period were bred in Puritan households.

With all this history behind us we are confronted to-day with the problem as it affects our time. And that history furnishes, surely, some hints for the solution. For one thing it yields the conviction that the spiritual aspect of Sunday is a treasure which, equally with the Puritan, we are bound to safeguard. The greatest thing in humanity to-day, and the pledge of the greatest things to come, is the spiritual consciousness which the Church possesses, and which, when its worship is real, comes then to its greatest height. Evolution, in its age-long working, has produced nothing else comparable to this. To bring men universally into the possession of it is to confer the greatest boon that life offers.

But in the meantime the Church must improve on Puritanism by learning to attach itself to average human nature. It is of no use for the engine to start off at fifty miles an hour if the coupling has not been made between it and the carriages. It is the business of the religious teacher and worker to master the conditions of the time and to plan his campaign accordingly. And he may do it with good heart. For when all is said and done in other departments, there is nowhere else such a power of appeal and fascination as the Gospel offers. When drama, literature, science, music, sport have done their best, Christianity can offer a joy and an uplift which still transcends them all. What the Church needs is a new faith in itself, in the message it has to offer, in the Divine forces entrusted to it. As Schleiermacher says in the “Reden,” speaking of Christianity: “The living spirit of it, indeed, slumbers oft and long . . . but it ever awakens again as soon as the season in the spiritual world is favourable for its renewal, and sets its sap in motion.”

In its renewal it only needs to catch the spirit of the time. Its Sunday must, first of all, be a democratic Sunday, a people’s day. Its institutions and services must be an appeal to every healthy human instinct. It should offer art and music for eye and ear, and the joys of fellowship for the social nature; it should let loose amongst the poor and disinherited all its play of kindness and brotherly love. It has to popularise the Christian Sunday by flooding it with sunshine. May we not, bringing fresh aids and knowledge to the task, seek again to realise the ideal of holy George Herbert, and make Sunday a time of which we can say:

Thou art a day of mirth!
And where the week-days travel on ground,
Thy flight is higher as thy birth!
O let me take thee at the bound!
Leaping with thee from seven to seven,
Till that we both (being tossed from earth)
Fly, hand in hand, to heaven!

X. Mystery

Perhaps the deepest thing in human life is its mystery. The sense of it is our chief result so far. It is at once our torment and our joy. How much of life's fascination comes from the puzzles that are wrought into its texture? Mystery haunts every step of our journey. It begins with the children, who love and dread it. How greedily do they swallow the ghost story which is to keep them shuddering hours after in the dark! In the glare of later life the sense of it is apt to become blunted. But we have only to think ourselves away a moment from the provincialism of our accustomed surroundings, to find again all our wonder-faculty alert. There is the same crowd to-day in London, but yonder, just as actual as Fleet-street, are the desert solitudes of the moon, where no foot has trod and no voice been heard for a million years. The temperature in this room is about sixty degrees. But at this identical moment the temperature on the sun's surface is about three million degrees, a heat 14,000 times that of boiling water. And that fiery tempest is a genuine part of to-day's business! I am doing at this moment something I call thinking, yet without knowing anything essentially of the process. The psychologist tells me that every phase and moment of it witnesses thousands of groupings and regroupings of the primordial mind-stuff, in which the conscious "I" takes no part. Am I, then, the thinker or they? And so at each step a new wonder.

It was out of the world's mystery that the religions grew. Each was an attempt, in its own way, to explain the riddle of the universe. But the riddle remained always the master. And so the religions, which were to explain the mystery, became themselves a mystery. In their later developments the old world faiths drew on this element as one of their chief attractions. In India, in Persia, in Greece and Rome, in Scandinavia, and amongst the Western Celts, in almost every tribe of man, in fact, we see arising behind the popular ceremonies a secret cult, open only to the initiates, in which a closer approach was supposed to be made to the ultimate secret of things. The Eleusinian and Thesmophorean "mysteries" in Greece, those of Mithras in Persia, of Zeus in Crete, of the Druids in our own land, all showed the same features, and rested on the same instinct. Their processions, lustrations, sacrificial offerings, mystic formulas, "Deiknumena," "Dromena," and what not, were alike a play on the human appetite for the unknown. As Kant in his "Anthropologische Didaktik" observes, "It is this field of the dimmer, undefined ideas (dunkler Vorstellungen) that is the greatest province in man."

Amongst the religions the relation of Christianity to mystery is noteworthy. It takes full account of it, and, indeed, plants itself broadly in this realm. So far from attempting to explain away life's riddles it boldly adds to them, itself being the greatest riddle of all. The New Testament is *par excellence* the mystery book. It baffles us at every turn. That it contains so much, and yet so little; that it raises such enormous questions, which it never attempts to answer; that it offers us so transcendent a central Figure, who Himself nevertheless writes us no single word, and whose coming and going are alike unknown; that it gives us the loftiest teaching set in a framework whose crudity confounds the modern mind; that it puts in operation enormous spiritual forces of which it vouchsafes no scientific account; that this epoch-making book itself, of such priceless value to humanity, should have been

exposed to all the hazards of literary fortune, flung on the world in scattered pieces, the gathering and preservation of which is left to a mere instinct—all this and a thousand other things meet and confound us in our attempted solutions. There was no need for the Church to elaborate any "mystery" of its own, as in later ages it was so fond of doing. The bare facts of the recital offer us, in this line, more than on this side the veil we shall ever be able to digest.

A curious development of religious thinking in our time has taken a view of the Christian "mysteries" which one may notice in passing. Modern Theosophy, in its *réchauffé* of the old Oriental philosophies, has sought to give them vogue by representing the early Christian teaching as full of these very dogmas. Within the mass of the Church's adherents, they tell us, was an inner circle of "initiates" to whom this secret doctrine, which formed the essence of the Gospel, was imparted. Do not the epistles again and again speak of "the mystery"? This,—the occult, esoteric teaching—they say, *was* the mystery, and the reason it has not been preserved as the true doctrine of Christianity lay in the ruthless suppression of it later by the Christian Fathers, and the careful destruction of the literature which contained it. It is really very funny that intelligent people should believe and propagate such ideas, and this with the actual facts so easily accessible. Irenæus, who wrote from the very midst of this period, might have had a prophetic foresight of the modern Theosophic statement when he penned these remarkable words: "For if the apostles had known 'hidden mysteries,' which they were in the habit of imparting to 'the perfect,' apart and privily from the rest, they would have delivered them specially to those to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves." Precisely. Who should be the guardians of the "inner doctrine" but the appointed heads of the Churches themselves? But we know what their doctrine was, and what their "mystery." It was precisely the contrary of what, from this quarter, has of late been offered as the genuine "innermost" of the early Christian teaching.

To come back, however, to our main theme. It is strange to note the periodical rebellions against the mysterious in life, and the endeavours to show that the whole affair is commonplace and quite easily seen through. But the attempts invariably break down. Gaps yawn in the new system which is to explain everything, peering through which we find ourselves again confronting the old unfathomable. The oddest venture in this line of our day is that of Haeckel in his "Riddle of the Universe," a work which, were it not for its deplorable effects upon the ignorant, might surely be classed as one of the most amusing books this generation has seen. Its dogmatism is so entirely naïve! Professor Haeckel has found everything out. He has exploded the old mystery, and found it a bag stuffed with sawdust. There is nothing to wonder at in suns and systems. They are just matter and force, and there an end. Haeckel regards himself as, in philosophy, a disciple of Spinoza. One wonders what Spinoza, were he alive, would have thought of his pupil?

The book, we say, is so amusing. Its logic! When the talk in it is of Spinoza, we have again and again expounded and extolled the Dutch-Jew philosopher's doctrine of the "eternal substance," the ultimate which expresses itself throughout the universe in the two forms of extension and thought. But when the book comes to physiology, we have chapter after chapter working up to the thesis that soul, consciousness, thought, is purely an affair of the brain. So many convolutions, so many cells, so much complexity of cellular combination, and just so will the thought be. So much development of brain, so much intellect. The disease, decay and extinction of the one is the disease, decay, and extinction of the other. It is all so simple. But is this, then,

the explanation? Our Beethoven is seated at his piano and plays. A wire breaks, and his music becomes defective. All the wires break, and the music ceases. Ah! then, there was no Beethoven at the piano. The piano played itself. Beethoven was a myth which science has exploded. Shade of Spinoza! To imagine that his doctrine of the eternal substance, expressing itself throughout infinity as extension and thought, should be translated into the idea that the only thought, the only consciousness possible to the universe, was through a brain exactly like ours! Haeckel is continually reproaching Christianity with its anthropomorphism, but the wildest preacher of its doctrine never ventured on such anthropomorphism as this.

Indeed, our materialist prophet is a warning to all such as step beyond their *métier*. His attempt at criticism of the Gospels shows to what absurdities a man may be reduced when he goes beyond the region he knows—and Haeckel knows his own realm as few do—to judge the things outside it. Many of our readers have doubtless noted his extraordinary statement about the Gospels and the Council of Nicæa. "The entire list of Gospels numbered forty. The canonical list contains four. As the contending and mutually abusing bishops could not agree about the choice, they determined to leave the selection to a miracle." And then he tells the absurd story of the different Gospels being placed under the altar and the inspired ones leaping out upon it. He gives the story as though it were the accepted Christian account of the admission of the four Gospels to the canon. It is difficult to characterise this statement. Is it "humour," or ignorance, or what? Has our Haeckel ever read any early Christian history? Has he heard even of Tatian's Diatessaron, a work which in the early part of the second century, over a century and a-half earlier than the Nicene Council, attempted a harmony of our four Gospels? Has he ever looked into Irenæus, who, at the same period, in his work "Against Heresies," speaks of the four Gospels as a predetermined number, comparing them to the four zones, to the four winds, &c.? Does he know nothing of the multitudes of references of the same period which show that generations before Nicæa our present Gospels were the everywhere recognised ones, held and treasured as separate, and apart from all competitors?

Our Haeckel has added to the "Riddle of the Universe" instead of solving it. It is a mystery in itself that so able a man should, on the ultimate phases of his problem, get so far astray. His philosophy is as crude as his history. Even Schopenhauer, whom he quotes so fondly, might have taught him better. "Against the assertion that I am a mere modification of matter, this must be insisted on that all exists merely in my idea." And had he duly pondered another sentence of his master Spinoza, he would have seen that it shattered his own position to atoms. "Things must exist not only in the manner in which they are manifested to us, but in every manner which infinite understanding can conceive."

Yes. Here speaks the philosopher and not the sciolist. The modern materialist invites us to take the sense-verdict of a consciousness that has only begun to be developed—a mere glance upon the surface of things—as the ultimate thing to be said. Man will never be satisfied with such an answer. His religion may be limited in its expression, but it has reached a deeper grasp of reality than this. Its doctrine of miracle, of the supernatural, may be, as to its form, somewhat wide of the mark. But in so far as it is a recognition of the wonder of the universe, especially of the wonder of its moral and spiritual life, it touches the centre. Its life of faith is, when all is said, the only true attitude in face of the mingled light and shadow upon the world. Against the scoff of Haeckel we can put the word of a greater scientist than himself. "My supreme desire," said Kepler, "is to find the God in myself whom I find everywhere outside."

XI. Office and the Man

There is perhaps no subtler nor more suggestive psychological study than that of the interaction between a man and his office. It is a wonderful play between opposites; between fixed and fluid, between past and present, between a sensitive soul and an iron system. And there is no better position for observing it than an old country such as our own. English life is from end to end seamed with officialism. In whatever direction we turn we see the enormous power it exerts in the moulding of thought and action. At first view the whole social structure, in this aspect of it, would appear to be an elaborate scheme for the prevention or suppression of originality. The population is run into ruts, which are so deep that there is no climbing out. It is the rarest thing to find a free and uncommitted biped. Before he has really found himself our man has become clerk, or cleric, or trader, or fighter, and is taking on as quickly as may be the shape and colour of his line of things.

It is curious to watch the action here of some position that is great and ancient. It is a sinister action. One might picture the office as a kind of ogre that feeds on the individuality, on the innermost life, of every fresh holder. Take, for instance, the English Episcopate. What a hard-and-fast mould into which to cram a live soul of to-day! How much is left of the actual man in an archbishop? By the very terms he must cease as thinker and innovator. He is the embodiment of a tradition. The tradition chooses his garments, his beliefs, his very gestures. A thousand conventions, written and unwritten, hem him in. The office is a giant, a thousand years old, compacted of a myriad influences, deeds, experiences of the past, a giant too strong for any separate individual who thinks to wrestle with him. And so “Amurath to Amurath succeeds.” The English Episcopate is made up of men well above the average in character and ability. But their office is always stronger than they. The Episcopate continues, but the man dwindles under it. We never look in that direction for great reforms, great movements of human thought. There has been no English bishop since Atterbury who has really risked anything. In the sphere of religion, what was accomplished by the whole bench in the eighteenth century as compared with the work of Wesley? We doubt if the average Englishman remembers the name of a single Church dignitary of the period except Butler. In France one Voltaire in the same century outweighed, as a teacher of his countrymen, the whole clerical host. In the nineteenth century, did the Episcopal order, by its entire collective intellectual utterance count as a feather in the scale when compared with the word of one layman, Charles Darwin?

The office system, indeed, on this view of it, seems to have worked badly, and one is inclined to ask why society, in its arrangements, should have permitted so tremendous a handicap on the enterprise of some of its best members. The question is already being answered in the loosening of that ancient grip. As Matthew Arnold says: “Dissolvents of the old European system of dominant ideas and facts we must all be, all of us who have any power of working; what we have to study is that we may not be acrid dissolvents of it.” We shall escape this last danger, in the matter before us, by remembering how office, as related to the individual, has gained its strength, and what its power has really meant in the world. For there is something to be said for office and its power. It is worth noting here, to begin with, that the authority of

the office, as such, is, in its original idea, strange as it may seem, a piece of democracy as opposed to despotism. It is the embodiment of Burke's view that "while the multitude for the moment may be foolish, the species is wise, and when time is given to it, as a species it almost always acts right." The office, in its limitations on the holder's liberty, is really the experience of the world, operating, it may be, over an age-long period, as to what the holder of this office should be and do. It is the view of the community as opposed to the caprice of an individual. His position is a trust for the carrying out of what masses of men, thinking and working through long periods of time, have agreed upon as the best to be done and said for certain objects.

Still more noteworthy is it that whenever a personality of the first-class has entered upon an office he has invariably enlarged its scope, brought new elements into it, stamped his own character upon it as henceforth entering into its conception. We see, for instance, how in Catholicism the popedom acquired continually new features with each great man that passed its chair. The Roman See was not the same thing after a Gregory the Great had held it, or a Hildebrand, or an Innocent III. So, in the simpler idea of the Protestant pastorate, what an enrichment has come to it from the labours of an Oberlin, who showed how a country minister might lift the standard of life of a whole population; or of a Von Bodelschwingh of our time, whose labour-colonies in Germany have revolutionised the whole question of vagrancy and of the unemployed! Indeed, there are few things more impressive in history than the sight of a great man wedded to a great office. He uses it rather than allowing it to use him. When the Roman imperium links with a Marcus Aurelius, when an English kinghood finds an Alfred the Great, it is as when a great soul inhabits a mighty body.

Yet it remains, so seems the verdict of the years, that for the very greatest work in this world, the existing offices, whatever their uses or history, seem inadequate and generally an impediment. Times arrive when the formulas for which they stand are worn out, and when humanity asks for a fresh start. It is then that personality asserts itself over office. That idea of a perfectly clean slate, of the abolition of the rut order of going, of deliverance into a gloriously new, unfettered scheme of things, has been caressed by all the thinkers. Descartes handled it in philosophy, Rousseau prophesied of it in the social world. Emerson preached to his Americans that theirs was the time and the land for it. But really the only originality possible here is the originality of a new, great soul. And such when they come are outside office. They *are* the office. Jesus presented Himself to his countrymen as a layman, "the carpenter's son." His doctrine had no sacerdotal, no Levitical sanction. It held from Himself. As Tertullian so finely says, *Dominus noster veritatem se, non consuetudinem cognominavit*. "Our Lord said, 'I am the truth,' not 'I am the custom.' " It was as when George Fox cut out for himself his suit of leather and of his own inspiration set forth to preach to England. To-day we see all the myriad ecclesiastics of Christendom through nigh twenty centuries founding themselves upon the unofficed Galilean layman.

It is so, we say, almost always with the teachers and workers who go to the roots of things. No existing position fits exactly to these new births of time. And that because they are new, and are here to create the new. In Russia to-day we see on one side a vast hierarchy, innumerable in its members, wealthy, hoary with age; on the other a Tolstoy, who has flung away what officialism he had, and speaks from the plain ground. What, to Europe, is the message of Russian ecclesiasticism as compared with this man's solitary word? It is the same everywhere. When the great poet comes, he comes not into the office of a bishop, but into the immeasurably wider office of a

man. He is here to express not a past, but a present and future; not a department, but the whole sum of things, and in terms of his own time. We have no offices, we say, for the really great callings. They are here by an invisible consecration and empowerment. What succession, for instance, is there to the order of sainthood? Yet when it comes it is the most potent thing in the world. How significant in this regard, as exhibiting the inherent rank of saintliness among the world values, is that quaint story of St. Martin of Tours, in which the chronicler relates how, being sent for by the fierce Emperor Maximus to hear him talk, "the saint spoke of nothing but religion, duty, heavenly blessedness, while the Empress hung on his words, and at last insisted on waiting on him at a meal, arranging the chair and table, bringing water for his hands, standing beside him in motionless observance, and collecting the very fragments of bread from his plate at the conclusion of the supper, as if such relics were preferable to an imperial banquet."

This age-long story of office and the man has left some puzzling problems for our own time. The great offices are there, with all their stiffness of tradition, their rigidity of outline, their colouring, ready to dye to their own hue the men who take them. Many of the world's greatest posts are hereditary, and it is here the tragedy of office is oftenest played. Think of the Tsardom, with its tradition of barbarian absolutism, of slaughters, of Siberia, of corruption and serfdom, and then of a soul born into that fatal line with a poet's refinement, with a patriot's ardour for liberty! More often, however, the high offices have been a lure. They appear never to have lacked candidates. They appeal to so much in human nature. They seem to add so materially to a man's natural stature. Office is a splendid tree for a short-legged Zaccheus. If only, however, our man of five feet four, as he climbs to his elevation, would remember that the perch he has reached advertises, not so much his elevation, as the fact that he is exactly five feet four! This side of the comedy promises to be played indefinitely. *Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose*.

At present the men of real consequence seem in increasing numbers to stand outside the more restrictive offices. The investigators, the original writers, the men who are social forces work in their own names and from their individual standpoint. Their office, if they have one, is usually self-created. A "General" Booth has his title in inverted commas, but it carries more power than a bushel of generals whose titles are orthodox and without commas.

Yet the world cannot get on without its offices, no, nor without its traditions. The lesson which emerges from a study of this kind is not to cast aside the past, but to use it in a more rational way. What we are learning to-day is the new use of old forces. Niagara, which has thundered for ages and done nothing but thunder, is now manufacturing electricity. The peer, the ecclesiastic, the monarch have also age-old forces behind them. It is their golden opportunity to do with them what has been done with Niagara; let them harness the old power to new ideas, to fit the needs of a new time.

English society is to-day stuffed with titles. They crowd us. It is as in New York at the end of the Civil War, when, as was once elegantly observed, "You could not spit out of a window without hitting a colonel." But when all is said, is there a better title than this, which Sir Nathaniel, in *Love's Labour Lost*, gives to schoolmaster Holofernes: "You are a good member of the Commonwealth"? Shall we ever get back in England the days when her greatest offices were filled by her greatest men—when it can be said again of her Prime Ministers, for instance, what Bunsen said of one of them: "Gladstone is the first man in England as to intellectual power, and he has heard

higher tones than anyone else in the land”? The true relation between office and the man, whether in Church or State, has surely never been better put than in that sketch of the government of the Primitive Church which a Christian Father has left us: “The tried men of our elders preside over us, obtaining that honour not by purchase, but by established character.”

XII. The World's Happiness

The greatest human assets are precisely those which it is impossible to put into figures. You may reckon up a nation's military forces, but how will you gauge its *morale*? The census will give you the number of people in England on a given night, but where is the census of its thought-power? The true riches of humanity are ever unseen. Its real kingdom is always not of this world. The dominant spiritual quality of life is never more present to us than when we look into a theme like this, of the world's happiness. Here is something which all men believe in, for which all are thirsting. Happiness is a religion on which no one turns his back. And yet on this theme, so vitally and universally interesting, what do we know? What statistics are at present available? We can find out how much wheat or cotton there is in the market to-day. The men who deal in corners can inform you. But how much happiness is there? Is the output increasing? Is there a likelihood of its deposits being used up, or are there any as yet untouched sources of supply? It is when we ask questions of this kind that we begin to discover what raw, untrained hands we are as yet at the whole business of living.

The modern world is built, so we all say, on commercialism. Everything is under the rule of give and take, of barter and exchange, of so much for so much. And yet that world which man at his deepest habitually lives in knows nothing at all of this, and goes by another set of laws altogether. Happiness is outside commercialism. Yesterday's sunshine and spring beauty filled us all with delight, and not one of us paid a penny for it. The millionaire's entertainment, on the other hand, on which he had lavished thousands, produced all manner of results, duly chronicled, but not this. That is the odd part of it. We make elaborate preparations to capture what is as common as the air, and miss it! For the reason why we are not happy is certainly not because of any lack in the original supply. The universe is doubtless too big an affair to have had our little human joy as its prime object. But certainly it seems to have been one of its objects. For it has been joined to everything we do, and laid along every foot of the ground we traverse. There is no function of a healthy life that does not yield its pleasure. In working and in resting, in sleeping and in waking, in society and in solitude, in youth, manhood, old age; in the play of our muscle, in the activity of our brain; in anticipation, in realisation, in reminiscence; in the view of the actual and in the mind's sweep over the unseen; in the ardour of conflict and in the hush of contemplation, we find this inmost treasure of life waiting to yield itself.

The sense of the infinite resources here available grows on us as we study the world's history. Happiness is not a deposit like a coal bed, which, after being drawn upon for years, shows signs of giving out. The experience is rather of an immeasurable supply which only awaits a growing capacity to use it. Man at his lowest doubtless found life pleasurable enough, but his history has been that of a gradual rise in the quality of his pleasure. The saint will be ill employed if, from the height of his spiritual endowment, he scoffs at animal gratification. It will be the rich man scorning the poor man. In the early human beginnings these rough satisfactions were all there were to be had, and we may rejoice that in so rude a time those poor relations of ours were as merry as they were. But the miracle of man is in his constant new becoming. This feeble biped carries in him the potency of a seemingly infinite development. And

as he grows, from one stage into another, always comes he into contact with subtler and more refined delights. “The soul,” says a mediæval saint, “can never have rest in things that are beneath itself.” “Beneath itself”! Humanity enjoyed those “things beneath” so long as there was nothing higher. But the universe has, to this child of promise, unfolded since some of its more intimate secrets; it has hinted of joy sources hidden aforetime, and so have we man discontented with the animal in him, and training his spirit for the newer paradise.

This joy world, as it emerges into its higher forms, shows itself as something entirely spiritual. How remote it is from that of commercial calculation is seen when we examine the way in which happiness comes, grows, and distributes itself. Were there no other evidence to go by we might from this one standpoint argue for man as an ethereal being. Happiness is the outflow of life, the communication of it from one soul to another. It is the rhythmic movement of a spirit’s peace and joy which, by a beautiful law, propagates itself and impinges upon other spirits. And the movement here partakes of infinity in its exhaustless energy. When, for instance, a great nature has poured its inner history into a book, the store of refreshment, after having ministered to countless other natures, is there still, with its overflow of benefaction no whit diminished, waiting to rejoice all later generations. Think of the treasure of happiness shut up in the world’s great books! Here the select spirits wait to give us of their best. Erasmus is eloquent of this preserved delight. Says he: “I give myself up to the society of my friends, with whom I enjoy the most delightful intercourse. I turn aside with them into some quiet nook, far from the madding crowd, and either whisper gently into their ears, or give heed to their sweet words, communing with them as with my very soul. Is not this the purest of joys? . . . They speak when spoken to, when not addressed they keep silence. . . . They give steadiness to the successful, and comfort to the troubled, and are always the same.”

It is in this matter of quality in happiness, both of that which we enjoy and that which we communicate, that the chief problem lies. Here is the region of the noble and the ignoble choices. To be content with animal satisfactions is to take prehistoric man as our type and to deny ourselves fellowship with that diviner man that is to be. The men of the plain, lured by the “*Sirenum voces et Circæa pocula*,” who prefer Sodom and Gomorrah to climbing the mountain hard by, are people whose taste has been uneducated. The strange taste in joys! We suppose that Roman lady whom Juvenal describes, who to satisfy a momentary caprice ordered one of her slaves to be crucified, took a real pleasure in the scene, and that the Emperor Galerius “who never supped without blood” enjoyed his meal.

But the Power that is working in man, and ever lifting him forward, makes it impossible that he should rest in such levels as these. He knows too much. While he lurks in the lowlands he is disturbed by the far-off hail of the spiritual *élite* who, “*épris des hauteurs*,” have climbed the heights and discovered there a new human possession. It is the infinite betterness of this good that makes the lower pleasure by comparison to be evil. Man’s long training in the suppression of the lower for the sake of the higher has been really a lesson in the static and dynamic of happiness. He has found that temperance and chastity are the keys and passwords to new kingdoms.

Happiness is a secret of living, and so the world’s immeasurably greatest benefactors have been those who have caught that secret and imparted it to others. The Church’s communion at its purest has ever been the gathering together of souls who have a secret to impart. There is no joy comparable to that which thrills upon us from

contact with some highest soul. That was why men gave up all and followed Jesus. It was what led gay young knights to break off from court and camp and follow Bernard into the wilderness. How true to all this is that word of Peter the Venerable in his letter to Bernard! “If it were permitted to me, my dear Bernard, and if God willed it, I should prefer to live near you and be attached to you by an indissoluble tie, than to be first among mortals and to sit upon a throne; for must not one prefer to every living thing the happiness of living with you?” It is precisely the same experience which lives in that utterance of Gregory Thaumaturgus who, in a yet earlier age, found heaven in the company of Origen. Speaking of the first day of meeting him he says, “That day was in truth the first day to me, and the most precious of all days, if I may so speak, since then for the first time the true sun began to rise upon me.”

As we watch these high souls, shedding their exquisite gift upon others, the question inevitably arises, “Whence did they get it?” For certainly they did not themselves make what they have; they found it. The theme leads us here to the Unseen Personalities. Happiness for us is an affair of person and person. The soul cannot make its own music. The touch must come from another. And our topmost human personalities have gained their happiness from that touch. There is a philosophy to-day which dismisses personality from the heart of things, and will not allow man to speak of a Heavenly Father. It is a philosophy which to us misreads the ultimate facts of the soul. Our highest consciousness could only have been awakened by a Consciousness, our love and joy by a Love and Joy behind. That this Consciousness is beyond all our thought, granted. But it contains it all—and more.

In the highest spheres it is, we say, the personal that gives us our joy, and all along the line it is in this same personal that we find it. The best gift we can offer our friends is the best in ourselves. Is it not worth thinking of, the extent to which by our simple being and doing we can increase the world’s happiness? We can add definitely to this treasure every day. Scientists speak of matter and force in the universe as being a constant, the amount being never added to nor diminished. But herein the spiritual transcends the material. Here is a value that can incessantly grow. Whatever our station may be, our gifts or lack of them, we can, by willing it, add continuously to the sum of human joy. And this, after all, is the world’s best possession. As Westcott says, “The most precious things are the commonest, and they are to be gained (for others as well as for ourselves) not by large fortunes but by large souls.”

Perhaps our greatest debt is to those brave spirits who, striking the rock of hardest fate, have found living waters to gush out even from its flinty wall. When men can sing in a dungeon they advertise the essential soundness of the universe. Was there ever a better advertisement of it than Sir Thomas More, who in his “Utopia” talks of the “merry death” of good men, and illustrated his doctrine by his own cheerfulness, as of a child at play, when he himself went to the scaffold! But he had learned in a good school. The school of Christ has been a school of triumphant dying. “Our people die well,” said John Wesley. It is a good test of a philosophy of life. They learned their secret of happiness from Him who, faced by the cross, made in that tremendous hour a legacy to His disciples of His own peace and of His own overflowing joy.

XIII. Summits

How the memory lingers over the elect moments—we can count them on our fingers—when we have topped our mountain! The start an hour before midnight, the long grind through the darkness, the wrestle upwards on the rock face, the tramp over ice and snow, the skirting of the dread abyss, the danger, the enormous fatigue, have at last culminated in this! We are at the top of the world, with all its pomp beneath us. Where else such a sensation, a prospect so magnificent, such a feeling of ethereality, of remoteness from the commonplace, of vast exhilaration? But it is a fleeting moment. This utmost eminence is not a place to rest in. Its air is chill and the wind smites with a force unknown in the valleys. Half-an-hour of its pitiless exposure and we are glad to descend. And when, from far down we look back on our peak yonder, its awful loneliness, redoubled as it seems since our brief visit broke for a moment on its eternal silence, appals and haunts the spirit.

But the world could not get on without its heights. It is strange that the old dwellers of the Swiss valleys spoke of the mountains as “the evil country.” They did not know how much to these bare, forbidding realms, the world owes its fertility! Without them no streams to run, no vital air currents to circulate, no fresh soil to enrich the fields; the earth would be a stagnant marsh. The wealth of our planet as well as its beauty comes from its irregularities. It is the mountains that feed at once our bodies and our imagination. The system of upper and under which gives us our noblest prospects, is the one which enriches our fields, and fills our garners.

One cannot contemplate the grand mountain architecture of our planet without noting its close analogy with human life. Here, too, have we upper and under, the peaks and the valleys. From the dawn of time men have been discussing levelling processes, and have made the strangest experiments in the interests of equality. But humanity shows to-day, as conspicuously as in the time of the Pharaohs, its lowlands and its highlands, its greater lifting themselves over its lesser, and will doubtless continue to do so to the end of things. It would be easy to show how, in the social realm, just as much as in the continents with their Alps and Andes, the slopes, the elevations, the towering altitudes which there discover themselves are the sources not only of the variety and interest of the world’s life, but also largely of its fruitfulness and prosperity. We are not built for dead levels. We want an outlook upwards as well as downwards. Abolish the human distinctions to-morrow and they would be back again the day after. The names might be changed, but the things themselves would be there, for they are in human nature.

But these human summits form a singular study. The struggles to attain them, and the experience of those who get there, offer the mirthfullest of comedies, the mournfullest of tragedies. Every department of life, be it remembered, has its summit. There is somewhere, doubtless, the premier chimney-sweep, and the first among boot-blacks. We hear of men challenging supremacy in the swallowing of so much beefsteak at a sitting. There are tastes, it appears, in summits! Men reach them in the strangest way. Our mountain peaks have been thrown up, many of them, by gigantic convulsions, enormous pressures from beneath which have flung this crown of slate or granite to its topmost place. That, too, is how thrones and empires have been made. When a social eruption breaks out like that of the Commonwealth in

England, or of the Revolution in France, the boiling cauldron beneath vomits forth a leader, and we see a Cromwell, a Napoleon, the country's strongest man, shot up to the top. And what a position it is! All the winds meet here. On it the fiercest light beats. The peak has that diabolical peculiarity of being a point from which you cannot take a step without going down! And it is the loneliest spot in the world. A king has no friends. Said Tennyson of one of his last interviews with Queen Victoria: "She is so lonely on that height: it is terrible!" Dr. Arbuthnot remarked of Queen Anne at her end, "I believe sleep was never more welcome to a weary traveller than death was to her."

But there is a grace which mingles with every human condition, and the pain of the summit has its alleviations. One of the mercies connected with pre-eminence is that no man possesses it entire and complete. There is, luckily for him, always a valley in which to retire, the valley, that is, of his various inferiorities. He, too, who looks down on so much, has the comfort of looking up. We step off our own little line of things, and find that outside it we are nobodies. And to an honest soul there is no healthier realisation. A man has been elected president of something or other, and cannot sleep at nights for thinking of his dignity. Let him for his comfort look round a little. He may soon persuade himself that his celebrity is not formidable. He has no need to ask whether he can paint like Sargent, or sing with Patti, or bowl like Rhodes, or play like Joachim, or draw a cheque with Rothschild. He may walk down Fleet Street, and discover that every single man he meets can do a dozen things better than he can. Is it making shoes, or fitting a coat, or grooming a horse, or thatching a hayrick? These unnoted who crowd the road, in their department are as far above him as Matterhorn is above Zermatt. It is by this mixture in the same man, of high and low, that the world is kept sane. The stage "strong man" knows that the weak figure of five feet six before him has a lineage from the Conquest, or is a giant of science, and that it will accordingly be ridiculous to vaunt too much his mere muscle before him. The weak "intellectual" on the other hand, knows that, in comparison with a Sandow, he does not hold all the points, and is modest accordingly.

We shall not, if we are wise, ever give ourselves to summit-hunting as a profession. The great men find themselves there while seeking another thing, and without suspecting whither their path was leading. They hold the position when reached, as a post where God has stationed them, to guard as best they may till the appointed time. In this connection Bishop Creighton has a striking passage concerning the great monk-Popes of mediævalism. Speaking of Hildebrand, who became afterwards Gregory VII., he says: "He knew well that only that monk will help to subjugate the world who shuns it and strives to free himself from it. Renunciation of the world in the service of a world-ruling Church, such is the amazing problem that Gregory solved for the next century and a-half." It was a saying of Cromwell, born doubtless out of his own experience, that "the men who go farthest are those who know not where they are going." They move to their destiny pressed by a divine obsession. "*Ich kann nicht anders*," Luther's great word at Worms, is their common note.

Lower men, in their foolish envy, often forget how much of this pre-eminence is a martyrdom. The social height is as windy and exposed as the Alpine one. There are great sensations there, but the occupants long unspeakably at times for the safe shelter and the homely comfort of the valley below. And, as a mere matter of enjoyment, to look up to a height above is so vastly preferable to the perpetual look from above downwards! To lose one's faculty of admiring, of awe and reverence in presence of something greater than ourselves, is indeed an impoverishment. Aristotle

paints his “magnanimous man” as “not apt to admire, for nothing is great to him.” He has our sincere pity. Ruskin has a healthier view when he declares that people living in a modest house who enjoy and admire Warwick Castle are so much better off than he who, living in Warwick Castle, has nothing to admire!

One of the strangest things in history has been the blindness of men to the real altitudes. A dirt heap immediately in front will shut an Alp from our view. One writhes in thinking of the way the great souls have been treated. Think of a sublime Mozart, with that immortal music in him, visiting a Duchess de Chabot (who remembers *her* now?), who keeps him waiting in a cold room till his fingers are frozen, then bids him play, while she and her company are loudly talking all the time! An Archbishop of Salzburg takes this Mozart in his retinue and lets him dine with his cooks. When this genius dies he is put with others in a common grave, nobody to this hour knows exactly where. A Palestrina, also, whose ethereal heavenly strain reveals to us to-day the exquisite texture of his soul, fares exactly the same. His patrons treat and pay him as they do their cooks and footmen. Odd world, which lets Homer go begging, claps Bunyan in gaol, and pays its jockeys ten thousand a year! Perhaps the strangest part of it all is that the men themselves on summits are often unaware of the fact, and are looking out all the time on some other height which they conceive it is their proper destiny to climb. Cæsar seeks to be known as a great engineer rather than as a great captain. When Voltaire visits Congreve the dramatist poses as a country gentleman and disparages his literary work. “Had I not heard of you as a writer,” is the Frenchman’s retort, “I should certainly not have visited you as a squire.” We have a Goethe priding himself, not on his “Faust,” but on his dabblings in science, and a Scott making everything of Abbotsford and nothing of “Waverley.” We, to-day, can readjust these values. We know our immortals, and what work it was that made them immortal.

In this talk on summits we have left a thousand things untouched. What a world of ideas, for instance, is suggested by that saying of Le Play: “*La verité etant un sommet, tout chemin qui monte y conduit*” (“Truth being a summit every road that mounts leads towards it”). Yes, truly! Amid all our present confusions we have this for reassurance. The road on this side the mountain strikes exactly the opposite direction from the road on that. But they meet at the top. To-day science may seem to lead here, and religion there. Great is the clamour of the contending hosts. But let each follow its light and move upwards. At the summit waits the ultimate truth with its great reconciliation.

There are summits, too, of experience, coming to all of us in our separate lives. What stories the world holds, could we reach them, of men’s greatest joy, deepest grief, vastest realisation! But the grandest summit humanity knows is Pisgah, whence it gets its view of the Promised Land. The view changes with every generation. But ever that mountain rises in the midst, and from its height the prophets get their vision. Hid in mists, shrouded often in utter darkness, yet always gleaming again through its obscurations, shines there upon man, as his guide and inspiration, the mystic, celestial light of the City of God.

XIV. The Ethics of Desire

Amid the myriad subtle movements which belong to the springtime, the subtlest and deepest is that of the awakening of desire. In the commonest minds and in the highest there is felt at this time mysterious yearnings, stirrings of the blood, wild impulses towards one knows not what. It is a universal experience, which has been recognised everywhere in literature. Tennyson's line immediately comes to mind:

In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished dove;
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Pierre Loti, in his "Roman d'un Spahi," makes this a theme of realistic description. Amiel, in his *Journal Intime*, takes note of the fact in his own way. Speaking of the springtime, he says: "Il fait tressaillir le moine dans l'ombre de son couvent, la vierge derriere les rideaux de sa chambrette." It is the time, in Clough's vivid words:

To feel the sap of existence
Circulate up through their roots from the far-away centre of all things,
Circulate up from the depths to the bud on the twig that is topmost.

And so it is that spring presents us with one of the most formidable of the Sphinx riddles of life—a riddle presented to us all, with answer demanded under penalties. What is the function of desire in the economy of existence; what place shall we accord it in our thought and action; is it a blessing or a curse; should we seek for its annihilation or its fruition? These are the questions that have been asked for ages, and they are being raised to-day as though the theme were still new. When we think of the wild confusion of answers we are reminded of the remark about the Sorbonne. "This," a visitor was told, "is the hall where the Doctors of Divinity have disputed for five hundred years." "Indeed!" was the reply, "and pray what have they settled?"

Amid the bewilderment of response there seems one clear dividing line. In this matter the East has been against the West. It is most striking to note the almost unanimity with which the philosophers of the early Orient have taken their stand against the whole range of human impulse which we know as desire. To them it is the soul's enemy, to be fought to the death. Says the Bhagavad Gita: "Know that it is the enemy lust or passion, offspring of a carnal principle, insatiable and full of sin, by which this world is covered as the flame by the smoke, as the mirror by rust." This, indeed, is the keynote of the whole Vedanta philosophy, which regards the visible world as merely phenomenal, and says the only way in which we can gain reality is by surrendering all that appeals to the outward. And Buddhism joins here with Brahmanism. With Gautama the aim of existence was the extinction of desire. The human progression, through a succession of births, was towards a Nirvana of divine indifference. By the amount of a man's desire could be measured his distance from true blessedness. Only as that fire died out could he reach his peace.

It was this tradition of the "immemorial East" which, flowing into the early Church, produced there the asceticism of the anchorites and hermits of the Libyan desert, and which has been present sporadically throughout Catholicism ever since. It is represented by that saying of St. John of the Cross, that whatever seemed pleasant to the senses was to be by the saint instantly turned away from, while everything repugnant was to be embraced. The monastic vows and the celibacy of the priesthood

are forms of it. We see it in the physical duress to which a Bernard and a St. Francis subjected themselves; and in the quaint word of a Brother Juniper, one of the early Franciscans: “When carnal desires come, I occupy myself in holy meditations and holy desires, and so when carnal suggestion knocks at the heart I answer, ‘Begone, for the house is already full, and can hold no more guests.’ ”

But this method of settling the great question, while continually proposed by the East to the West, has never found any great acceptance there. Heroic spirits have felt its fascinations, but not the commonalty. The ecclesiastical imposition of asceticism has proved a disastrous failure. Its effect on morals is shown by the revelations of the Black Book of the English monasteries after Thomas Cromwell’s visitation, and by the declaration of Zwingli, who, speaking of his own experience of the Catholic priesthood, says that “scarce one in a thousand was chaste.” The Renaissance was, amongst other things, a huge revolt of the flesh, in which literature and art joined hands. Rabelais with his pen, and Rubens and Titian with the brush, delivered to the world an apologia of the passions. The note they struck has been reverberating ever since. It fills the world to-day. Our modern “Decadents” are every whit as voluptuous as the “Parnasse Satyrique,” and a good deal more unwholesome. Nothing is more discouraging than the present cult of this diseased literature, from the far north to the uttermost south of the Continent. Norway has a whole group of lady novelists whose theme is the grossest sexualism, while Germany, catching the disease from France, gives us, in her Schnitzlers and Dörmanns, poets whose stock-in-trade is a ghastly combination of pessimism and erotic dunghilldom. Can anything be imagined more despicable as a view of life than this from the last named?

Doch einer Laune will ich noch genügen,
Eh’ ich verlasse diesen alten Bau:
Ich will mich noch an einer hübschen Frau
• • • • • •
Beiläufig zehn Minuten lang vergnügen.

The gist of which is that despairing of life he will end it, but before leaving the world will have yet one more bout of voluptuous pleasure. It is Tibullus and Anacreon over again. Nietzsche has put this stuff for us into a philosophy, in which he declares all restraint to be a sin against nature, and bids us make war against all the old ideals, against all that is hostile to the senses and the primary instincts.

But the question remains, Is there no middle term between the Eastern verdict on desire and this mad exploitation of it? Either of them seems a dehumanising of ourselves, a cutting off, at one end or the other, of some great and seemingly integral portion of our proper life. That pleasurable sensation, and the desire for it, within limits, is not in itself an evil, is nowhere, to our knowledge, better put than by Sir Thomas More in his “Utopia”: “For a joyful life—that is, a pleasant life—is either evil, and if it be so, then thou shouldest not only help no man thereto, but rather, as much as in thee lieth, withdraw all men from it as noisome and hurtful; or else, if thou not only mayest but also of duty bound ought to procure it to others, then why not chiefly to thyself?” In other words, the very precept to give bread to the hungry, viewed in all its aspects, is an argument which overthrows asceticism.

Let us assure ourselves on this point. Desire is no mistake of the human constitution. It is nature’s motor power. Mysterious, elemental, of all forces within us the most formidable, yet there as part of the good of human life. It is the explosive, the dynamite in our economy, and, like dynamite, needing to be housed with care, and

handled with utmost discretion. It cannot be safely used alone. Thus taken it is brutal and not human. It can only be healthily part of ourselves as a combination with all highest things that are within us.

Indeed, in the new, vaster view of life that is opening upon us to-day, we are beginning to see what the ancients never did, the bridge across the great antithesis; or, better, we are discovering there is no antithesis. There is here no irreconcilable duality, but rather a unity. For all desire is substantially one. It is a function of our highest life as well as of our lowest. To declaim against desire is to kick down the ladder by which we have ascended. There is subtlest wisdom in the saying of Spinoza that "the human passions are not defects. . . . We have not so much an appetite for what is good, as that we deem a thing good because we have for it an appetite."

What constitutes the real human advance here is not the Buddhistic notion of the elimination of desire, but the Christian one of its elevation and purifying, of the direction of it upon ever nobler objects. In this evolution what once was a fiery ungoverned impulse becomes reined and curbed, and made to draw in the harness of reason, conscience and the spiritual affections. It is one of the beautiful features of the Divine education of our race that in this way the powers of the animal nature are duplicated in the higher, and work there in a sublimated form. Man, beginning thus as raw material, ends as a kind of radium, the glorious force which, drawing into itself the subtlest essence of all manner of lower substances, lifts it to use on an immeasurably loftier plane. The passions under this discipline become the instruments of the soul. The primal heats, caught up and deftly combined, form the summer temperature of its higher chambers.

But the one imperative note which comes from a study of this kind, and which we so specially need to-day, is that in a true human life the passions may never be in any other than a subordinate place. Desire, in its lower forms, may not be at the helm. Whenever the reins are snatched by it from the hands of conscience and the higher affections we have the "carnal mind which is death." Passion, we repeat, is an explosive, and in a properly safeguarded community explosives are isolated, with a waterfilled moat around them. In the life of to-day, specially of the cities, these explosives are being far too freely handled. The gunpowder lies in all directions, exposed on the highways, and there are people, meanwhile, who make it their business to fling about lighted matches. Things are better with us in these matters than on the Continent, but there is in our midst a "literature," so called, being produced to-day, with huge profits to authors and publishers, which is a disgrace to all concerned. Those who aim at the best in life will leave this ordure alone. They cannot afford to link themselves with the down-drawing forces. They will desire with their soul rather than with their body. To do otherwise is to turn life's feast, meant to be a banquet of immortals, into an orgie from which there is ever a ghastly awakening.

XV. The Larger Reference

In that child nature, the study of which of late years has become so supreme an interest to both science and philosophy, there is perhaps nothing more instructive than its attitude in presence of a disappointment. Our youngster has perhaps broken or lost his toy, and is in consequence entirely miserable. As we contemplate him we think of all the blessings he is possessed of. He is at the beginning, with all life before him. He is entirely healthy, with every limb and every organ perfect. He is, we will say, the member of a prosperous home, the object of father and mother love, and with the best prospects for his future career. He belongs to a free country, to a foremost race, is an intelligent soul in a boundless universe. One could, indeed, go on without end enumerating these advantages. But they are all lost on our youngster. He has broken his penny trumpet, and is in despair. His whole being is concentrated on that one point. There is everything else for him, if only he could see it, but he does not see it. His happiness for the time is wrecked, and for lack of his penny trumpet. And yet, as we can see, that is not his actual need. His real want is a larger reference.

When from the child we come to the study of ourselves, we discover how close our kinship is in this matter. There is no point in which we have more need of education than in this of the larger reference. We are continually repeating the tragedy of the boy and his penny trumpet. As we walk along the street how many downcast faces we encounter! How few that reflect the genius of the morning! What are these people brooding? Ten to one it is an affair of penny trumpets. There has been here a quarrel between mistress and maid; there a set-back in business; so-and-so has missed a society introduction; there is the remembrance of a snub, or the presence of a finger-ache;—and the whole horizon is clouded. It would be an immense statistical operation to calculate how much of average lives are spent in glooms created by these single circumstances that are allowed to occupy the foreground. With many poor wretches there is scarcely an emergence from them. They plunge from one into another. Their inner climate is of Newfoundland, a perpetual fog.

We hardly realise how much of the art of living is contained in our attitude on this one point. The annoying circumstance, in one or other of its innumerable forms, is part of the daily programme, and the whole question is, what are we going to do with it? Shall this be the dominant feature in our consciousness to-day? Are we then so small that this tiny thing must overshadow us? A moment's resolute thinking, still more of resolute willing, and we laugh at the Liliputian tyranny. We have only to set it against our whole relation to life to discover its insignificant proportions. I was disappointed yesterday; or some one insulted me; or I was overlooked in the recent distribution of favours. What then? To-day the sun is shining; I have my sight and hearing; my limbs swing freely; the air of the spring morning, the song of the lark, the rhythm and beauty of the universe are all for me; all the grounds of my spiritual hopes are here; there is no slump in these values. The disappointment! It is the sum of one farthing struck off my immense account with life, which it would be absurd even to include in the reckoning. Shall these items in the pence column stop me from being joyous to-day? It is one of the days of my life. It would be too great a folly to disparage it, with all its immense wealth of being and doing, because a fly buzzed in my ear.

The man who uses habitually the larger reference will find in it, we say, a great daily deliverance. But two things are required to its exercise. One is the sense in him of the higher interests, and the other a resolute inward effort in relation to them. The penny trumpet tyranny establishes itself because the thing is there, visibly before our eyes. The subjects of the larger reference, on the contrary, are not so immediately present. They have to be summoned into the consciousness by an effort of the will. The whole secret here is in the going forth of the inner spirit to meet life and conquer it; nay, rather to create it. For, as Madame Swetchine says, life is everywhere and always what we put into it.

It is supremely interesting to note how the great souls, in the different ways, have won their victory by the larger reference. They have not all been equally favoured in the width of the outlook to which they could attach themselves. The Stoics found, in their relation to the universe, ground for mental serenity, if not for any great hope. Amiel is continually harping on the same string. In face of daily disappointments his word ever is, "*Rentrer dans l'ordre, accepter, se soumettre, et faire ce qu'on peut*." We read of George Eliot that as life advanced her attitude was more and more that of simple resignation. It was the Stoic frame. Often in the men of action we discern an outlook, limited in itself, but nobly detached from their immediate personal fortunes. When Wolfe, shot in the breast, lay dying at the Heights of Abraham, he heard an officer cry, "They run; I protest they run." "Who?" "The French." "Then," he murmured, "I die happy."

Indeed, one could find abundant examples of men whose outlook was not what, in the Christian sense, would be called spiritual, who nevertheless refused to take their view of life from its immediate circumstances. Anaxarchus crying out while being beaten to death, "Beat on at the case of Anaxarchus; no stroke falls on Anaxarchus himself," was undoubtedly a disciple of the wider reference. It has been the fashion of late to decry other-worldliness, but, despite extravagances here and there, it has a noble tradition as the protest of human nature against a provincialism of outlook. When the Indian Bhagavad Gita bids a man depend on the inner treasure of the mind, "which having obtained he respecteth no other acquisition so great as it; in which depending he is not moved by the severest pain," we realise what a great note has been struck. Those early Eastern thinkers, "dreaming on things to come," refused, in the name of the soul within them, to estimate life—its wealth and its happiness—in terms of the seen and temporal.

It is precisely here that modern materialism, as expounded by the Haeckels and the Büchners, has struck so false a note. They have too limited a reference. They take the backward look of life. They interpret things by their past. They seek for their secret in origins and primitive forms. But no one who had not seen an oak could guess the oak from an acorn. Yet that were as wise a procedure as to construct the issues and possibilities of religion from early fetichism and ghost-worship! The question here is not what we have come from, but what we may grow to. It is not in the animalisms and barbarisms of the past, but in the aspirations, instincts and prophet glimpses that now play through the loftiest part of us that the secret of human destiny is to be sought. It is, as Goethe was fond of saying, our unexpressed that is the highest part of us; our wishes and presentiments are the prophets of what is to be. The world which the materialists picture is a world which ignores that latest emerged in us, the whole sphere and action of the religious affections. Man's sense of awe, of veneration, of faith, of heavenly love, of inner ecstasy in presence of the unseen, forms the most essential part of him, and its entire sphere of action requires a reference that the

materialist's world is unable to furnish. That is a crawler's world offered to beings who are furnished with wings.

It is from considerations of this kind that we learn to appreciate the transcendentalism of the Gospel. The New Testament is the book of the larger reference. Its persistent message is that man has a lodgment and a stake elsewhere than in the sphere of the senses. It educates man out of his parochialism, and shows him his citizenship in a roomier universe. To Voltaire's question, which has been the question of humanity, "*Que suis-je, où suis-je, où vais je, et d'où suis-je tiré*," it gives the highest of answers. "We come from God and we go to God." And there is no other answer that so fills the empty space in the human soul. The Christian teaching and example in all ages has been an application of the larger reference. It was to this Augustine appealed when, with the Roman world falling in pieces around him, and the barbarian hordes battering the walls of his episcopal city, he wrote his "City of God." It was this which made St. Bernard confident that nothing could hurt him except himself. It was this larger outlook that made the Anchoress Julian, that sweet soul of the fourteenth century, utter the prophetic word, "Our soul may never have rest in things that are beneath itself." The materialism which seeks, in its view of life, to ignore this phase of human thought and feeling, is like an astronomy that would do without the stars.

Yet religion itself, the sphere of the wider outlook, needs, in a multitude of its professors, an enlargement of the reference. Most of the outside criticism of the Church has been a deserved criticism. Religion has been cowardly where it should have been brave, and its utterances sectarian where it should have been universal. When shall we have enlarged our religious thought until, with Schleiermacher, we can declare it to mean "the seeking and finding of the Universal Being in all that lives and moves, in all becoming and change, in all action and suffering; the having and knowing in immediate feeling, of life itself as the infinite and eternal life"? When shall we have reached the courage of Milton, and hold with him that "truth is strong next to the Almighty; she needs no policies or stratagems or licensings to make her victorious. These are the shifts and the defences that error uses against her power"?

But, after all, the final lesson of this theme is, as we began by saying, in its application to our personal life. We cannot afford that any one of our brief days shall be less than a triumph. And that result can only be achieved by an incessant import of the great into the little. The moment's affairs must be set ever against the greater background. There is a discipline here which in the end will make us ashamed of our joylessness.

Wo sind die Sorge nun und Noth
Die mich noch gestern wollt' erschaffen?
Ich schäm mich dess im Morgen-roth.

XVI. The World's Memory

The world's memory is generally taken to be a bad one. Cicero tells a good story against himself of how, after a mission to a distant province, where he had accomplished what he considered to be great things, he returned to the capital, thinking he would find everybody talking of him, to discover that no one even appeared to know that he had been absent. When disposed to be vain we may profitably ask ourselves for how long we should probably be talked of if we disappeared to-morrow. What space in the public mind is occupied at this moment by the personalities of the first rank who passed away a year ago? One might as well ask with the old French poet, "But where are the snows of yesteryear?" If this is the fate of the greatest, what of the lesser? We gain our little eminences, accomplish some small popularisings here and there, make a momentary stir. Then we drop out; the tide of new life sweeps over the spot we stood on, and the world goes its way as though we had never been.

There are many to whom this view represents the entire reality. So broken and spiritless are they that they find even their greatest consolation in the coming nothingness. Here, in the final negation of thought and life, they will take

Their fill of deep and liquid rest,
Forgetful of all ill.

It was thus that a great Roman comforted his friend on the death of his daughter: "Why bemoan the death of a girl when she and all of us together, with cities and empires, are passing down the throat of everlasting oblivion?" To some moderns it is not cities and empires only, but worlds and systems that are rushing to this universal *néant*. In his "Foundations of Belief" Mr. Balfour thus eloquently states their dismal conclusion: "After a period, long compared with the individual life, but short indeed compared with the dimensions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed, and the earth, tideless and inert, will no longer tolerate the race which has for a moment disturbed its solitude. . . . The uneasy consciousness which in this obscure corner has for a brief space broken the contented silence of the universe will be at rest."

But is this, after all, the true and final view of things? It is the one, undoubtedly, that first strikes the senses—one that in certain moods makes an almost irresistible appeal. But the moment we begin to investigate we begin to suspect its validity, and before we are far on in the process we are convinced that it is illusion. Whether we like it or not, this is not the way the universe is built; the background and end of conscious life is, at least, something other than oblivion. We alter our standpoint to discover for the first thing that the world, instead of having a short memory, has a very long one. It seems, indeed, to forget nothing. The whole of its apparatus would appear to be constructed with a view not merely to produce, but always to reproduce. It repeats its performances, lets nothing slip again that has once come to birth. For memory, be it remembered, is not an affair of brains only. Its essential, the element of repetition and reproduction, is wrought into the very structure of things. The light rays by which the original spectators at Whitehall saw the execution of Charles I. two and a-half centuries ago are still travelling, charged with their vision of the tragedy,

and might conceivably at this moment be reproducing it on the retina of beings at the other end of the universe as a present fact. The shower of rain of countless ages ago that indented the shore with its falling drops is there recorded for our geologist, who studies to-day his block of newly-unearthed sandstone.

When we come to the sphere of living beings we realise afresh with what tenacity and with what accuracy the world remembers. Evolution acts like a university professor who recapitulates always the earlier lessons before going on to the next theme. The science of embryology is, for instance, one long, marvellous story of world-memory. The unborn child, in its progress from the earliest germ cell to the completed form, repeats successively all the forms of animal existence—protozoon, fish, reptile, mammal—through which organic existence has worked its onward way from earliest beginning to its crown in humanity. It is not enough, we see, that the story should once have been lived. It must be incessantly repeated. The very make of things is, in fact, a provision for memory. When a volition stirs the grey matter of a brain it creates a channel of its own there. The fact that the channel, or beginnings of one, is there makes it easier for the next nerve-current to run along it. That is the physical side of what, on the inner and mental side, we call the forming of a habit. Instinct seems to be nothing else than this bodily memory. Into the nerve system of bird and beast the channels have been dug deep by far-off generations of ancestors, until what was once a volition is now an involuntary movement. The young bird does what the old bird did before it, because all the roads along which its nerve force will flow are already cut for it deep into the system.

This marvellous world-memory, which most of us have hardly thought of as memory, repeats itself still more wonderfully when we come within the sphere of human life. Our muscular and nervous systems are one vast remembrancer. When our consciousness entirely forgets, they recollect for us. How often do we wash and dress ourselves in the morning, with our thoughts entirely away from the process! But our muscles do not forget. They pass from one step to the next, taking each detail in its proper order. When we walk to our business it is the same. In the course of the day we shall have made uncounted thousands of movements, and without a mistake, because each nerve and tendon, each fibre and brain-cell has learned its lesson and can repeat it without consulting us.

So much for the material and physical side. Had we this only to argue from, it would still appear that the world tended to something other than nothingness; that it worked not only to produce, but to preserve and reproduce, its results. But the argument moves with accumulating force when we step from the world without to the world within. It is the mind-stuff, the things that relate to personality that, as we began by saying, seem most perishable. But that is not really so. Not a single element of any man's thought or deed is ever lost or forgotten. It goes, with all its mixture of quality, to vivify or burden the soul-atmosphere which the future has to breathe. It will work itself into the instincts and dispositions of every coming generation. If Nature seems careless of our name she preserves our fact. We are living by the unknowns whose work she treasures. Nobody knows who wrote the "Theologia Germanica," but it helped no whit the less to make Luther and the Reformation. Our world is a haunted world. As we lay our ear to the din of the present we find its undertone to be the immeasurable murmur of the past.

But a true study of memory takes us far deeper than this. For it links us not only with the remotest time, but with that which is beyond time altogether. For the soul's real life, the life of which it becomes conscious when it awakes to its actual self, is

primarily a memory, a memory of its home and origin. There is a side of us turned away from the world, even as that face of the moon which no one has seen from the world's beginning. It is the side of our transcendental relations; that outlook upon the infinite of which Mrs. Browning sings:

. . . I had not so far left the coasts of life
As not to hear that murmur of the outer infinite
Which unweaned babies smile at in their sleep,
When wondered at for smiling.

There is a part both of our thought and our feeling which can only be explained by this transcendental memory, the soul's consciousness of our spiritual origin. It is thus, and thus only, that we can understand the mind's rapture at the perception of truth; thus only that the emotions produced by great deeds or great music become possible. How could any mere combination of sounds cause these exquisite mental results? These melodies are a memory. Their ravishment lies in the appeal they make to something that is at once in and back of the mind. In these tranced moments it sees its relation to a harmony that was before the world's.

For a similar reason we can speak of religion itself as, in its essence, a memory. That seems a very daring statement of Augustine's in his "Retractations": "That which is now called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and, in fact, was with the human race from the beginning." And yet it is plain what he means. It is the faith of Origen and the Greek fathers that the Logos, "the light that lighteth every man," was in the world from the first, guiding man upward from point to point of his spiritual career. Mr. Andrew Lang is one of many researchers who to-day declare that the savage tribes of every part of the world give evidence that behind their often horrible and cruel superstitions lie the fragments of an original belief in a Deity wholly beneficent. The Christ whose presence made holy the fields of Galilee spoke to the human memory when he declared the heavenly kingdom, the Divine fatherhood and the soul's destiny. The soul leaped at the message because it found in it an echo of the Primal Voice.

In the Apocalyptic Vision of the Last Things we read that "the books were opened . . . and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books." That is a parable which science, as we have just been reading it, seems to endorse. The world is itself a great book, written within and without, carrying in itself the whole record of life. It is a faithful history. No detail in it has been missed. And the world history carries, of necessity, the world-judgment. Evolution, with its small beginnings and its steady movement, is the surest witness to great coming consummations. And the world-system which has been so careful of deeds will not, let us be sure, be less careful of the persons who did them. Its whole method, as we have seen, is to hold what it has once produced. It is not likely that personality, the greatest of its results, should be the one exception to that rule.

It is well to be on good terms with memory. We are shaping it now into an angel of inspiration, or into a worm that dies not. A good memory is not necessarily the retentive one. That might easily turn out the worst of all. It is the one whose tablet bears the record of the soul's conflict and victory. For, as Maeterlinck has it, "There is one thing that can never turn into suffering, and that is the good we have done."

XVII. Society and Solitude

We are the product of both, and it would be difficult to say which has had most to do with the making of us. At first, and for a good way on in life, we are of the general lump, and barely distinguishable from it. Infants are some time before they realise their own separateness. According to Hölfding children, toward the end of their second year, have been seen to offer a biscuit to their own foot, as if they thought it an independent being. Indeed, where we begin, and where we end, both in body and soul, is a question which may puzzle philosophers as well as children. Our view of what we owe to society should be helped by a glance backward. Have we ever thought of the number of people in the past who contributed to our existence? To trace back our ancestors, collateral and successive, to the Conquest would be to wrestle with numbers beyond computation. What a vision, could it be revealed to us, this army of our unknown forebears, this innumerable host of separate lives each with its human story, that have gone to the making of you and me! And we shall stand related in the same bewildering position to generations to come. As Burke somewhere puts it: "Society is a partnership, not only between those who are living, but between those who are living and those who are dead, and those who are to be born."

A thousand things link us, we say, to the mass. There is already among us, apart from theory, an enormous Communism. We are talkers, and even thinkers, by virtue of a language which is equally the property of my neighbour and myself. It is the feeder of our most secret life, and yet derives all its use and power from the fact that it dwells, on the same terms, in a million minds beside our own. It is society, the community, that has imposed on us our daily habits. Rousseau puts the matter in his forcible way when he says: "As soon as he is born man is wrapped in swaddling clothes; when he is dead he is sewed up in a shroud. All his life long he is pinioned by laws, manners and customs, decorums and professional obligations." We most of us get our religion in this way. We are Hindoos, Christians or Mohammedans according to the latitude in which we were born. Nine-tenths of us seem to be tribal. And we catch the contagions of the tribe. We take immense precautions against physical infections, but our mental surface is exposed at every hour to the subtler ones which incessantly flash through the human crowd. The day's politics, its art enthusiasms, its literary and ecclesiastical controversies are all epidemics. We receive them and pass them on because we are wedged in the throng and cannot escape its contacts. Take him where you will, at his work or his play, in his greatness or his littleness, man is inevitably social. He is knit to the community as closely as the corpuscles of his blood are knit to the structure of his body.

Yet, when all this is said, man remains the great solitary. He is so both collectively and individually. Humanity, as a whole, is surely the most lonely of created things. Whether we look up or look down we seem alone. An immeasurable gulf separates us from the animal forms that share the planet with us; but this is nothing to the void that opens above. Through all the ages man has been on his watch-tower, straining eye and ear upward for some sign that should be given him out of that immensity. But the universe keeps its secret. Man hears no voice but his own. Are there, then, no relatives of his yonder? Must he in this resplendent creation hear for ever nothing beyond the sound of his own footsteps? Where man, weary of his long vigil, falls back

upon this view, his spiritual fortunes reach their nadir. There seem recurrent periods in history when that awful chill smites the soul. It was so in the later days of the Roman republic, when despair of any high relationship amid the world's turned men inward and downward to their lowest self as the only resource. What an awful cry is this of Propertius!

Dum nos fata sinunt, oculos satiemus amore:
Nox tibi longa venit, nec reditura dies

("While the fates permit, let us satiate our eyes with lust; for thee the long night is coming, to which there shall be no returning day.") There is a precisely similar despair abroad in Europe to-day, with similar moral results.

But that is not and can never be a permanent attitude with man. It is a temporary faintness which at times seizes this star-led traveller, as, on his incessant way upwards, he breaks upon the new, awesome prospects and breathes the too-rarified air. By-and-by he takes heart again and still moves on. For despite the dogged silence outside, he discerns movements in his own soul, events in his history, appearances amongst his kind, which assure him of an unseen kinship somewhere in those upper spheres. His utmost desert has a habit of blossoming suddenly as the rose. Hard by his Slough of Despond stands always his Delectable Mountain. On the wail of a Propertius comes the advent of a Christ. And what has happened before will happen again. The twentieth century, as the first, may look for its Avatar when the upper solitudes shall again be peopled, and Divine voices heard. Again men will say, with Pascal's entire conviction: *Voila ce que c'est que la foi parfaite: Dieu sensible au cœur*.

Herein do we discern the whole mystery of man the solitary. It is along this desert path, so hard and terrible, so bewildering in its silence, that he comes to the possession of himself. For, mark, we have two solitudes. We are part of a lonely humanity, but we are also ourselves alone. Spite of our utmost oneness with society, speaking its language, breathing its thought-atmosphere, under sway of its custom, moulded by it as clay by the potter, we nevertheless, in its very midst and centre, find ourselves separate and apart. Society presses us on every side, but it is a surface pressure, and beneath there are unfathomed depths. Language often conceals our thought, it never fully expresses it. When I say, "I am well!" "I am happy!" what have I told? My neighbour hears, and attaches some meaning to the words, but the actuality of consciousness they stand for is so far beyond him! Surrounded by our nearest and our dearest, we live alone, think alone, feel alone, and will die alone.

This we say is the mystery of man the solitary, and there should surely be some solution of it. We refuse to believe that it is either a sordid or a tragic one. In every age exultant souls have testified to the contrary. The isolation, they discover, is an insulation, and that for the transmission of a message. We are shut off from everything else that we may hear it. The message is the whisper of a hidden way. The voicelessness of the material universe means that man has to look elsewhere for his spiritual society. The path heavenward lies not along these tracks, but through states of the soul. "The kingdom of God is within you." When a man understands the meaning of faith, of love, of sacrifice, of prayer, he ceases to feel lonely. The upper spaces become populated. He has discovered his kindred.

His kindred, and it is a noble one. The unseen society which gathers round seekers of this order is august. There is, to begin with, a companionship which is not even personal, but is nevertheless full of all strength and upholding. Leigh Hunt, speaking

of the later days of Napoleon, says, “no great principle stood by him.” It is a revealing word. Alas for the man who has lost the society of the great principles! It is precisely their fellowship which nourishes the hero-souls. Exposed to the scoffs of baser men, these elect ones find here an all-sufficing compensation:

One self-approving hour whole years outweighs
Of stupid starers and of loud huzzas,
And more true joy Marcellus exiled feels
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.

But man cannot keep habitually in this region without realising sooner or later that to have contact with great principles means to have contact with something that is yet higher behind. Socrates felt inspired with his daimon; Cicero taught the inspiration of all great and good men. In the New Testament all this flames into the splendid truth of the witnessing in the human spirit of the Spirit of God.

In proportion as we tread this way shall we be less and less afraid of what men call solitude. It is one of the great tests of a man to note how he endures his own company. Said Pascal: “The man who lives only for himself hates nothing so much as being alone with himself.” On the other hand, it is precisely in solitude that the disciplined soul finds the best company. For there he discovers his truest self. In the crowd we have been a dozen different people; every fresh comer sees us in his own light. But as the compass needle, drawn hither and thither, by opposite influences, trembles back, when these are removed, to its mystic pointing to the Pole, so does an attuned nature, after the tossings of the throng, resume in solitude its attitude to the Infinite.

The great writers, the great thinkers must be alone. The prophets are ever men of the desert. It is among the mountains, aloof from his fellows, that the Elijah of to-day, as of centuries ago, hears the still small voice. In his Irish exile at lonely Kilcolman, Spenser sees the visions of the “Faërie Queen.” When cut off from his home, his friends, his city, a wanderer in Europe, Dante writes the poem “on which both heaven and earth had laid their hands.” The leader is alone because he is a leader. The mass who follow are not on the same plane of thinking or feeling as this pioneer who treads in front, with only the stars and the inner voices to guide him.

It is assuredly one of the great secrets of living to know how to be alone. On the man who has learned it the crowd, once so imperious and dominating, has ceased to impose. Its voices, whether of threatening or applause, interest and perhaps amuse, but never coerce him. He does his duty by his fellow, and feels all the weight of obligation which binds him to society. But his actions are no longer regulated by this cry or that. For the great moments, for the critical decisions he retires from the throng, that in silence he may hear the verdict of his inmost soul. He listens with awe and submission, for he has learned to recognise beneath that whisper a note august and central, which seems to him Divine.

XVIII. On Being Spiritual

Our age is busily occupied in revising the earlier moral and religious verdicts. It is conscious of having a word of its own to say upon matters which previous generations had regarded as finally settled. And in no direction is it more vividly aware of this than in the range of questions which are included in the word "spiritual." St. Paul's ringing word, "to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace," is one of those sentences that, once uttered, can never be forgotten. It has burned itself indelibly into the human consciousness. Instinctively men recognised that a great distinction had here been struck, a view opened upon a fundamental human reality. But what is it to be spiritual? The Pauline sentence has, in the intervening centuries, produced innumerable interpretations. To elucidate it all manner of experiments have been carried through, and to us, at this latest day, is given the supreme privilege of watching the results, and forming our judgment thereon.

This judgment, as it shapes itself in the mind, is, we discover, in many respects different from that of our fathers. For one thing our outlook is wider. Comparative research has put a final end to parochialism in religion. St. Paul was not the first to whom the revelation of the spiritual mind was made. To millions of our fellows it was known long before the Christian era. The old Indian philosophy, which regarded the world of sense as a fleeting shadow, and the invisible behind as the only reality, had, in its own way, taught this truth for ages. And as we turn the pages of the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," with its mystic formulæ and its vivid sense of the world to come, we realise how these earnest worshippers of six thousand years ago, with their eyes fixed upon the Unseen, had precisely that set and attitude of the soul which the apostle's word implies, and to which it appeals.

To get to the meaning of this word for our age we have, moreover, to work through and to set aside the strange misconceptions that have gathered round it. No word in our vocabulary has probably suffered more from misuse. Caricatures so grotesque and so repellent have been exhibited of the spiritual in character as at times to disgust the world with the whole idea, and to bring about appalling moral reactions. It has been regarded as synonymous with ignorance. Erasmus, in his indictment of the monks, declared that it was a sign of holiness among them not to be able to read. Men have earned the reputation, and still earn it, by the acceptance and glib utterance of certain doctrinal shibboleths, a procedure which has cost them no single mental strain, and no single inner or outer sacrifice. An appearance, a pose of the features, a style of dress, a tear in the voice, a nasal twang, have, in their day, been enough to win the title.

Men have persuaded themselves that they were spiritual on the strength of a certain persuasion, especially when accompanied by a capacity for ecstatic feeling. And this when permitting themselves the most extraordinary licence of action. Benvenuto Cellini, when shut up in the Castle of St. Angelo, comments with an angelic fervour and appreciation on the Pauline epistles; and when he is let out gives himself with an equal gusto to his amours and his murders. Sir John Hawkins, carrying a cargo of negro slaves stolen from Africa to sell in the Spanish Settlements, after escaping a storm, remarks: "But God would not suffer His elect to perish."

To be spiritual has been interpreted by others as involving a refusal of, and seclusion from, certain large sides of human life. Under this persuasion the early Anchorites fled to the desert; celibacy was regarded as the only way to perfectness; the arts and sciences were tabooed as godless secularities, and psalm-singing, supplication, and religious reading and meditation as the only saintly employments. Think of the waste of time of the people in monasteries repeating the Psalms year after year at Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones and Compline, as well as at Matins and Vespers, each day witnessing this same incessant stream of words. What good to God or man? How weary heaven must be, if earth is not, of this everlasting repetition! If this were the genuine spirituality, the world, with the best intentions, could certainly not afford to be spiritual at the price.

In this connection one's thoughts turn inevitably to Puritanism, amongst ourselves the progenitor of what is most influential in religion to-day. How stood Puritanism in its interpretation of the spiritual? Undoubtedly there was, in the intensity of its apprehension, a tendency to separatism and exclusiveness. Yet not so much among its highest representatives. Milton grasped the whole world of learning, and none of his age had a more exquisite perception of the beautiful. Colonel Hutchinson, purest and loftiest of characters, the portraiture of whom by his wife is one of the treasures of biography, is pictured for us there as fond of hawking, dancing and fence; and we have lovingly dwelt upon also "his hair of brown, very thick set in his youth, softer than the finest silk, curling with loose great rings at the end." The Puritan had no notion either of shutting himself up in monasteries or contenting himself with psalm-singing. As Green has it: "It was the Puritan who went forth to fight the Spaniard in France or in the Netherlands. It was the Puritan who burst into the Spanish Main and who singed Philip's beard at Cadiz."

Nevertheless, with the rank and file we discern a limitation of view and of practice, which, while meant to be spiritual, was not so, being in no sense founded on the Divine mind as we now discern it. The jests at the Roundhead of a Randolph, a Dryden, a Butler and a Cowley, were in some degree justified. The Puritan tendency in the seventeenth century was to see God only in one phase of things and only on one side of life. These men seem never to have realised that the unseen contained a sense of humour. The broad humanity of the Roman poet, "*humani nihil a me alienum puto*," was foreign to their mind. And the lesson of this narrowness is given us in the reaction that followed. We wonder immeasurably that the Restoration morals should have succeeded the Cromwellian age. How could such a change come, and so quickly?

Psychology gives us the answer. The parents had over-driven themselves; had used up in abnormal efforts their spiritual force, and so had little or none left for their children. It was here we have the solution of the otherwise amazing facts that the children of the Puritans stood aloof from Puritanism, that we read of Cromwell's sons having little pretension to religion; of Milton's nephews, brought up in his house, writing satires on Puritanism and publishing filthy songs; and of the daughters of great preachers figuring on the infamous stage of the Restoration. When man tries to run one part of his nature to the utter exclusion of the rest, the result, as ages of experiment should now have assured us, is never a success.

With all this experience behind us, what, then, is it to be spiritual? In brief, spirituality is two things—a perception and a performance. It is for one thing to realise God as everywhere in His world; to accept with reverent gladness every variety of its phenomena and every phase of its experience as a new manifestation of

Himself. The spiritual man is he who in a sunset on the Alps, or in a sonata of Beethoven, or a problem of mathematics; in the age-long drama of history, in the laughter of little children, in the events of his life, in the questions and answers of his experience, in his highest aspirations, sees everywhere, now the hiding and now the manifestation of that ultimate Reality, which his soul's voice tells him is Holiness and Love, and to be united with which is the one final craving and cry of his heart.

And with this perception comes a performance. Knowing the universe as spiritual, its law as holy, the spiritual man seeks as his dearest aim, to conform his action and character to that law. The law is exceeding broad. All knowledge, all science, all skill are included in it. A Mozart's perfection in music is of affinity with the perfection that is spiritual. All hold of the one principle. And so the spiritual man is the broadest and not the narrowest of his fellows. He seeks the best in everything, for the best is God.

A topic like this illustrates, among a thousand other things, the beautiful solidarity of humanity. For, in this direction, all are not gifted in the same degree. There is a vicarious principle luminously evident, by which the seer helps the man who does not see. Does God love less the practical man who builds bridges and houses, but has no such perceptions as our prophet yonder, with his wireless messages from the unseen? And yet the prophet leans on the practical man as much as he leans on the prophet, and the world could do as little without the one as without the other.

There is no fear, despite surface appearances to the contrary, that spiritual-mindedness will cease out of our world. It cannot, because the spiritual is always there. Go far enough in any honest pursuit and you inevitably run up against it. Gregory Thaumaturgus speaks somewhere of "the sacred mathematics." He spoke out of a true perception, for all knowledge opens the way to the one shrine. No man is great apart from this greatness. Christ is here our Chief because His whole nature answered to the spiritual and thrilled to the sense of God. The finest thing Mr. Bryce has to say in his appreciation of Gladstone is that "he led a third life also, the secret life of the soul. Religion was of all things that which had the strongest hold upon his thoughts and feelings." That is the hall-mark of manhood. As we rise out of the slough of the animal, and become more completely human, the more clearly does the world appear to us as spiritual; the more do we feel

Through all our fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.

XIX. The Feast of Faces

There is no such portrait gallery in the world as a London street. At every moment we have a fresh masterpiece of form and expression. The greatest pictures, as Ruskin has reminded us, are those of the human face, and there is nothing on canvas that for realism and suggestiveness can compare with what the street offers us. And the gallery is being incessantly refilled. It is a wonderful thing to ponder, that along these great thoroughfares there has been moving a steady stream of human life for over a thousand years. Think of the changes that in that time have come;—in religion, in government, in dress, in language, in ideas! Along the Strand and up Ludgate Hill men have tramped in chain mail, in doublet and hose, in the long, pointed shoes of the fourteenth century, in the love-locks and Vandyke hats of the Cavaliers, in the bag wigs of the time of Steele and Johnson. And during these long centuries of change the footsteps on the pavement have never ceased. Always has Thames ebbed and flowed through the years, and so also has this other stream. It is fuller to-day than ever, and each face we encounter is a picture beyond the compass of a Reynolds, a book deeper than our Homers and Shakespeares.

There is nothing in the world of form, so far as we know it on this planet, to compare with the human face. We have only to look away to what answers to it in the animal kingdom to realise the difference. What æons of time, what infinitude of varied process has Nature occupied in fashioning this outline? What planning, what unearthly dexterity to mould, out of bone and muscle and nerve fibre, this finished organ of a soul's expression! We are reminded of Huxley's marvellous description of ovarian evolution as viewed through the microscope: ". . . So that after watching the process hour by hour one is almost involuntarily pursued by the notion that some more subtle aid to the vision than the microscope would show the hidden artist, with his plan before him, striving with skilful manipulation to perfect his work." The evolution of the face has been the work, not of hours, but of measureless ages, yet "the notion of the hidden artist, with his plan before him," not the less haunts us. And the mystery does not end there. In the face we have the matchless organ, the Marconi instrument that vibrates to the touch of the infinite, but whence come the ideas which fill and use it? The instrument, after all, is not the music. The soul thrills through and suffuses the feature outline, and yet the one does not yield us the other. Here, indeed, have we the door slammed in our face. The greatest rebuff, surely, that science has ever received, in its attempt to penetrate the mystery of mind, was in the discovery that its great doctrine of the transmutation of force breaks down utterly in this realm. If consciousness were simply a form of material energy, then, in the same way that heat disappears by its conversion into motion, would nerve force disappear in the production of feeling. But there is no such equivalent. The investigator, at this point, reaches a blank wall. In the face, then, two worlds meet, with two sets of laws. It is this which gives us its wonder and fascination. Fashioned by reason and lighted by soul, it shines in its every feature with the supernatural. It is matter so penetrated by spirit that the one seems here visibly to melt into the other.

But there are faces and faces. Aside from what is common to humanity there is, to the careful observer, exhaustless interest in typal and individual variation. In the moulding of them it seems as though the inner and outer causes were in perpetual

struggle as to which should predominate. The physical, for one thing, is always at work. Atmosphere, sunshine, occupation, a thousand material differences are all feature artists. We see their results in a few generations. The American face is already at a far remove from the English. There are descendants of early Portuguese settlers in Africa who are almost black. It is curious how national types assert themselves. Amongst a cosmopolitan crowd you can almost invariably and with absolute accuracy pick out the Englishman. The language a man speaks is one of the hundred subtle face moulders. To be perpetually using certain muscles for the production of given shades of sound tells ultimately upon the entire expressional result.

But our truest feast of faces comes in our individual studies. And here it is not what the circumstances of climate or nationality have wrought that whets our interest. It is the marks laid there by the central mystery of life. What a sheer delight it is to look upon a child's face! The children seem to have been growing more beautiful in these later years. The marvel is that they seem so entirely content with the world they have come into. There is something astonishing at the coolness, the absolute equanimity with which they accept the idea of being born into such a universe as this. And yet, why not? The pessimist should consider well this fact, that the first thing that meets a child on its entrance here is the heaven of love in a mother's eye. Whatever it encounters after, here is pure love for the beginning. And may we not believe that, in whatsoever other spheres and states we may come into, this same rule will hold? Why shiver at the strangeness of another world? The children are, from the first day of arrival, perfectly at home in this. And in that fresh birth which lies for us beyond death, may we not believe that again love will be the first to greet us, and that our entrance will be to the centre of a home?

The children's faces yield us much, but they do not yield us all. The greatest treasure of the street is a later development. The faces we ponder most are those that carry a history in them. Into some, as we look, we realise at once that here the great choices, the great decisions have been made. Here has been inner victory. The soul within has fronted life, the tug of its lower desires, the impact of its strange fortunes, and has emerged triumphant. That victory, we feel, has been won for us all. We share in it as we glance at the clear eye and at the lighted features. There are utter strangers whom we long to address. A beautiful soul we feel is passing by. We take toll of it as it passes. Marvellous power of goodness, that even as, wordless, it moves along the street, it gives itself forth! "Wheresoever the river goeth there is life." One thinks of an Arthur Hallam, of whom his father said, "He seemed to tread the earth as a spirit from a better world"; of a Vincent de Paul, who covered France with charitable institutions, whose homely peasant features were, we read, transfigured by the exquisite beauty of the soul within. Of all varieties—strong and honest, tender and refined, flashing with victorious eagerness, worn with patiently-endured sorrow—these *schönen Seelen* pass us by, and the brief instant of our speechless contact has left us the better. The lighted features have shown us how goodness is winning its kingdom.

But our portrait gallery is not always yielding us these results. The realism of the street is at times more terrific than Vereschagin. There are doom faces that haunt us for days. There is no theology so lurid in its "doctrine of last things" as that which is written on some features. The tragedy reaches its deepest when the story of utmost loss and degradation is visible on the face of the young. There are girls in their teens whose eye offers a glimpse into Acheron. One asks, in despair, what our humanity, with its religions, its churches, has been about to permit these souls, at life's

beginning, to break through all the safeguards, and to drop plumb down into such depths as these?

But it is not the bad faces only that oppress us with a sense of social wrong. What of those that, as they pass, tell of defeat, of hunger, of grinding poverty? The worst evil our great cities have wrought is that they have cut our tie to our neighbour. Inside our door the ache of the youngest and weakest receives fullest attention. We step into the street, and the brother's trouble that waits there is nothing to us. The worst is that he finds in himself no right even to speak of it. He will sleep to-night under an arch and we in our comfortable beds, and we permit the system to go on as though for this the heavens and the earth were made. We talk of mercy and we have not yet begun with justice. The slave owner recognised his obligation to feed and clothe his people, but we have not yet reached that level. Surely the coming prophet voices, that bring the Gospel of to-morrow, will begin by thundering in our ears till our dead social conscience is once more awaked! We shall then confess that our damning sin has been, not in accepting or rejecting this or that speculative doctrine, but that we used our strength to exploit and exult over our weaker brother, instead of bearing his burden and pouring oil into his wounds.

When those who have, accomplish their full duty by those who have not, when the possessors render justice to the disinherited, the common face in the street will take on a new aspect. Meanwhile we have a duty to our own. We are all under an obligation to the picture gallery, to offer it as noble a contribution as we can. How strange, though, the notions people have of facial comeliness! It is an affair for them of the chemist, the artist, of dyes and paints and cosmetics. Montaigne gives an entertaining description of the feminine appliances of his time for the enhancing of beauty. Centuries earlier we have Alexandrian Clement discoursing thus on the same theme: "At the dawn of day, mangling, racking and plastering themselves over with certain compositions, they chill the skin, furrow the flesh with poisons and with curiously prepared washes, thus blighting their own beauty. Wherefore they are seen to be yellow from the use of cosmetics, and susceptible to disease; their flesh, which has been shaded with poisons, being now in a melting state. So they dishonour the Creator, as if the beauty given by Him were nothing worth."

The truth of the last sentence of the Greek father, obvious as it is, has not yet penetrated our civilisation. Yet Plato had already said it in the "Republic" in his question: "Is anything more noble than a man whose beauty of soul is combined with outward beauty of form, the latter corresponding to and harmonising with the former?" The two legitimate facial artists are Nature without and the Soul within. From the fresh air and the honest sunlight does Nature extract her colouring, and there is no artificial compound that compares with it. But the finer touches, those that divinise a countenance, come from within. We have only begun to realise the artistic possibility of character. The vision of heaven in the Apocalypse opens the inmost truth of things in exhibiting, as history's final consummation, a state in which the soul's perfect purity shall clothe itself in a form and an environment of unimaginable beauty.

XX. On Points of View

Sir Robert Peel once startled the House of Commons with the question, “What is a pound?” It would, we imagine, be a still greater poser to ask, “What is a fact?” One of the wonders of human nature is that it should have arrived at convictions on any subject, considering the ground it has to go upon. The simplest and solidest things, when we begin to look steadily at them, have a faculty of dissolving into mist. A mountaineer makes the acquaintance of an Alp. He sees it at first seventy miles away, and it is a cloud on the horizon. He gets nearer, and the cloud has turned into a well-framed picture of glacier, crag and snowfield. He climbs it to find both the earlier impressions vanished, and in their place a series of quite new ones, which change every hour as the ascent proceeds. Which of these effects is the mountain? Do any, or all of them put together, bring us to the actual fact? What here is reality, and what our own sensation? We do not know. Our belief in the mountain and the external world generally is, at bottom, an act of faith. We believe in the concurrent testimony of our own and our neighbours’ perceptions, backed as these are by the conviction, arrived at on other grounds, that this is a reasonable universe, whose Author has not constructed our senses with a view to their making fools of us.

We know, in fact, the spiritual world, the world of thought and feeling, a great deal better than that material one with which, strangely enough, people imagine themselves so familiar. But here again we have abundant grounds for intellectual humility. In this region also the prospect is so dependent upon the point of view, that one is apt to wonder, with the pilgrim in Lucian’s Hermotimus, where the kingdom of truth really lies, and whether there is any road to it open to mortals. Shall we ever reach that for which earnest souls so yearn, a universal agreement upon all the great questions of life? If so, it will not be yet. What we have to consider in our day is the immense effect of the individual standpoint in determining inward conviction. As we look at the way in which heredity, temperament, circumstance, geographical conditions, anything and everything rather than the unbiassed intellect, determine the way we look at things, we realise with Arnold that

Limits we did not set
Condition all we do;

and that man at present is not so much himself a reasonable being as the hodman and day labourer of a higher Reason which uses him thus.

Consider, to begin with, the varying standpoints of temperament. How is man to arrive at any similarity of view on, say, theological or social questions so long as there is the present disparity in the functioning of the human liver? There will be optimist and pessimist philosophies so long as there are healthy and unhealthy philosophers. A bilious temperament like that of Schopenhauer formed the atmosphere through which he saw facts. The pessimistic stomach orders the brain to produce a theory which shall fit its indigestion. Argument would no more avail against a view thus formed than it would against rheumatism. A similar inability to discover that they belong to the same universe is found in the relative temperaments of the scientist and the poet. A Darwin complains that he cannot appreciate Shakespeare. A Keats replies that the world is spoiled by the investigator.

Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her woof, her texture; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.

Who can say that the world in which these two live is the same? Better to admit with Jean Paul that a new universe is created every time a child is born.

The small extent to which man, in his judgments, is governed by unbiassed intelligence is even more strikingly illustrated by observing the effect produced on him by his geographical standpoints. When we find every Turk a Mohammedan and almost every Russian a Greek Catholic, we have a state of things which is clearly not a result of individual reasoning. What a curious illustration, too, of racial standpoints is to be found in national self-estimates! A Frenchman believes his country to be at the head of civilisation, and is astonished to find the coldness with which the proposition is received by the Englishman, the German, and the American. But these, in their turn, have a similar national cult, rejected in the same way by their neighbours. A common-sense and approximately correct international appreciation seems likely to be one of the last things the world will learn.

There are, however, matters more vital than national self-esteem, and it is curious to note how, in some of the most important of these, the geographical standpoint has had its share. One wonders, for instance, what would have happened to the Oxford Movement, and to religious thought generally in England, had Pusey, when a young man, remained a few years longer in Germany instead of returning to Oxford when he did! To-day how odd it is to think of the unbending champion of Oxford orthodoxy as once an enthusiastic adherent of the new critical movement in the Fatherland, and as publishing a book whose liberalism drew on it the grave censure of a High Church divine! If we ask the reason for the transformation, there seems in the final resort to have been no other than the change of longitude. The distance between Pusey's earlier and later points of view was the distance between Bonn and Oxford.

So far we seem to have been chronicling nothing but confusions—collecting evidence, as some might suggest, in the interests of a general Pyrrhonism. The confusion is, however, more apparent than real, and the evidence, rightly studied, will be found after all to be on the side of faith and progress. When we look at the course of history, and at what is happening to-day, we observe in this region a law at work whose operations are becoming ever more distinctly visible. We recognise that while individual experience and individual idiosyncrasy die with the individual, there is gradually accumulating a vast *collective* experience which is destined to become the basis of a universal conviction. In the light of that collective experience the earlier and partial human standpoints will disappear. We see the process going on. Geography and race, powerful as they still are, do not count as they did fifty years ago in the formation of opinion. The best men of every clime are beginning, across the political and theological barriers, to clasp hands, and where the leaders go the rest will ultimately follow.

And the new common standpoints are not only powerful to unite, but also powerful to inspire. What a difference, for instance, between the world theory which viewed man as in a state of ruin and under a curse and that now replacing it, which regards him as advancing from humblest origins to an ever higher level; which, instead of

despairing over his wickedness, points to the wonder of the good he has attained, and which sees in his history the sure evolution of a spiritual kingdom and the ever clearer revelation of a Divine Helper and King!

A study of this topic should teach us at least two lessons. One is the absurdity of erecting correct theological opinion into a *sine quâ non* of salvation. In these things we are beginning to discover that we know very little and that our fathers knew less. Men see in these matters according to their standpoint, and in nine cases out of ten their standpoint is not of their own choosing. The other lesson is that of sympathy. Before we abuse or think hardly of the man who disagrees with us, let us first of all try to understand him. “Put yourself in his place,” was Charles Reade’s motto for the solution of all social disagreements, and it is an excellent one. We might, indeed, almost accept Madame de Staël’s daring dictum, “If we knew all we should forgive all.”

XXI. Life's By-Products

One of the features of our manufacturing processes is the accumulation of material left over from the main article produced, and which in earlier times was thrown away as waste. It is the characteristic of our modern methods to turn all this to profit. At the gasworks, in the starch factory and in a score of other industries, the by-products, scientifically treated, figure prominently in the assets of the concern. There are instances, indeed, where the once neglected by-product has become the chief element of manufacture. Waste, we are beginning to recognise, is simply another name for our own ignorance. The object which we insult by the epithet is something whose true value and uses we have as yet failed to comprehend.

When we turn from specific processes of this kind to the phenomena of life as exhibited on our own planet, it is impossible not to be struck with the wide range of analogy which is here opened. The modern man is studying this theme with a certain uneasiness. He sees in it a disagreeable reference to himself. It is an illustration of the bewilderment which the vast extension of the horizon has produced in the human spirit, that science is asking whether, after all, man himself is not a mere by-product of the cosmic process; whether the vast movement of life towards its completer expression has not thrown him up as a mere experiment, a bridge on the way towards something better! The argument here that a Nietzsche had long ago presented to Germany, a Bernard Shaw and a Mr. H. G. Wells are now seriously offering to the English mind. The bare suspicion is one that gives a sharp knock to our self-complacency. But, after all, this is not the main question. What we have come from and what we are going to are largely hidden from us. We are perpetually in the making. Man is the loom on which the past and the future are being woven together. The chief problem for us is to secure that, at this meeting-point of the eternities which constitutes our life, our own bit of weaving shall be of the best we know.

But it is precisely here that the subject of by-products, as related to our chief output, comes in. When we contemplate human life as a whole, we are arrested by the question, "Who is the chief manufacturer here?" Is it our own consciousness, or is it a consciousness beyond our own that is using us for ends we do not see? The horse in the shafts yonder has, doubtless, ideas of some sort as to what he is doing and why he is doing it. And there is a certain accuracy about his ideas, within limits. But the driver behind him has views also, which go beyond those of the driven quadruped. He cannot explain them to his horse, and this absence of explanation is very likely one of the standing perplexities of equine existence. We, too, are in the shafts. We have notions as to where we are going and what we ought to do. But at every point we are puzzled. Our life results are not what we looked for. The outcome of our energies seems so often a pure waste. The question is, "Are we the proper judges, or is there another eye, that of a driver, upon the business?"

We are sorely in need of an assurance on the point, because the vast proportion of human endeavour seems, so far as we can see, to have been a by-product, for which we can discern no proper use. Think of the enormous amount of energy given off by our race in its long history, of which we know nothing! Take its blunders and follies; the frightful story of its superstitions and the sufferings thereby entailed! Read the

story of the Inquisition, or of witchcraft, where countless thousands of helpless women were put to the most horrible tortures, simply because men had taken into their heads a wrong idea! In the human story every step of progress has been preceded by a hundred miles of wandering from the track. Why this wandering, and blundering, and suffering? To our view it is so fearful a waste. Side by side with his products of truth, life, beauty, and happiness, are these mountains of slag, these amorphous rubbish heaps, these red pools of blood.

What is the meaning of all this, or is there a meaning? Is evil a necessary by-product in the manufacture of life? We know how the philosophers have toiled over that problem. No one of the earlier thinkers has, we suppose, gone deeper into it than Leibnitz. His "Théodicée"—in which he labours the question of evil as related necessarily to finiteness, the limitation of being forming in itself a privation, as being without the beatitude of the Divine; while free will, and the opening of an infinite number of causes in a created universe, made the other forms of evil to be in a way inevitable—is perhaps the best bit of reasoning on these lines the world has seen or is likely to see. But Leibnitz, with his "best of all possible worlds," does not somehow satisfy us. It is only when we reach the later conception of the by-product and its uses—the conviction that our actions, limitations and sufferings are, apart from the consequences visible to ourselves, working out an infinite number of other results known to the great Producer; that there is here absolutely no waste, but that every thrill of human emotion, every effort and pang that seemed so fruitless are being wrought up by the invisible cosmic chemistry into finished products of measureless value—that our shaken faith is once more re-established. When Dryden sings—

Fool'd with hope men favour the deceit,
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay;
To-morrow's falser than the former day,
Lies worse, and while it says we shall be blest
With some new joys, cuts off what we possesst;
Strange cozenage!—

we have no means of meeting his note of despair except by the faith that the disappointments, the seeming wastes of hope and desire, are in themselves the raw material of a new great manufacture that is at present hidden from us.

But we have stayed, perhaps, too long on the more purely speculative aspects of our theme. It has abundant practical sides. Our modern social system has, for instance, been constructed largely on the principle of certain leading products with a residuum of waste. Our city life, under the present conditions, throws into its gutters a mass of debased and criminal existence, which we accept and acquiesce in as if it were a normal and inevitable part of the social process. The State makes provision for this material by the erection of gaols. Theology recognises it by a doctrine of total depravity. The private citizen is every now and then waked up to its presence by a robbery or a murder. Meanwhile, it is beginning to occur to some of us to ask whether these bodies, minds and souls now swelling the rubbish heap might not be treated a little more scientifically? Whether the experiments that have been tried on the other rubbish heaps might not be tried on this? Whether human nature is not as susceptible of treatment as the refuse of coal gas? And whether, while brilliant colours are being extracted from the one, something brilliant also, if only brains and heart are brought to the task, may not be obtained from the other? Our prisons, our police-courts, our criminal law proclaim that we are yet in the rubbish-heap stage of

manufacture. But that stage cannot last. The human waste product of to-day will be one of the brightest assets of the future.

Another side of the theme is opened when we discuss the by-products of our separate lives. With many men it has been a difficulty to discover what was their real life-task, and what the mere *parerga*. In some there has been such a splendour and variety of gift, that we are left to wonder where their chief interest really lay. Think of a Leonardo da Vinci, master of half-a-dozen first-class departments, in each of which he shone supreme! What shall we call him—civil engineer, architect, poet, scientific discoverer, sculptor, or painter? There have been men of such exuberance of life that the achievements by which men now remember them were thrown off as the merest by-play. We read of Charles James Fox making a magnificent speech in the House of Commons, for which, in lieu of preparation, Horace Walpole tells us that "he was just arrived from Newmarket, had sat up drinking all night and had not been in bed." There have been men of prodigious industry in what they regarded as their chief employment, but who are only known now by what they regarded as their by-play. Bishop Ken was a most learned prelate, and produced a vast quantity of literary matter. To-day he is remembered by two hymns. One wonders how Paul compared his epistles with the other output of his life! How small an output these letters, dashed off in the heat of controversy, amid the hurry and distractions of travel and of his other work, compared with all else he had said and done! And yet it was by these his name was to live; it was these scraps from his pen that were to build up doctrine, to fill libraries with reverent commentary, to furnish the world's pulpits with texts for now nigh two thousand years.

Indeed, we do not know what part of our life, what of the things we have done or shall do, will tell most upon the sum of things. It is often when we are doing the thing we least understand, when on a track that seems a blind one, that the issues will be greatest. Yet no man does a thing by mere hazard. In practical chemistry the by-products, though far enough removed in appearance and quality from the chief manufacture, are related to it in a way that shows no variation. And the side results of a man's life, its trivialities, its amusements, will all have an intimate and unbreakable connection with the main thing in him. Said Goethe of Schiller: "I have never heard from him an insignificant word." It could be said of every man of value. His laugh rings with the same note as his deepest aspiration. His footstep, the poise of his head, the light in his eye, tell one story.

For manners are not idle, but the fruit
Of loyal nature and of noble mind.

The man who would get most out of his life will take care that the by-products add to its general sum. He will have no room for waste. His amusements, his seeming idleness, all will be healthily related to the main thing. He cannot afford to have divided interests. For the finger-tips of him are thrilling with the same life as the central brain. In a collection of early Christian Syriac documents, in a piece entitled "The Teaching of Addæus the Apostle," there are these remarkable lines: "At the consummation of creation will be a resuscitation of all men, and at that time their course of conduct will be portrayed in their persons, and their bodies will be so many volumes for the writings of justice." A wonderful word, and in its way a true. For the sum total of our life, its main and its by-product, what is it all but a secret writing, a cryptic inscription, engraved upon every part of body and mind, and that may start into wondrous visibility when the light of eternity has fallen upon it?

XXII. Going on Pilgrimage

In the summer time the modern man finds reviving in him a mysterious instinct of vagabondage. He is become as migratory as the swallow. He wanders and wanders, even if, as is sometimes the case, he is miserable over the business. It was Madame de Staël's view that "whatever may be said to the contrary, travelling is one of the saddest pleasures of life; when you really feel at ease in some strange town, it is because you are beginning to make it a home." Most travellers have had times when they shared that sentiment, but it is not the average experience. There is exhilaration in movement. Dr. Johnson thought he reached life's highest expression in being whirled along a pleasant country road in a postchaise. We understand his feeling. And the break with the accustomed and the familiar which travel brings is certainly at times a sensation to be tasted. Its fullest flavour is perhaps reached when we journey alone. We can enter then into Hazlitt's idea of being "lord of oneself uncumbered with a name." We revel for a while in being able, as he puts it, "to shake off the world, lose our importunate everlasting identity, become the creature of the moment—to hold to the universe only by a dish of sweet-bread, known by no other title than 'the gentleman in the parlour.' " With most of us, however, a little of this goes a long way. It requires generally a rare and peculiarly trained spirit to cut all its communications with society and yet find itself entirely at home.

Travel has been enormously developed in these later years, yet it would be a delusion to suppose that our generation has here anything like a monopoly. Nothing, indeed, is more remarkable, especially when we consider the almost utter lack of facilities, than the enormous human movements of the earlier ages. Men had neither roads, nor railways, nor steamers, but somehow they got about. We in these islands are a branch of the same race we now rule in India. Our fathers found their way here from Central Asia. In those days they travelled in nations. Think of the descent of the Huns upon Africa, of the Goths upon Southern Europe, of the movement of the Calmuck Tartars across Siberia! How amazing the cool hardihood which permitted the Helvetii, as Cæsar describes, to vacate their old territories in Switzerland, burning their homes behind them, and staking their existence as a people on a vast trek westward! In those days people did not travel for pleasure. It was business all the time. The human movement was as that of a glacier, inevitable, pressed on by resistless forces behind.

And, apart from these vast primitive migrations, we note how universal and continuous has been the individual pilgriming. The scholars and teachers have ever been a wandering tribe. The Greek philosopher never considered himself finished unless he had had a journey to Egypt, and the writings of many of them, of Plato especially, show how great must have been the commerce of ideas between Greece and the far East. In the Middle Ages and later men incessantly trafficked to and fro on the errands of religion and learning. Erasmus in his letters gives us graphic pictures of the hardships of travel, of the abominable condition of the inns and of the roads. But despite that the scholar found his way from Rome to Cologne, from Cologne to Paris, from Paris to Cambridge. He was free of the whole Western world. Mr. Cook will to-day book you to Jerusalem, and you will journey there almost as easily as to Margate. Ignatius Loyola begged his way on foot, so far as the land

journey was concerned, and had on the road constant hairbreadth escapes from death. Altogether a wonderful story. Perhaps the greatest human history is the history of man the traveller.

Amid the almost infinite diversities of travel there is one form which stands out with peculiar interest. It is that of the pilgrimage. We should not know man, some of his deepest things would be hidden from us, did we not study him as pilgrim. Of pilgrimages there is the widest variety. Says Mark Pattison, “Patriotism, poetry, philanthropy, all the arts and all the finer feelings have their pilgrimages, their hallowed spots of intense interest, their haunts of fancy and of inspiration.” But while the varieties are many, it is very significant to note the limitations. People make pilgrimages to Canterbury, to Lourdes, to Weimar, to the grave of Burns. Do they ever make pilgrimages to Chicago? It is worth while to ask the question, because the answer is so full of meaning. Men build their cities of to-day, crowd them with the apparatus of money-making and of money-spending. And all this, we say, is honourable, laudable, the spirit of the age, the mark of progress. Singular, though, that to all the splendour and profit of this movement the pilgrim spirit in man makes absolutely no response. Here is a mystery worth investigating.

The secret, when we look for it, is easily discovered. The world’s business marts, its pleasure centres, are everywhere. The next dust-heap would become one to-morrow were gold found under it. But a shrine can never be made that way. A place becomes a pilgrim centre only by its connection with the higher energies of the human spirit. It is thus even that the beauty spots of our planet become sacred to us. There are mountain scenes of the Andes or of the Selkirks of incomparable natural grandeur, but they affect us in no way as do far homelier views where some great spirit has brooded. Cornwall is a different place to us after the Idylls. We wander through the Scott country as in an enchanted land. Yes, it is always man at his deepest that really moves us. He has then the faculty of leaving his very essence behind him, and it lingers there, losing no whit of its potent charm through all the waste of years. It was the privilege once of the present writer to assist at the unearthing of an ancient tumulus in the West Country, and never will he forget the thrill which passed through the explorers when, after long toil with pick and spade, the last stroke brought to view a bronze implement and some withered leaves, the fragments of an oak chaplet. For here, across long ages, they were face to face with their brother man, with his art, his religion, his hope and aspiration in the presence of death.

The shrine, we say, whether of poet or patriot or martyr, is always a testimony to the higher qualities in man, to his essence as spiritual. The modern millionaire is supposed to be master of most things. He can, if he choose, build himself the most splendid of mausoleums. But his utmost wit and wealth can never turn it into a shrine. We go to the spots to which pilgrimages are made without any inquiries as to banking accounts. Have our readers ever seen the cottage at Chalfont where Milton lived? It would not be good enough nearly for the lodge at the gate of our merchant prince. But nobody will visit the merchant’s palace in the mood that holds us as we stand here at gaze. It is a money-making age, but the soul even to-day exacts its terms.

It were well for our holiday-makers if, more often than they do, they turned their excursions into pilgrimages. That would be at the same time to cultivate health of body and enlargement of the mind. But to get what these places can offer there must always be some previous interior preparation. What we take from them depends on the size of the vessel we bring. What is the good of visiting Assisi unless we are on

terms with “Frater Franciscus”? The present writer, looking once from the Ægean at Salamis and Marathon, was accosted by a functionary of the vessel he was on with the remark that “he could not for the life of him understand what people saw to make a fuss about in these rocks and tumble-down ruins.” And there seemed no answer except that “to him that hath shall be given.”

We cannot, however, all be pilgrims in this sense. Some of us are home-bound. But to the most circumscribed, who have never left their parish, there is open a miraculous journey, with grander scenery and more wondrous adventure than belong to any other wandering on this planet. There has never yet been a pilgrimage to surpass that of John Bunyan, and he made it without stepping outside the boundaries of his prison cell. Some day a genius of the highest class may be given us who shall write a new “Pilgrim’s Progress,” setting forth, with something of the Bedford dreamer’s vividness, a soul’s movement in the time that now is. Its outlook would be different in many respects from that of the seventeenth century. There are points, doubtless, in which Bunyan might be improved upon. There is one, however, in which he can never be surpassed. It is in his sublime conception of the inward life as, under the Christian inspiration, a continual ascent, where the end immeasurably transcends the beginning.

Humanity having once secured, will never again let go the view of life which, commencing with the City of Destruction and the Slough of Despond, works ever upward to the Delectable Mountains, to the Land of Beulah, and to the heavenly city. That is the invincible optimism of the Christian Gospel, to which there has been nothing comparable before or since. Contrast this with the life-scheme of the old Greek poet: “When once the appointed time of youth is past it is better to die forthwith than to live”; or with that of the despairing modern science which speaks in a sentence like this: we quote from a letter of Huxley to John Morley: “It flashes across me at all sorts of times with a sort of horror that in 1900 I shall probably know no more of what is going on than I did in 1800. I would sooner be in hell a good deal—at any rate in one of the upper circles. . . . I wonder if you are plagued in this way?”

Clearly no way has been discovered of making the life-journey an upward and victorious one except the New Testament way. Were that light darkened, our utmost science would shed no ray upon the path. But how joyous has that illumination made the pilgrimage for innumerable souls! How cheery, as compared with Huxley’s view, is that of Baxter, of whom Calamy says: “He talked about another world like one that had been there, and was come as a sort of express from thence to make a report concerning it.” Every age in fact through the Christian centuries has had the like report. The Christian souls here are wonderfully akin. Here, for instance, is Clement of Alexandria, who, long centuries before, is able to lay down the very ground plan of Bunyan’s story: “But the elect man dwells as a sojourner. The body, too, as one sent on a distant pilgrimage uses inns and dwellings by the way, having care of the things of the world, of the places where he halts, but leaving his dwelling-place and property without excessive emotion; . . . giving thanks for his sojourn, and blessing God for his departure, embracing the mansion that is in heaven!”

Truly there seems only one conclusion to the matter. When all has been said and done; when wealth and science and philosophy have given their uttermost, they leave the life problem to the Christian solution. There is no way of getting the best from the world except that pilgrim way which gives us, as we move, that perpetual song of the heart: “For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come?”

XXIII. Rest and Unrest

There is no idea which the modern man, especially in his tired moments, caresses more tenderly than that of rest. He builds his future heaven out of it; and it is the goal of all his earthly toil. And yet there is no idea about which there seems more general confusion. It is of all states the least understood. One of the needs of the civilised world to-day is a proper philosophy of rest. A clear vision here should alter our thinkings and our doings in more directions than one.

What, to begin with, is Nature's teaching? A glance at her order dispels a first illusion, that rest is a quiescence, a negating of action. Her greatest apparent quietudes are, in reality, the vastest activities. We sit seemingly motionless on a seemingly motionless earth. As a matter of fact, we are whirling eastwards at a thousand miles an hour by her rotary movement, and westward at 67,000 miles per hour by her orbital rush, while at the same moment, as part of the Solar system, we are sweeping on at an inconceivable velocity in a direction neither east nor west towards a point in the constellation Hercules. We think of sleep as representing most completely the idea of repose. But sleep, again, is an unremitting activity. In its hours the great forces of reparation are busy. The whole of the tissues are undergoing a process of nutritive recuperation. Every thread and fibre of us is drinking in power. That is what happens to the body. What the soul is doing during sleep is more than science at present can say. What is certain is, that it is not quiescent. The seeming stillnesses everywhere are only on the surface. A Matterhorn, a Mont Blanc, are quivering with energy. Magnetic currents are incessantly sweeping through their masses, and each particle of them, however closely they seem packed, is really separated from its neighbour by a pulsing ether which is a reservoir of force. In all her vast dominions Nature shows us no single spot which is at rest.

When we come to our conscious life the same fact meets us. A large part of our bodily organism takes no holiday whatever. Day and night the heart keeps on its ceaseless systole-diastole, the lungs go on weaving air into vitality, the watchers over digestion and secretion keep ward at their posts. No cry of weariness escapes them, no truce is called to their labour. It is only a fraction of our organism that knows what we call fatigue, and to which we minister with what we call rest. And this, as we have already seen, is in itself the reverse of a quiescence. Our repose is simply the bringing into play of other forces. Sleep is the coming on the scene of a fresh shift of labourers. The traffic is partially suspended in order that Nature's navvies may put the line in order.

In this quest, then, we find ourselves shut out from one after another of Nature's territories. Through the whole universe of matter there is no moment's cessation of activity; nor is there any in our physical organisation. Plainly, if we are to discover some semblance of reality in our idea of rest, we must seek it elsewhere. Where? The answer is in the inner realm of the mind. But here our first discovery is that within, as well as outside, there is no such thing as an inactive rest. Let anyone "descend into himself" and he will find that it is not in movement, in action, but in the opposite of it, that his soul is farthest from peace. The trying moment for the regiment is not in the charge, but before, when lying down and waiting the order to advance. Many great public speakers mix Gethsemane with every speech. But that comes not in delivery, but the time that preceded. When actually on their feet, with mind and body

in highest activity, the soul is entirely at rest. It is not the employed, but the unemployed, in whom we find the completest mental chaos, the furthest remove from tranquillity.

Our research, then, so far, seems to yield but one result. Rest consists nowhere, either in nature or in the mind of man, in a mere motionless inactivity. In both it must be, if it exists at all, a concomitant of action. We can, indeed, go further now and say that it is not only consistent with, but a result and product of, action. In mind and matter alike what we call rest is an equipoise, the resultant of a balanced interplay of forces. A keystone is dropped into an arch, and the structure stands. It is there for years, centuries maybe, the image of calm stability. Yet its rest is, for every succeeding moment, the outcome of a contact of powers, thrusting this way, that way, and giving us equilibrium as the result. As Nature climbs higher in her achievements, the more delicate is the balancing by which her rest states are obtained. It is a magnificent result, surely, of her engineering which secures that a planet like our own, the centre of such stupendous forces, should have everything within and without so exquisitely adjusted that while careering in space at lightning speed over half-a-dozen courses at once, it should appear to its inhabitants as absolutely still.

We can now apply this detailed and, we fear, somewhat dry exposition to some inner and more human interests. It should, for instance, dissipate for ever the notion of giving up toil and achievement as a condition of tranquillity. It is the idler, not the worker, who is remote from rest. A man who is truly himself is like a great wheel in motion; on the circumference the sweep of a mighty movement; at the centre of it, peace. The Methodist village carpenter in “Adam Bede,” with his feet in dry shavings, his face turned to the fair country visible through the open window, his strong arm plying the plane while his voice rang out in hearty song, is an image of full activity, and one also of as perfect peace as is to be had in this world. It is always when a man begins to act that his boding anxieties and fears, the enemies to his rest, take their flight. Strange that with such simple first lessons as these before us we can fall into the mistake of sighing for idleness as our paradise. If that were bliss, God surely had never immersed Himself in so workaday a world as this! The social system which produces masses of rich or poor idlers is on the wrong lines. In America every man, whatever his position, is expected to work. It ought to be a universal prescription. The lounger is out of the world’s order. He should be shunned as a centre of social disease.

But the proviso of work as an element of our rest-philosophy is only a beginning. For rest, we next discover, is of all grades. We spoke a moment ago of the delicate balancings by which Nature achieves her higher forms of equilibrium. All this is reproduced and surpassed in the soul. It is absurd to talk of peace as though it were a single product. There are as many forms of peace as there are of men, and you may judge a man by the kind of peace he achieves. There need, for instance, no great forces to produce the “rest” of Clough’s jesting lines:

Let me, contented and mute, with the beasts of the field, my brothers,
Tranquilly, happily lie—and eat grass like Nebuchadnezzar!

Our grass-eating peace-achievers have legion to their name. They are in evidence in all ages and literatures:

“Oh, he’s drunk, Sir Toby, an hour agone; his eyes were set at eight i’ the morning.”

Judging from appearances, the type has a long enough career yet before it. But its achievement is not one to boast of.

Above this lies the rest of philosophic indifference. It has some famous watchwords. There is Plato's dictum that "nothing in human affairs is worth any great anxiety"; and Ovid's "*non est tanti*"—"it is not worth so much trouble"; and Lord Melbourne's "Why can't you let it alone?" A closely allied frame of mind is that which compounds with fate and lets things take their course. Brunetière, amongst moderns, sings the praises of accepting the inevitable. We remember Amiel's constant cry to "*rentrer dans l'ordre*"—"to enter into, to conform oneself to the universal order." All this brings undoubtedly a peace of a sort. But it is a wintry peace, with snow on the ground and the streams frozen. The forces which produce its equilibrium are distinctly not the highest.

What then is the highest peace? We have worked along this long line of illustration in order to reach a point from which at last we may view it. The greatest achievement of life, so far as we know it, is the production in souls of what the world's greatest book calls "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." Greatest, because it is the highest product of the highest forces, acting at their highest level. We get our vision of this supernatural splendour by studying the souls who have caught most of it into themselves, whose faces have been most persistently turned in its direction. These lives have been full of labour, full of burdens, of opposings, of pains. Here it is a St. Francis, who took poverty as his bride and made jests at his suffering body; there, a Pascal whose constant ill-health, as his sister tells, "was taken always as a means of spiritual perfection"; there, again, a Tyndale who gave up everything, his country, his liberty, and, finally, his life, out of "the pity and compassion which I had, and yet have, on the darkness of my brethren, and to bring them to the knowledge of Christ." What an equilibrium of forces is here! On one side the pressure of immense burdens, the knowledge of imminent looming dangers, the sense of bodily weakness, the onset at times of the human passions. On the other side, meeting all this, checking, guiding, mastering all, a flow from above of ineffable Power, Below conquered by Above, and for result the soul in the very vortex of the maelström knowing itself at rest!

There is, we say, nothing in the world or in history to compare with this. We talk of the Peace of Utrecht or of the Treaty of Paris. They are trivialities compared with the peace God creates in consecrated souls. Nature's whole scheme is a parable of this highest result. The world spinning in vacuo, its enormous burden upheld by a power invisible, is her visible sign of this crowning wonder. Peace in the battle, rest in the whirlwind—this is the miracle of the ages, the miracle wrought by Christ's Gospel in the hearts of men.

XXIV. Our Reading Life

From the beginning the human race has been a race of readers. Not, however, by any means one of book readers. Of the vast majority it might be said, as of Sir Nathaniel in *Love's Labour's Lost*:—

Sir, he hath never fed of dainties that are bred in a book.
He hath not eat paper as it were; he hath not drunk ink.

Of the countless millions that in succession have trodden this planet, it is the merest fringe that have studied letters. Printing is an affair of yesterday. For ages manuscripts and the study of them were the secret of a class; for an immeasurably longer period there were no manuscripts at all. So far, the great mass of our fellows have got through, and, as it seems, with considerable satisfaction to themselves, without scent of ink.

Yet, as we have said, they have all been readers. The savage, blazing the trees on his way through the trackless forest, was a writer. The man who followed and who steered his way by these marks was a reader. The reading that is outside of books is the occupation at once of the highest and of the most primitive forms of intelligence. The Red Indian finds in the clouds, the running river, the obscure signs of prairie and forest, a library which he cons with marvellous insight. A William Wordsworth, as he goes up into the hills, carries there another kind of insight and obtains another kind of result. But the library is the same. The first thing a child reads is human feature. It differentiates accurately between a smile and a frown. A Darwin, bringing his trained intelligence to its last and highest exercise, takes up the same study. That is a wonderful account of education without books which Plato gives as the training of the Persian princes. At first the main care was for the developing of their bodies. Then they were taught to ride and hunt. At the age of fourteen they were handed over to the care of four wise men, of whom the first taught the youth religion, the second taught him to be ever upright and true, the third to be master of his own desires, and the fourth to fear nothing.

The Persian had learned what it is essential we should all know, that a first-hand acquaintance with things is far better than any knowledge that is second-hand. The highest kind of reader is the man who interrogates Nature for himself. Geordie Stephenson was the reverse of a bookman, but his steady following up of a single idea, of one stray hint that Nature flung him, did more for himself and his fellows than the swallowing of whole libraries. In the literary sphere itself it might seem that the only way for the modern man to obtain originality is to abstain from books. To peruse them will be to beget that uncomfortable suspicion, which Goethe has somewhere expressed, that all the things to say have been already said. The complaint, indeed, is older. Two thousand years ago the Latins were afflicted with the same paralysing idea. "*Pereant isti qui ante nos nostra dixerunt*" is their distressful cry. "Confound the fellows who have said our good things before us."

Yet when we have made all the deductions, and ranged in line all the objections, it remains that reading, in this narrower book sense of the term, stands as, perhaps, the most wonderful feature in the long, manifold education of the human spirit. Has it ever occurred to us to realise what is involved in the scanning of a single line in a

printed page? Think of the ages of evolution that went into the formation of an alphabet; what it meant to arrive at the fixing of a given sound as signifying, for all who heard it, a certain perception; and then the translation of the sounds into forms recognisable by the eye, and the arranging of them into the complex of forms and ideas contained in the simplest sentence!

The process by which we get our book has been, then, we see, sufficiently wonderful. The result is even more so. A great book is, if we come to think of it, one of the most entirely spiritual of our possessions. It suggests, as perhaps nothing else does, the human share in immortality and infinity. Leigh Hunt catches part of its significance in that fine passage of his on Homer: "To a shape like this, so small, yet so comprehensive, so slight, yet so lasting, so insignificant, yet so venerable, turns the mighty activity of Homer, and so turning is able to live and warm us for ever." Books are the very essence of souls. On to his page a man distils his most ethereal part, and there it remains, living, speaking, persuading, ages after his own frame has mouldered into dust. The thing partakes, we say, of infinity. After innumerable souls have drunk of this fountain it springs for ever fresh, the supply no whit diminished. Fifteen centuries have rolled since Augustine penned the volume I am reading, but its intellect, its hope, its faith, show no sign of the years. Its argument is of immortality, but itself is, perhaps, the greatest argument.

How to spend our reading life is a question belonging to that "Ethic of the Intellect" of which most people think so little. Those who are eager for life's Best will, however, in this department, take a very clearly marked line. They make a simple calculation. The world, they find, has produced a certain number of first-class minds that have left themselves on record. Their work is mental and moral society of the highest kind, to which we are freely invited. Why should we, whose time is short, and who have a thousand other things to do, waste its hours by lingering in the ranks of the third or twelfth raters when these *élite* are calling to us? They lie scattered over all the ages and over all the languages. It is worth studying a language to read one great book in it. Robert Hall learned Italian to get at Dante, and it was worth while. Robertson of Brighton said of certain volumes that read, and re-read, they had entered into his composition like the iron atoms of the blood. A certain splendour from these great spirits casts its glow upon all who come into their circle. However modest our own dimensions, the swing and momentum from these force-centres will inevitably make itself felt in our character and action. To the world's first-class literature we may apply the words used by Madame Roland of Plutarch. It is "the pasture of great souls."

There are, indeed, few moments so big with the inner destinies as those in which a receptive mind happens for the first time on a great book. The business of opening it is in itself so simple. Poking a fire or putting on one's hat is, physically considered, probably more complex. But for how many a man has this turning of a page been the remaking of his world! The reading of William Law's "Serious Call" opened for the young Oxonian, John Wesley, the track which made him the greatest of English evangelists. A gay young Spanish cavalier, wounded at the siege of Pampeluna, beguiles the tedium of his sick-room by scanning a volume of the "Lives of the Saints." The result is that Ignatius Loyola, the erstwhile knight and courtier, becomes the ascetic, the beggar monk, the founder of world-encompassing Jesuitry.

To earnest men another most fateful hour of their reading life is when, passing from the literature of "Yea," they for the first time make acquaintance with the literature of "Nay." It is a very easy piece of moral and mental gymnastic, and one much

recommended by certain schools, to read only on one side. And there are men—those whose service lies in the direction of action rather than of thought—who seem to prosper best on this kind of fare. A man must eat according to his faculty of digestion. For those, however, who are in search of convictions in place of opinions, who interpret in any high sense their mission of teacher and guide, no such terms are possible. Such are never easy about their message till they have faced all there is on the other side. They get their truth as the result of a fight in which they sweat blood at every pore. The man who has wandered in the great and terrible wilderness, after having had his early home of traditional belief sent crashing about his ears; who, after wearying and agonised quest, discerns at last the guiding light, and with tottering feet reaches at length the Promised Land, will have a note of his own as teacher and prophet to his fellows.

The sum of all this is that our reading life, in any true conception of it, will be a constant effort in the direction of a higher being and doing. In the homely words of an early writer, it is "a manuring of the soul." To take in for the mere purpose of accumulation is an ignoble business. The word, of whatever sort, is not life's ultimate. Montaigne's scorn of Cicero and Pliny for seeking glory by mere writing and speaking is somewhat strained, but his assertion that "if the acts of Xenophon or Cæsar had not by much exceeded their eloquence I cannot believe they would ever have written them," has all our sympathy. Whether we read what others have written, or write what others may read, the same end should be in view—character and action. When Germany rose from under the yoke of Napoleon, its young poet Körner stirred it with noble song and then leaped into the field and died fighting for freedom. A Tyndale read his Bible and forthwith braved dungeon and stake in the endeavour to open the Book to his fellows.

Since Christianity began there has accumulated round it a literature so vast that no scholar, however omnivorous or long-lived, could ever hope to overtake it. Yet such an achievement were, in the Christian sense, child's play compared with that of reading the first dozen verses of Matthew's fifth chapter, and translating their whole meaning into life. When the Church and the world begin to read the Christian record in that fashion the eastern sky will be red with the millennial dawn.

XXV. Of Pulpit Silences

The difficulty, in a subject like this, is to choose among the hundred different ways of approaching it. To many the title's first suggestion would be of the great pulpit voices they once listened to that are gone for ever silent. The departure of a true spiritual teacher is to multitudes the keenest of personal bereavements. When a Spurgeon, a Beecher, a Phillips Brooks passed away, the world to them seemed to have lost its noblest music. And yet these successive silencings of the great leaders are, strange though it seem, a necessary part of our spiritual evolution. The eternal unfolding needs new agents for its each successive phase. Were Augustine, or St. Francis, or Luther, or Wesley to be given back to the Church to-day, they would be only a bewilderment and a failure. To be of any use they would require either a reconstituted mind or a reconstituted world. Each age must breed its own leaders, seek its own spiritual nourishment, work out its own salvation.

It is not, however, of the dead but of the living we would here speak. One of the clamant needs of the Church to-day is an adequate theory and practice of pulpit silences. Says R. L. Stevenson in one of his letters: "Oh, if I knew how to omit, I would ask no other knowledge. A man who knew how to omit would make an Iliad of a daily paper." The preacher is, perhaps, more badly in want of this art than even the littérateur or the journalist. The need has been recognised in all religions. Among Greeks, Romans, Egyptians; in Buddhism, Hinduism, and in fact every considerable system, down to the cult of the most savage tribes, we find an external, public utterance carefully guarded by silences. Behind the exoteric teaching lay an inner core of "mysteries" to which only the initiate were introduced. The aborigines of Central Australia to-day have secret rites and doctrines revealed only to the males of the tribe after passing the manhood tests, and rigidly concealed, not only from the outside world, but from their own women and children.

It is noteworthy that early Christianity proceeded on lines not entirely dissimilar. The Church fathers are insistent in pointing out that Christ spoke to outsiders in parables, the inner meaning of which He disclosed only to His disciples; that Paul, in addressing Felix, dealt with the first principles merely of righteousness, temperance and judgment, and in his sermon at Athens confined himself to common religious truths. Following this order, we find in the early centuries a general pulpit instruction for the multitude, a further Christian indoctrination for the catechumens, and a still more developed *disciplina arcani* for the baptized. Cyril of Alexandria sums up the position in the statement: "All may hear the Gospel, but the glory of the Gospel is set apart for the true disciples of Christ. To all who could hear the Lord spoke, but in parables: to His disciples He privately explained them."

It is, to say the least of it, a singular revolution of method which has brought us to the pulpit instruction of to-day. At the period of which we have just spoken the system of reserve was applied to what were considered the special doctrines of Christianity, such as those of the Trinity, of the Atonement, the Incarnation and the Holy Spirit. These were for the baptized communicants. At the present time, on the contrary, it is the fullest proclamation of these doctrines from the pulpit to all and sundry that in orthodox circles is regarded as the pulpit's primal duty. Newman never made a more daring assertion, or one that cut more clean counter to evangelical Protestant feeling,

than where, in his "Arians," he declares that, "No one sanction can be adduced from Scripture, whether of precept or of example, in behalf of the practice of stimulating the affections (*i.e.*, gratitude or remorse) by means of the doctrine of the Atonement, in order to the conversion of the hearers." The statement is, of course, entirely disputable, but that it could be made, and by so influential a theologian, shows the strangely different conceptions that still obtain as to what constitutes the true idea of pulpit teaching.

What, then, in such teaching, should be found and what omitted? The question is far too wide for any proper answer here. The utmost we can do is to offer some suggestions. And the first is to note the example of Christ. There are remarkable silences in His preaching, some of which have been made the subject of bitter complaint. It is, for instance, sufficiently significant that there should be no reference in it to human origins or to the doctrine of the Fall. But there are other gaps not less striking. Strauss, in "*Der alte und der neue Glaube*," gives full and caustic expression to a widespread feeling in his complaint that Christ's Gospel has no word for culture or for progress. Science, art, industry, the marvellous developments along these lines which have transformed the world, have apparently, he urges, no place in Christ's ideas or sympathies. It seems on the surface a formidable objection. But a deeper insight shows that the gap here, instead of being a defect, is one of the most significant of the Christian evidences. As Harnack has pointed out, there is no final gospel to be delivered on the subject of art, science or industrial development. Their history is one of perpetually succeeding phases, which change with the generations. Christ's message was to the permanent in man. It recognised that while men everywhere differ, man is always the same. And his highest ultimate need is, in all circumstances, the same need. It is precisely because the message is outside of time developments that it becomes a universal message. What the Roman slave of the first century and the prosperous, cultured citizen of the twentieth alike require as the condition of successful living is a mental, spiritual state that puts them in true relation to God, themselves and their environment. And it is precisely on this line that Christ and His message meet them.

This consideration should help us greatly in the solution of some other urgent pulpit problems of to-day. How far should there be speech and how far silence on matters of immediate national interest? To what extent is the Christianity preached to be an *applied* Christianity? In what way and to what extent are the social, the economical and the political questions of the hour to be dealt with by the preacher? Apostolic Christianity offers an answer which it were well if our own day would carefully re-study. We find in the primitive Church a complete absence of what may be called the ordinary social, economical and political propaganda. The conditions in these respects were in all conscience bad enough, but they did not form the subject of Christ's or the apostles' preaching. Slavery existed and in the most cruel form, but no anti-slavery crusade was set afoot. Judæa was a crushed nationality, but these Jewish exhorters had nothing to say about a political redemption. One saw everywhere the extremest poverty, but the apostles never interested themselves in the principles of "The Wealth of Nations." Why was this? The lesson has been strangely misunderstood, and by more than one side. In some quarters the facts are used to show the utter impracticability of Christianity as a system of life; in others to show that the only true follower of Christ is the world-renouncing monk.

Both are wrong. The reason why primitive Christianity had no specific anti-slavery, anti-poverty, anti-despotism propaganda lay in no sense in the fact that it acquiesced

in slavery, or poverty, or despotism. Actually it was the enemy of them all, and in the end will be fatal to them all. The primitive "silence" on these matters lay in the fact to which we need to-day to give our fullest attention, that the new thing Christianity had brought in was of infinitely more value to life than all these, and its propagation accordingly of far more importance. If only the pulpit would believe it! When the preacher has become merely political it is because he has lost grip of religion. As long as this last is vital in him he cannot help seeing that it is of infinitely more political and social and economical value than any politics, or socialisms, or economics. To Paul it was so much more worth while to make a slave a Christian than to agitate for his freedom! There will always be enough and to spare of politicians; what the world really wants is men who have news from the land of the ideal, who have God's life within them, who open afresh the springs of living water that quench the thirst of the soul. When the Church is alive it makes religion the most interesting thing in the land, whatever else is happening. It is worth while here remembering the conditions in this country a century ago. Politics were exciting enough then. Our grandfathers were facing Peninsular campaigns, threatened French invasions, and Consols down to somewhere near fifty. And yet there were voices in the pulpit that made all these things seem little. For this time of external confusion was the time of the great Evangelical revival, of the great Methodist expansion, of the missionary era, when the societies were founded which now cover the world with their operations. Politics were great, and so were wealth and commerce, but the Church succeeded in convincing men that the affairs of the soul were greater still.

Is this to say that Christianity has been, or can ever be, indifferent to political or social progress? Let anyone who is inclined to think so read such a book as Loring Brace's "Gesta Christi." It will be strange if he does not reach the author's conclusion, that "Christianity has floated everything else in history—Governments, philosophies, rationalisms, like straws on its stream thus far. It is an eternity of sympathy and benevolence and purity." It wins offhand the lower things by aiming perpetually at the higher.

That the Church is the representative of the eternal in the midst of time does not, however, absolve it from a heavy responsibility in relation to the things of time. Its message will have these continually within its scope, but ever to bring them under its own light, to view them *sub specie æternitatis*. The pulpit cannot be silent on sins, whether national or individual, that are destroying spiritual life; no, not though it suffers as did a Chrysostom at Constantinople and a Savonarola at Florence. But when men speak on these themes they must have a call. The true prophet knows that his message has been given to him and that it must be spoken at all hazards. The question of pulpit speech or silence on a given theme depends so much on *who* is in the pulpit. No man should speak on disputed points who has not first earned the right to speak; a right centred in the trust and esteem of his hearers and gained as the wage of character and service.

The history of a preacher's pulpit silences is the story of his soul. As he progresses in life, how many statements, at the beginning so glibly uttered, have become impossible; how many truths once ignored, but burnt in by after experience, flame now at the very front! The *disciplina arcani* here is often one of suffering. "It's maest o't tinsel wark," said a village critic of Brown of Haddington's sermons when in his youth. Hearing him later, after a great spiritual experience had reached the preacher, the same critic said, "It's a gowd noo."

XXVI. Science and Conversion

The historian of the future will probably point to our time as one in which theology entered on a new phase. It is that of the application of the strictly scientific method. What has happened to our generation is that, almost without knowing it, we are bringing to these questions an entirely fresh mind. Instead of studying religion from the standpoint of a dogma, we are investigating it as a manifestation of life. We begin with psychology. “Here,” we say, “are certain remarkable and widespread facts of human experience. What do we make of them?” As the new method establishes itself it will work a wholesome change in theological expression. Some venerable words, too hard-worked in past ages, will be seen to have earned their right to retire. We shall hear less and less of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and more and more of accuracy and inaccuracy. In a word, religion will have become in the true sense scientific. Timid souls may find in this movement occasion for alarm, as though the great spiritual interests were endangered. Those who see farther will only rejoice, for they recognise that along this road man is about to reach a new religious interest and a new certitude.

Amongst the phenomena on which modern science has to pronounce, a central group, of highest interest and vital importance, is that connected with “conversion,” or “the new birth.” Neither the phenomena nor the phraseology are, let us remark, confined to any one faith. The phrase, or its equivalents, are in the vocabulary of all the great religions. They all have their category of “the twice born.” But it is in primitive Christianity, and in those religious conditions of after times that have been most nearly in accord, that we see the experience in its clearest form. What precisely is there in such testimonies as those of St. Paul, when he declares of himself and his brethren that they were “new creatures,” that with them “old things had passed away and all things had become new”; or in the recitals, say, of eighteenth century Methodism, which show us the savage Kingswood colliers or the wreckers of the Cornish coast, changed as to their habits, their language, their whole attitude to the world and life, to a degree almost beyond recognition? Here, surely, is a human phenomenon, with interests not only for the historian or the scientist, but for every sane man and woman.

For these statements, if founded in fact, are inevitably of a more than local reference. Their bearing is upon humanity as a whole, and they shed upon it the light of an immense hope. We see around us everywhere imperfect, defective, deeply diseased characters, and here is a whisper that, under certain conditions, they can be remade. The inner machine so desperately out of order is, we are told, reparable! The word goes that amongst Roman slaves in one century, and among English working people in another, without any amelioration of temporal conditions, there appeared a fresh enthusiasm for life, and the rise within them of an immense new moral force. The compelling interest of such statements lies here, that they relate to the actual life we are all of us living. Their reference is not to a supposed other world or future life, about which there are doubts and differences, but to the definite career we are now marking out for ourselves. The question raised is whether there is a force available by which we can morally recreate ourselves, and so make life doubly and trebly worth living?

If there be such a force, it is time some of us knew of it, for we badly need its uplift. We are in an age of decadents, if not of decadence. We see around us a second and third generation, descended from rich, fruitful, religious characters, but who themselves are desiccated, inwardly withered, with no internal spring of moral vitality. There are hordes of the outwardly well-to-do who are spiritually destitute. They have no home of the soul. The poor wretches, rich in worldly goods, are, as to central matters, absolutely without resource. Their dissipations are the desperate attempt to forget themselves and their inner misery. Bankrupt of happiness, they are like the winter vagrants of the Thames Embankment, who, with the light of homes and of palaces shining to right and left, are themselves shivering out there in the cold.

Are these normal conditions, or is there a chance of getting a change? That is the matter at stake in the doctrine of conversion, and the stake is a big one. The point now to examine is whether the doctrine has reasons under it that are tenable in the court of science. Are the cases that are cited a freak of temperament, or do they rest on a universal law? Let us ask one or two questions. The first is, whether, in the moral sphere, there may not be available for man vast forces that lie outside himself? Upon this we may say, to begin with, that if our world is all of a piece, that is precisely what science would lead us to expect. In the physical plane man's whole progress has resulted from the linking of his resources to outside reinforcements. Himself of puny physique, vastly inferior to a dozen fellow inhabitants of the planet, he is to-day master of his world, strong with the strength of its winds, its tides, its earth-currents, its roaring Niagaras, of all its accumulated forces. The earth is one vast power region which he is claiming as his own. And this because he has learned how to unite his inner force with this outer one. Now, that there should also be a spiritual power region, whose resources have the same relation to man's highest faculties as steam or earth-currents have to his physical system, is what to-day the whole analogy of life would lead us to believe.

The next question is, whether we may not affirm the outside moral energy as *personal*, and as acting on the individual by a kind of "possession"? Here again we are in a region of well-established fact. The phenomena of hypnotism have multiplied before us instances where one personality, by the projection of its will-power, penetrates the boundaries of another personality, and uses the patient's faculties and limbs as the organs of its own volition. But in these two affirmations we have contained all that is essential in the doctrine of conversion. What religion here affirms, on the one side, is, that just as the human subject quadruples his powers by outside linkings with the ascertained cosmic powers, so, by an act of will, he can ally himself with that sum of moral energy which he discerns to be working in the world, that "Power for Righteousness," whose operation is visibly clarifying humanity of its grosser elements, and evolving a new kingdom of holiness and love. On the other side it affirms the coming in to such a man of this moral energy as a form of life. It is a biogenesis on the highest scale. This is conversion. It is a giving of oneself to God, and a receiving of God into oneself. The original Quaker affirmation, "that Christians are now led inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God, even in the same manner, though it befall not many to be led in the same measure, as the saints were of old," is a rendering into the language of piety of what some day will be accepted as a formula of science.

But the teaching of this great experience, to have its proper weight, will have to be presented in terms of the modern mind. It will have to be dissociated from much that

in earlier days has been regarded as of its essence. Excellent men who have passed through it have grievously bungled their account of the business. They have offered us the history of their mental limitations, of their ignorances, their prejudices, their morbidities, as of the matter itself. In so doing, how grievously have they clogged the way for other inquirers! How they have clouded the real issue! Each man who travels this way must journey in his own fashion; but let him not dictate the going of his neighbour. How many have taken a Bunyan's hypochondriacs as a kind of strait gate for themselves! In earlier days the starting-point for the doctrine of conversion was the dogma of human total depravity. To-day the starting-point will be the affirmation of man's immense spiritual possibilities. And instead of being proclaimed as the privilege of a few it will be offered to humanity as its common and glorious heritage.

A point here to be carefully noted is the place of this teaching as a creator of life values. We have to-day a new measure of doctrines and institutions, in their "value for life." "How does the thing work?" And here the doctrine of conversion stands as of the first importance. For it is the very essence of individuality. M. Demolins, the eminent French writer, has, in a succession of books, exhibited to his countrymen the causes of Anglo-Saxon superiority as consisting in its development of private initiative, and of the worth of the individual. And it is precisely here that the Christian conversion has wrought with such immense force. It is for one thing the apotheosis of democracy. The "twice born" of other religions have commonly been an *élite*, a privileged aristocratic few. Christianity opened its spiritual paradise to the beggar and the slave. And wherever it has been corrupted, one of the first results has been the withdrawal of its democratic energy. To get a vivid sense of the contrast here one cannot do better than turn from the New Testament Epistles, where the deepest mysteries and highest privileges are opened to the poor and most obscure, to the religious position of, say, Montaigne in the sixteenth century. In his essay on "Prayers and Orisons," he offers us a perfect view of the aristocratic, Latin idea. It were better, he argues, that the vulgar should be kept in ignorance than be in a position to discuss these mysteries. It is "a shame to suffer the same to be profaned in the mouths of ignorant and popular people." The result of this idea upon the common morals is seen when in the same essay he speaks of soldiers, when about to engage on the most infamous adventures, invoking the Divine assistance for their crimes.

This doctrine will have to be the note of the new preaching as it was the note of the old. The strength of the Evangelical communities has lain, not in this or that variety of doctrine or institution, but in the development of strong individualities. And they secured this by driving it into men that, side by side with their weakness, lay immeasurable sources of power, which they could appropriate by an act of faith and of will. The great religious leaders by a sure instinct have fixed always upon this point. The Luthers, the Wesleys, the Spurgeons despised other objects in preaching as compared with this central one. And if the Christianity of to-day is to renew its strength and to hold its own it must regain that mood. It is nothing less than tragical to note how, with so magnificent a work at their hand, and human souls sick and perishing for want of it, men in pulpits will talk on any other subject than this. And yet we see the reason. "Conversion" is a word that is tophampered with outworn tradition. It has been made sinister by narrow and morbid association. The work of to-day is to bring the word out of local and sectarian byways into the broad open of the world. Conversion is a scientific fact as much as is magnetism. It represents the law of human moral recovery. The force available for it is within everybody's reach.

The next great spiritual revival will date from the time when the Church, in all its sections, has once more opened its eyes to this elementary truth.

XXVII. Interpreters of Christ

What is the relation between a mountain and the man who sees it, and reports of it to us who have not seen? How different the two things! And yet the man, to us who listen, stands for all we know of the mountain, and consequently our view is imperfect with his imperfections. As we hear him discourse the question arises, “How much is he giving us of the fact and how much of himself?” For what the man is interpreting is not simply the sublime object yonder, but himself also, his faculty of perception and emotion, his limitations, his point of view. The artist stands for so much in the picture. The mountain he sketches contains on its every face the image of himself.

The illustration may help us to understand what is one of the great fascinations and one of the great difficulties of the Christian history. For nigh upon twenty centuries there has loomed in the human imagination a height as of a mountain, with its roots in the earth and its head in the heavens. It is the personality of Christ. We look up to this with wonder and awe. Before or since there has been nothing like it in the world. A stream of spiritual energy that through all these years has been sweeping through the earth with ever-accumulating force and volume has here its origin. In this personality we find powers which amaze us. Here is a man moving familiarly amongst men, as one of them, and yet offering them redemption, forgiveness, peace, as things that were elements of His own spiritual consciousness, inner treasures that were His to impart. And doing and being all this He is so entirely at home with Himself. He feels it never in the least strange to be or do this, any more than you do to be a doctor or a draper! Millions of men who have read this story have felt in it the thrill of the Divine, and realised that in this personality God had in very deed visited His people.

But here begins our mystery. For Christ is to us an interpretation. And, as we began by saying, what is the relation between the thing in itself and the report of it? Is our outside reality the sum of the statements made to us concerning it? If not that, how near are they to the actual truth? We remember the story of Sir Walter Raleigh, who, on hearing endless opposite accounts of an incident that occurred under his own windows, laughed at the idea of his writing a “History of the World.” How much of our Christ is report of this sort? For the remarkable thing about Him is that He has left us so little that can be called self-interpretation. His greatest apostle wrote voluminous letters, in whose burning words are revealed every phase of his own inner consciousness. But Christ, with one doubtful exception, wrote no letters that have come down to us. He attempted no autobiography. He published no book. And so, on this side at least, our Christ is always an interpretation.

We open the New Testament to discover at once, even in these our earliest sources, how different the interpretations are. We pass from the ministry in Galilee and the Sermon on the Mount of the Gospels, to the Pauline Epistles and are struck at once with the difference of atmosphere. At a yet greater remove is the world of the Apocalypse. Is it the same Christ that is being talked of? Undoubtedly. But the light in each case has fallen evidently on a different reflector with a consequent variety in the image. We see that even those first disciples, who stood around the Master, and took the word direct from His lips, were most imperfect transmitters. We get more of

themselves than of Him. And when we come to the next generation we find its Christ interpretation a singular jumble of Eastern philosophy and of Jewish tradition. Jew and Greek are here busy painting their own images upon the central figure. How natural for the Jew to bring in sacerdotalism! It was inevitable, for his own mind, his language, the blood in his veins, were full of the sacerdotal ideas. And as for the Greeks, we may accept Wernle's dictum that "they obtained Christ's teaching as Greeks, and corrupted it to the best of their ability."

And then the story of this interpretation, as it has gone on since through the generations! It began in simple talk, dictated by loving reminiscence. How one lingers over the picture drawn by Irenæus of Polycarp and his hearers. "I can tell also the very place where the blessed Polycarp was accustomed to sit and discourse; and also his entrances, his walks, the complexion of his life, and the form of his body, and his conversations with the people, and his familiar intercourse with John, as he was accustomed to tell, as also his familiarity with those that had seen the Lord." There are we at the beginnings of all we know historically of Jesus. From such reminiscences as these the Gospels grew; out of them was developed the Church's creed. As, from this starting-point, we study the Christian literature of each succeeding age, we find always a different shade of rendering. On all these myriad souls the one light has flashed, showing us dimly enough the source of illumination, but revealing with sunbright clearness the scenery of these souls themselves. That is one of the marvels of the Christian interpretation. While its attempt to define Christ is so halting and confused, it is a perfect delineation of the artists. It is the most suggestive of studies to watch the interior of these strugglers, when the new power that is upon them wrestles with the old limitations.

The failures in the rendering are almost as instructive as the successes. There have been times when the light was so dim that scarcely any distinct image of the source is discernible. And this often in a period of the greatest theological pretension. What a picture is that which history offers us of the fourth century! Says Harnack: "The saints took the place of the old Pagan deities; their festivals of the old provincial services of the gods. The cultus of the Emperor threatened to obtrude itself into the Church." Philostorgius relates that "Christians presented offerings to the picture of Constantine, and honoured it with lanterns and incense. . . ." The Christian religion threatened to become a new paganism. What a story, too, is that of the "heretic" renderings of Christ! How we would like to get to the inwardness of these variations from the common opinion; to have had a talk with Marcion, or with Montanus, or even with that "Theodotus the tanner," whom Irenæus anathematises as "the leader and father of this God-denying apostasy (the heresy of Artemon), who first affirmed that Christ was a mere man"! One has a feeling that we should understand these men so much better than did their accusers, and that Christ Himself would have understood them so much better than we!

But it is precisely in the ages when the doctrinal and official apprehension seems dullest, and at the furthest remove from truth that we get often the most exquisite presentations of the Master. The current theology of Bernard's time is in many respects repugnant to us, but what purer emotion has ever dwelt in human breast than the passion for Christ which he expresses in his letters and hymns? In the fourteenth century, the time when Chaucer was revealing, in inimitable verse, the vices, extortions, and turpitude of the clergy, we have, from the heart of the Catholic system, messages like the "Revelations of Divine Love" of the Anchoress Julian, concerning which she has this beautiful word: "Wouldst thou learn thy Lord's

meaning in this thing? Learn it well. Love was His meaning. Who showed it thee? Love. What showed he thee? Love. Wherefore showed it thee? For Love. . . . And thou shalt never know nor learn other thing without end."

It is, indeed, at this point that the chief lesson of a study of this kind emerges. The line we have taken may appear to some to have been so far simply bewildering. "If all this means anything," says the reader, "surely it means that our Christianity rests after all on an unknown quantity. Our information of its central fact is, you say, from imperfect and variable sources, from each of which comes a different tale. Where, then, is our religious certainty?" And the answer is that Christianity neither gives us nor was intended to give us a certainty that can be proved at all points to the intellect. The cosmic scheme under which we live does not contemplate at any point an intellectual salvation. For ages men lived by the sun's light and heat without any proper conception of what the sun was. To-day, indeed, we are still at guesswork in the matter. But the sun shines, and man lives thereby. And in like manner, imperfectly translated to the reason, given to us through a thousand distorted images, shining into all manner of varying mental atmospheres, His word twisted continually by variations of languages, by the presuppositions fixed in human brains, the Christ has through all gone on shining upon our race, and ever, where men have failed mentally to grasp the mystery, they have nevertheless felt the warmth and the light. It is by the heart more than by the head that men have known Jesus. The greatest interpreter of Him is human life itself. The deed we perform, the event that meets us on life's way, the sorrow we endure, the inner struggle of the mind—these are the things that open to us one by one the doorways to this Treasure-House of the soul.

And still the interpretation of Christ goes on. The mountain has, as yet, only begun to be explored. Theology has tried its best and succeeded only indifferent well. As the human capacity widens new measuring lines will be brought and greater results obtained. The scientist is to-day in this matter, in a negative mood, but man never did and never can live by negations, and science will come by-and-by to a new temper. Some of the greatest spiritual testimonies are already from this side. What, in the humility of devotion, can surpass the inscription on the grave of Copernicus! "Not that grace which Paul received crave I, not that favour with which Thou didst pardon Peter; that which Thou didst grant the malefactor, that alone crave I." And where have we a more heart-felt breathing of discipleship than in the hymn of Leibnitz:

Jesu, dessen Tod und Leiden
Unsre Freud' und Leben ist!

The science of to-morrow, with a deeper apprehension of the soul's mystery and need than it now possesses, will regain that note, with something added of its own. With a mightier sweep of vision, it will be the great interpreter of Christ.

XXVIII. The New Incarnation

There is, perhaps, no Christian belief upon which theology has oftener come to blows with outside thinking than the doctrine of Incarnation. And, indeed, the forms in which it has been offered to the world have been sufficiently provocative. Both as a theory and as a statement of historical fact it has offered a broad enough surface to the shafts of the enemy. The whole conception of it has undergone enormous revision in the modern mind. But the revision has been also a reacceptance. Incarnation has taken a new hold upon the thought of to-day. Science has cast upon it fresh lights, and the philosophy of history is beginning to regard it as containing the secret of the world.

When the German idealists began, from their standpoint, to work on the problem of existence; when Fichte depicted the human mind as related to the Divine mind as branches are to the vine; when Schelling saw the external world as another expression of the ife that is writ in our consciousness, and the eternal spirit as coming to itself in man; and when Hegel offered his doctrine of the world and human history as exhibiting successive forms of one Divine idea, philosophy was, almost unconsciously, opening the way to a fresh concept of Incarnation. At the same time, from a totally opposite starting-point, that of physical science, a mass of new observations and conclusions were being developed, which, to the astonishment of thinkers, were found to point in the same direction. The central idea of evolution, of the development of life from lower to higher forms, when pursued to its implications, revealed itself as, if not a direct evidence of, yet in mysterious and wonderful harmony with, the belief in Divine Incarnation. Here Hegel and Schelling on one side, and Darwin and Spencer on the other, showed, without seeming to know it, as interpreters of the New Testament.

When to-day we read in the Christian Gospel, of Christ as the Word, as the image of the Father, our mind turns instinctively to the latest result of philosophy, of the Divine thought as realising itself, finding its vehicle and expression, so far as this world is concerned, in man. We turn to science, and take its renderings of the world-development as part of this process. We see Divinity burying itself, as it were, at the beginning, in the very roots of things, working up through one phase of existence to another, shaping animal forms as successive lowly expressions and adumbrations of what was coming, until, in man, and the soul, it reaches a clear consciousness of itself. It is the heavens coming up through the earth. It is the Highest taking on the form of a servant. Ultimately, on the plane of history, and as part of and indissolubly related to the whole movement, emerges a soul in which the whole secret of the Divine character is manifested. As Theodore of Mopsuestia puts it: “The human spirit of Jesus so perfectly appropriated the Divine as to become entirely one with it.” Ritschl is on exactly the same line in his declaration that “the essence of God, as it is spirit, and will, and especially love, can, and has, become operative in a human life.” And so Christ has for us the religious value of God. In Him God has expressed Himself, shown us His character. In the broad, sweeping thought of one of the earliest Christian writers, Justin Martyr, “He is the Word of whom every race of men are partakers, and those who live reasonably are Christians, even though they have

been thought atheists; as among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them."

But the Christ of the Gospels was an historical figure, who disappeared from the world nearly nineteen centuries ago. Disappeared; but the vanishing, and what followed are the most wonderful part of the story. However we interpret what followed, no one, including the veriest sceptic, can deny that it was after His death that Christ's greatest work began. Lamartine was not exaggerating when he said that "Christ's tomb was the grave of the old world and the cradle of the new." One of the Master's most pregnant words, that He would give to the world a spirit, a Paraclete, who after his departure should work amongst men as His representative, is now interpreted for us by the history of all the succeeding ages. The spirit of Christ, abiding for a brief space in a mortal frame, after the emancipation of death, has expanded in its august operations, until it promises to take the whole of human society, the entire circle of human living, as the body that it shall henceforth inhabit. "He that descended," says a great apostolic word, "is the same that ascended . . . that He might fill all things." In other words, the post-mortem history of Jesus is the history of a series of reincarnations, in which His spirit has been ever seeking and framing for itself a body through which it might work His work upon the world.

In tracing that great story, we find ourselves in front of some of the greatest problems of Christian belief and in possession of what seems a key to their solution. In every age of its existence the Christian Church, following a New Testament dictum, has called itself "the body of Christ." The definition contained much more than was suspected by most of those who used it. However we describe the Church; whether, with Origen, we speak of it "as the assembly of all the Faithful," or with Augustine as "the people of God throughout all ages," or with Cyril as "the most holy multitude of the pious," or with Bede as "the congregation of all saints," we find that, as it appears in history, it is ever a body with a soul inside it. And the body is one that grows, comes to its culmination, then decays and perishes. It is, besides, a most imperfect body, made out of the materials which each age furnished, and expressing, in the rudest way, the ethereal element within.

An illustration of what we mean is seen in the Catholicism of the mediæval age. Here is a system which for centuries represented what there was of Christianity. It boasted of possessing in its dogma the whole truth of things, in its organisation the entire discipline of life. But no sooner had it reached its height of power than its decay began. Huge crevices began to yawn in its intellectual system; moral diseases infested it. At the very middle of its reign we have Bernard of Cluny declaring of Rome that "the Pontiff, or rather the King of this odious Babylon, tramples under foot the Gospel of Christ, and makes himself adored as a God." As the years roll on the signs of decrepitude increase. The Reformation breaks the body in twain. The world's new thought, turned upon this great theological system as it is depicted in a Dante, or in the "Summa" of an Aquinas, pronounces it to be old and ready to vanish away.

But Protestantism, which proclaimed itself also a Church, and as being in its turn the body of Christ, has shown similar characteristics. From its appearance in the sixteenth century to the present day it has exhibited all the features of a mortal body. Lutheranism and Calvinism, as the men of Charles the Fifth's time knew them, have had their stages of early growth, of culmination and of decay. To-day their doctrinal systems are riddled by criticism, their old watchwords are without significance; their programmes fail to meet the modern aspiration.

What is the meaning of this? Does it spell the defeat of religion, the overthrow of Christ? Surely by this time we should have read our history better! What has happened here in the theologic and ecclesiastical systems is what has been happening through all the ages of which evolution speaks. It is the eternal story of the one spirit creating successive bodies, making what was possible of them, but all the time, and especially during their decay, weaving ceaselessly the new body that was to take their place. We may say that each age of the Church has had the body that was possible to it. The shortcomings of the Church in each age, its limitations, ignorances, superstitions, show us, not the mind of Christ, nor the possibilities of uplift that are in it for humanity, but simply the level to which under that uplift, each particular generation had arrived. It was this view of Christianity that led Schiller in a letter to Goethe to exclaim, “I find in the Christian religion virtually the foundation of the highest and noblest; and the various manifestations of the same in life appear to me, therefore, so repugnant and insipid because they are failed representations of the highest.”

It is along this line of thought surely that we arrive at a proper comprehension of what is happening around us to-day. Here again in Church life are visible on all hands the signs of decay. A vast quantity of our religious apparatus is obsolete. A mass of the traditional religious statement and ceremonial fails to touch the modern mind. Men in consequence are writing about “the coming irreligion” and the approaching extinction of Christianity. What is really taking place around us is a series of vast preparations for yet a new incarnation of the Christ. Marvellous and awe-inspiring, to one whose eyes are open, are the stages of the august process. The very dissatisfaction with the existing forms is a part of it. Carlyle has put into unforgettable words the spirit of the time; “The religious principle, driven out of most churches, either lies unseen in the hearts of good men, looking and longing and silently working towards some new realisation; or else wanders homeless over the world, like the disembodied soul seeking its terrestrial organism.”

That new organism is already looming into sight. The fresh incarnation is visibly preparing. In the twentieth century also shall the Christ find His body. And it will be a higher, nobler structure than any that has preceded it. A thousand things that belonged to earlier forms will be missing in this. The old proscriptions, the old narrowness, the suspicions against knowledge and reason, the claims of priesthoods, of blind authority, will be missing here. This body will have a brain stored with all the world has of knowable, but its soul will be the soul of Christ. In this incarnation we shall see Christianity in its essence as the Spirit of Heavenly Love, binding human society together in a brotherhood of service, in a holy, happy fellowship of the spirit. Nothing can prevent that coming. All history points this way. Here shall be fulfilled the aspiration, echoed by a myriad loyal hearts, which our great Puritan poet has put into imperishable words: “Come forth out of thy royal chambers, O Prince of all the Kings of the earth! Put on the visible robes of Thy imperial majesty, take up that unlimited sceptre which Thy Almighty Father hath bequeathed Thee; for now the voice of Thy bride calls Thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed.”

XXIX. The Prophet in Man

Religious prophecy, as commonly understood, seems just now to be somewhat at a discount. Biblical critics, working over what were once regarded as supernatural predictions, have shed upon them a new and commoner light. The foretelling supposed to be centuries before the fact turns out to be a *vaticinium ex eventu*; the significance of the prophet is declared to be a significance for his own rather than for future times. And the grotesque performances of a belated Biblical school of our own day, who, undeterred by the thousand failures of like-minded predecessors, go on constructing out of Daniel and the Apocalypse lurid pictures of impossible cataclysms, have tended, with a large portion of the educated public, to bring all efforts of this kind into discredit. The *rôle* of prophet has shifted from the religious to the scientific teacher. Upon the astronomer who can predict the exact moment of an eclipse a hundred thousand years hence; upon the physicist who announces the date of exhaustion of our coal supply, or who figures out the period during which the sun's heat will keep the earth habitable, the mantle has now fallen. Modern literature is full of "Anticipations," but they do not profess to be religious.

And yet this is, after all, merely on the surface. For religious prophecy is as much alive to-day as ever, and will become the more potent as its real significance is better understood. With a changed nomenclature, and with a wider, deeper outlook it will resume its old authority, and much more. For in the end it will be recognised, not merely by a class, by a religious nature here and there, but by the common intelligence of the world. It will be seen that the Bible is true to humanity in being full of religious prophecy. And that because humanity at its root is itself full of it. The prophets *d'élite*, the Isaiahs, the Pauls, are such, first of all, because all men are prophets. The prophetic word draws from a common element. It would have no significance and find no echo did it not represent something which underlies the whole basis of human life. Man himself is the prophet, because he is himself the mystery, the one in whom, far beyond his own knowing, is wrapped up the secret of the universe. His history is a spiritual drama, the unfolding of which becomes ever more wondrous, and from whose past a mystic finger points towards a something greater yet to come.

Before, however, going further on this line, a word may be needed as against a possible objection. The awakened interest in philosophical studies in this country seems to have had for a first effect the bemuddling of many eager minds. We have, for instance, the doctrine of spiritual evolution attacked on grounds of high metaphysic. Spinoza is flung at us as having disposed for ever of the notion of "end" and "purpose" in God and His universe. Is not, it is asked, the idea of a something better towards which God works the very negation of that All Perfect which, by its very definition, must be as all perfect *now* as *then*? Reasoning of this kind reaches its ultimate, surely, in the position of an American philosophical writer, who derides the notion of final causes and speaks of the apparent movements in the universe as simply "variations of the cosmical weather"! But all this is simply the philosophy of presupposition, of which by this time we ought to have become decently rid. When we touch the Infinite we can frame any number of *a priori* contradictions. The Greek philosophers amused themselves that way ages ago. It is the old fallacy of supposing

that the thinkable is always the same as the actual. When with a little more wisdom we condescend to the sphere we really know, we find the universe full of what in our language at least, are "ends" and "purposes," though in heaven's vocabulary the words may be translated quite differently. And of these purposes, the chiefest we discern is that of the evolution of the human spirit.

In piecing together for us the story of evolution science is giving us a new Scripture whose religious and prophetic interest holds us spell-bound. One of its first lessons is that man is the one and final object towards which the whole movement of the planet has been straining. There will be in this world no animal organism that can transcend his own. That result was provided for long ages ago, when evolution, which hitherto had worked through physical variations, began, in our remotest ancestor amongst the mammalian primates, to work by increments of mental power. Henceforward in the struggle mind was for ever to outweigh body, and man the mind-possessor to be, in the kingdom both of animals and of all natural forces, alone and supreme.

But that point was settled only as preparatory to another. For out of man the animal was to be evolved in due course man the spiritual. Science and the Bible have here each their Book of Genesis, and the two substantially tally. Man rose morally by falling. The history of each human child is, in this respect, the history of the race. In the infant, born without moral consciousness, and rising gradually to the sense of this sphere by experiments and stumbles and failures, we have the Eden story for ever repeated. The way in which Nature has nursed man towards a spiritual end is the miracle open before our eyes to-day. In prehistoric times, in the long infancy accorded the human animal, an infancy which developed the germs of altruism and self-sacrifice in the parents, we see the first start in the great process. Later, we have man emerging upon the sphere of contemplation, of a consciousness of the universe as related to him in a mystical manner. Religion takes shape in crudest forms, yet always cognisant of the fact that man contains in himself a mystery too deep to be uttered. In every land and of every faith prophets appear who try to put this secret into words. The movement is gradual, interspersed with epochs of sudden variation. As someone has said, "If Nature does not take leaps, she at times makes great strides." To-day we are trying to translate into terms of evolution the immense stride known as Christianity. And it is in this way we are at last getting a true understanding of it. As Lamennais, with prophetic insight, long ago said: "Christianity can only continue its evolution by entering into the circle of the natural laws of man. It is now entering on this new era, one of those solemn moments in which everything seems to be perishing, but in which everything is being reborn." And the latest verdict of the evolutional philosophy of to-day is that the ethical and spiritual forces which the new Testament Christianity set working in humanity will, as the next stage of human development, inevitably dominate the world.

From this glance along the line some observations as to our special theme can now be made. And the first is that the human values of to-day derive their chief worth from the fact that they are prophetic values. The interest of our life is intensified tenfold when we realise that it is a perpetual Becoming. To-day carries a greater to-morrow. Even Nietzsche, that scoffer *par excellence*, who enjoyed nothing so much as turning everything in doctrine and morals upside down, cannot keep back a certain awe at the spectacle which cosmic history unrolls. Says he, "Man awakens for himself an interest, a response, a hope, almost a confidence that something important is about

to happen, that something is in preparation, that man . . . is an interact, a bridge, a great promise."

But the spectacle gives us more than this. Surely a prophecy of much lies in this single fact that everything so far in human history has proved greater than man had originally imagined. Doubtless there were pessimists in the paleolithic days, ancestors of our club vaticinator, who predicted nothing but disaster and decay. Could they have seen what the race has reached since! Is it nothing to us as a prediction, or at least a hint, that the universe on all the sides of it we are learning to know is proving to be on so broader a scale than an earlier time had imagined? May we not argue from this fact to another? If the Cosmos open to-day to our physical vision is so immeasurably grander than the older reckonings allowed for, may we not conclude that its spiritual side, when we read it better, will show a similar scale; that its dimensions in love, in moral beauty, in perfectness and joy, will in like manner prove not less but immeasurably greater than our present conceptions make them? Was not that saying of Goethe's a true prophet word: "Our wishes are presentiments of the capabilities which lie within us, and harbingers of that which we shall be in a condition to perform"?

And this carries us on to that final prophecy in man, his sense of immortality. The assurance here, be it observed, does not come from man's senses, nor from his logic. It does not rest on syllogisms. Science, it is true, is groping towards some synthesis on this theme. Its doctrine of the persistence of force; its new-found certitude that nothing is wasted or lost in the universe visible to it, open new applications to the sphere of the invisible. But it is not from this source that the main strength of the feeling for immortal life derives. Numbers of men who dabble in science to-day have no assurance at all of the matter, but the contrary. Where it exists in strength its sources are deeper. They lie on man's spiritual side. The assurance is a product and an accompaniment of the higher living. Love is greater than knowledge, and the fruits and assurances of the heart are greater than those of the brain. It is thus that the saints partake beforehand of the rest that remaineth. Men in the secret of Christ know themselves the conquerors of death.

To sum up. The prophets who from age to age utter their word of fire hold their brief from the common element of prophecy which inheres in all humanity. That element is the greatest of our possessions. There is that in man deeper than his present word, and that will take all Eternity to utter. All in our life is good, because all co-operates to the one end. And all is burdened with the prophecy of that end. The history of the past teaches us that the highest in our aspirations is nearest in fact to what is to be. It is not the future which doubt or despair pictures, but that of hope at its highest that history, science and religion to-day bid us expect:

There shall never be one lost good; what was shall live as before.
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound;
What was good shall be good, with for evil so much good more,
On the earth the broken arcs; in heaven a perfect round.

XXX. The Teaching of Emerson

Among modern teachers of the common life Emerson has gained a place which seems secure. It is well, for this high, sweet nature had a message for the world of which the rolling years seem to have increased rather than diminished the significance. There are literary men who are far more than makers of books. Anyone, for instance, who has studied French literature, from the Renaissance downwards, finds its key in Rabelais. Here was a man who may be said to have created an atmosphere—a mental climate for a whole people. At a time when Europe was convulsed with the ultimate questions of life and religion, this man struck in with his note. It was not Luther's note, nor Calvin's. Far otherwise; but it set the tune to French thinking for centuries afterwards. Generation after generation the Gallic mind has seen things in this man's light, and the influence is as strong to-day as ever.

Would it do to say that as Rabelais stood for the essentially French view of life, so Emerson represents the American view? The statement would have to be taken with large reservations. The Concord philosopher stood outside the religious movements which commanded the deepest feeling of his countrymen. The Unitarianism in which he was born found him too broad for its definitions; while from the orthodox Churches his views on Christianity placed him at a seemingly immeasurable remove. Nevertheless, Emerson is typically American. It was only America that could have produced him, and he offered his country in return more than he took from it. He, too, has created an atmosphere in which his fellows have seen things. It was not simply the Boston Transcendentalists to whom he gave eyes. In men of the most opposed theologic and literary camps we trace his manner, his glance. When Quaker Whittier sings:

I feel the earth move sunward,
I join the great march onward;

when Walt Whitman from his boathouse writes, "My notion is, I am myself just as much evil as good, and I say there is, in fact, no evil, or, if there is, I say it is just as important to you, to the land, or to me, as anything else," we have echoes from the same voice. And the boundless optimism which was not afraid to say that even evil itself is good in the making, and that "all's well with the world," has become an inheritance of American thinking. A Beecher, a Phillips Brooks, and the whole school of preachers that follow them, have shared the optimism, though taking their own way of expressing it.

We have said that only America could have produced Emerson. Buckle might, indeed, have found in him an illustration of his favourite doctrine of environment as the moulder of men. In religion and philosophy, where he habitually dwelt, Emerson was simply the American idea carried to the farthest point. A man of the new republic, of a community which had broken politically with the Old World, and started everything afresh, he carried the evolution into the field of thought, and asked his countrymen what hindered them, having gone so far in the minor arrangements of life, from striking out routes for themselves in the matters that were principal? "We have begun to govern afresh and trade afresh; why not begin to think afresh? Why should we not hold an original relation to the universe? We have shaken

off the old world and the old past politically; why should we be their bond slaves internally and religiously? The cosmos is just as much ours to possess, to receive revelations from, to frame conceptions of, as it was to the prophets, the religious leaders and law givers, from whom men for ages have been taking their opinions. We are in a better position to form an opinion than they were. Let us claim our liberty!" That, in substance, was Emerson's message, and it was a greater Declaration of Independence than the one that Jefferson penned.

A daring assertion this, we say, such as only a young country, intoxicated with freedom and success, could have produced. Men, it is true, had dreamed the same thing before. Descartes had set himself to arrive at truth by thinking away every prepossession, everything traceable to authority, until he reached a primal, incontrovertible proposition from which he might start. But neither in the Old World nor the New is it so easy in these matters to "clean the slate." Descartes' "*cogito ergo sum*," his new logical starting-point, turns out to be not even original; an Augustine had said the same thing, in almost the same words, a thousand years before. And our American, in his turn, we discover, has not accomplished the feat of jumping off his own shadow. For the past will not be shaken off. We may burn the parchments, destroy the institutions, pull down the Churches. And the past laughs at our efforts, for it is entrenched in our blood, in the fibre of our brains.

Yet, with all reservations taken, there was a note here that the world will never again forget. True, we cannot break with our past, any more than a tree can break from its root and live. We cannot, for the past is an integral part of our present. Nevertheless, when Emerson affirmed the sovereignty of to-day over yesterday; when he declared that the soul of a living man is the miracle of the ages, has in it now all the Gospels, all the divinities, all the revelations that the world has ever known, and that it holds potencies such as shall yield higher revealings in the future than any history records, his word struck on the general mind as in itself a revelation, and has been a common property of thinking ever since.

Connected with his independence was his optimism, and this, again, was a distinctive American product. It is that of a man who, for one thing, lived in a sunny clime, whose air exalts and intoxicates. A French writer has maintained that the sterner religious faiths, and the melancholic temperaments, are a product of the northern fogs. Give a man sun enough and he will create for you a happy philosophy of life. Emerson might have been cited in proof. Carlyle and he held similar opinions on many central points; but the character of the one had been compacted of countless Novembers, fogs, and north-easters, while the other was embodied sunshine. Not that the optimist's view was here always the sound one. There was a certain provincialism in it. Emerson belonged not only to a sunny, but also to a well-to-do, continent. The America of his day knew scarcely anything of abject poverty. Our prophet's Zion was marvellously at ease. And in taking these surroundings as the measure of existence in general, he made a mistake that carried him in many directions, far astray. He had no eyes for the sterner aspect. He grew impatient when men spoke of it. He records with a kind of petulance how Carlyle, on his first visit to him at Craigenputtock, "still returned to English pauperism, the crowded country, the selfish abdication by public men of all the duties that public men should perform."

One feels, indeed, that his is too dainty a touch for such a world as ours. His doctrine is for a state of ideal perfection, not for one where all the work is yet to do. Our physician of souls is here like those modern curers who tell people airily that there is

nothing the matter with them if they would only think so. Meanwhile our hospitals are full, and the patients cast curious eyes on the visitor who assures them that all is well. A doctrine which proclaims that "the less we have to do with our sins the better"; "no man can afford to waste his moments on compunctions," gives us, with the world as it is, and men as they are, a strange sense of inadequacy. It is holiday-making on the battlefield. The man who never felt anything the matter with him, nor has never made a study of disease, may do excellently as the leader of a picnic, but he leaves wide space for someone who will "bear our infirmities and carry our sicknesses." To wave away the Cross as a Jewish business with which the modern man has no concern, is to trifle with the facts of life. As Lamennais said, the world carries the Cross in its heart. Redemption, sacrifice—these, after all, have made the soul.

For all the blood that ever was shed
Runs through the streams of that countrie.

Emerson's defect, indeed, seems to have been to have anticipated Paradise before we have got there. He loves the saints, but he offers no process for making them. His gospel is sweetness and light, but it lacks driving power. He speaks of Wesley and his fellow-workers as outgrown, but we cannot discover in his methods anything that would have converted the Kingswood colliers or the Cornish wreckers of the evangelist's day into God-fearing people. We are glad of our philosopher and his word, but the world's main stream of healing has risen otherwhere than at Concord.

It is when we have in this way assigned him his place, knowing him as, like the rest of us, standing for a part and not the whole, that we can most unreservedly yield ourselves up to the enjoyment of our thinker. He is the modern Plato, and, like Plato, a born intuitionist, if ever there was one. His very style proclaims the type of his mind. Never did a man more justify Buffon's word, "*Le style c'est l'homme même.*" His truth comes to him in flashes, and he offers it us so. You shall read him from end to end, and find no two consecutive sentences of deductive reasoning. His utterances are aphorisms. He opens his mouth and pearls drop out. He throws out his thought, illustrates it, turns it round, makes it flash with its myriad facets in the sunlight, and there an end. There is no progression. You can never tell why the theme should begin in this way or finish in that. And yet the effect is vast. Wherever he takes us he plunges us into immensity. An opening word, and we are on some farthest cape, contemplating "the unsounded purple sea of marching billows."

Like Plato, also, of whom he was so fond, he was, in the strangest manner, a mingling of East and West. He found a wondrous attraction in the Eastern philosophy. With Schopenhauer and with Thoreau, he had pored over the Vedas, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Zend Avesta. He accepted with them the world as phenomena, as illusion, and spirit as the only reality. Yet withal he had, as Plato had, a strong objective side. The mystic was also the Yankee business man. He was a philosopher with a banking account, and with full appreciation of a good dinner. He never lost his head. He rallies, with his subtlest irony, the enthusiasts of Brook Farm, and the Transcendentalists who, in the name of the ideal, took to camping out in the woods. And who shall say that his was not the saner, and the better, part?

For the rest, while gladly taking him as one of the greatest of the modern witnesses for the Unseen; as a teacher who, in a commercial and materialistic age employed an unsurpassed insight, power, and beauty of expression in proclaiming the supremacy of the moral values, in affirming the rights and the essential majesty of the human

soul, yet Emerson remains to us the writer, the literary man, rather than the prophet. He was not distinctly a religious force. There were notes here that he did not touch, depths he did not sound. We bathe ourselves in his sunshine; we rejoice in the illimitable prospect he unfolds, but when we seek strength for the daily battle, consolation in defeat, courage for the dark and cloudy day, it is not to Concord that we go, but still to Calvary.

XXXI. Vicarious Consecration

Auguste Sabatier, in an essay on the Atonement, lays it down as a first principle that no doctrine of it could be acceptable to the modern consciousness which did not satisfy at every point the universal moral law. In particular he shows how the element of the vicarious, of which the Cross is the special manifestation, founds itself in the very nature of man as a moral being; that vicarious suffering is a law of the spiritual universe, and keeps the world alive. We propose here to carry the argument a step further, and to point out how the vicarious, the "for others" idea, belongs essentially, not only to the higher sufferings and endurances, but also to the higher strivings, to all true and sane endeavours after perfectness. The passage in the Fourth Gospel reported as a saying of Christ, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself," is one of those utterances which, as we gaze into it, is seen to penetrate to the utmost roots of things. It is a statement of the altruism of holiness, a doctrine denied in some quarters, feebly apprehended, if not misunderstood in others, but which, when fairly grasped, exerts on every mind that is honest a constant and irresistible upward pressure.

Goethe was a man of many moods, some of them very Pagan moods. Perhaps he never showed more clearly the side of his character which made Heine dub him "der grosse Heide" than in his statement that "the man who has life in him feels himself to be here for his own sake, not for the public." It is a heathen sentiment and not a Christian. The man who partakes of the world's highest life may begin for himself, but he can never end there. In religion he will, at the earlier stage, and very legitimately, want to find his own soul saved; in business he will have to look after himself, if only to save other people the worry of looking after him. But as the horizon expands he finds these personal issues swallowed up in a sense of something greater. The same thing happens in his pursuit of mental and moral culture. The first enthusiasms here centre largely upon oneself. The delight of knowing, being and doing the best is experienced as the highest of all sensations. But in any true progress there emerges in time another feeling, with a flavour all its own. It is the sense of an overpowering moral indebtedness. The consciousness here is quite unique. The debt which presses is different from any of those with which the business or the legal world make us familiar. It is not anything that our fellow-men have done for us or paid to us which creates the obligation. It is something rooted in the vaster relations of Being. It is the feeling that a contribution is asked of us to the invisible interests of the Universe. We are here to add something to the world's spiritual assets.

The new obligation of which we become conscious is to increase the sum of goodness. One of the most significant, as well as one of the most pathetic, things in history has been men's ceaseless quest after the good. So eager has been their search for saints and sainthood that where they could not find what they sought they have invented it. The hagiologies, the Lives of the Saints, with their supernatural embellishments, their impossible idealisings—what are they but the expression of the world's impatient expectation of a Diviner light that is to break upon it out of human character? When men find such a gleam, how eagerly they follow it! What a revelation of human possibility, if only we would see it, is afforded by stories such as that of the crowd of young aristocrats who gave up their gaieties to follow their beloved Bernard into the Clairvaux wilderness, or of the English nobles who, when

they felt the sainthood of Wycliffe, in the language of Thorpe, his early biographer, "were devotedly attached to him and kept a record of what he said, and guided themselves after his manner of life!" How the common human heart vibrates to that saying of the Italian peasant to Francis of Assisi, "Art thou brother Francis of Assisi?" "Yes!" "Try, then, to be as good as all think thee to be, because many have great faith in thee, and therefore I admonish thee to be nothing less than people hope of thee." Such a person is, in fact, felt to be the possessor and free distributor of immeasurable wealth. He is the discoverer of a new paradise, and men flock to breathe its celestial air.

Our point is that as our inward development goes on we find ourselves laid hold of by a secret imperious demand to this higher helpfulness. "For their sakes" we, too, are "to sanctify ourselves." Humanity has a claim upon us to be and do our very best, that we also may add to the sum of the invisible Good. By our value we increase the value of all mankind. The noble motto, "*Non inferiora secutus*" is not fully realised till we have learned not only to follow the higher things, but to follow them from more than a personal motive.

And this vicarious perfecting must have the widest range. Few things have done more harm to religion than the narrow, conventional ideas of holiness that have so largely obtained. According to notions prevalent in some circles a "saint" is a more or less feeble, microcephalous person, attired in black, to whom half the world's knowledge and practice is taboo. It is an idea descended from the dark ages, when religious professors counted it a virtue not to wash themselves, and when, as Erasmus has it, a man reckoned himself holy on the strength of not being able to read. In our own day the type of character bred upon these views is vividly set forth in a description given by Phillips Brooks of some of his companions at college. He attended a prayer meeting which they conducted. "Never," says he, "shall I lose the impression of the devoutness with which these men prayed and exhorted each other. Their whole souls seemed exalted and their natures were on fire. . . . On the next day I met some of these men at a Greek recitation. It would be little to say of some of the devoutest of them they had not learned their lessons. Their whole way showed that they *never* learned their lessons, that they had not got hold of the first principles of hard, conscientious study."

It would have been well for these men to have learned a little more not only of the Greek language, but also of the Greek idea which identified virtue with knowledge. The argument of Socrates, that as a man is a good horseman by knowing horsemanship and a good smith in proportion as he knows his handicraft, so a man is good in all other departments of his nature by the appropriate knowledge, requires balancing by other considerations, but it has point. We want to get rid of the "sainthood" which has been the scoff of strong men, and substitute for its outworn formulas the idea which is alone worthy of the word, of a human perfectness, that is, of body, intellect and soul. Plato touched the inwardness of the matter in his question, "Is anything more excellent than a man whose beauty of soul is combined with outward beauty of form, the latter corresponding to and harmonising with the former?"

Humanity has suffered a horrible waste of time hitherto from lack of this wider definition. It cannot afford to waste any more. When religious men have come to full recognition of the fact that holiness means wholeness, that sainthood is sanity; that not only the discipline of the soul, but the training of the body, and the acquirement of knowledge in its every department, are parts of sanctification, the long-lagging

world will at last begin to march. But ever as we toil onwards along any or all of these routes the discipline will lose its finest edge unless all be wrought to the music of this great refrain, “For their sakes I sanctify myself.” Our work will fail of sanctity unless it be done in the thought that in its every department we are apprenticed to the Best, in the service of All.

The sense of vicarious consecration is one of those great formative ideas which hover like guardian angels over humanity and assure its inward progress. To have it clearly established within us is a supreme guarantee against whatsoever is base and unworthy. Under this leadership a man can climb without pride; his successes leave him humble. When we dare not do other than our best because our brother needs all the worth that we can win, our progress is a sheer good all round. This master-thought also kills hypocrisy and the whole miserable art of religious subterfuge. It is death to the notion of salvation by creed, by Church, or by the juggling transfer of theological “merit.” The sanctity which is to be of any use to others must be a reality of fact and character. It clears out the pretenders. Said Casaubon of Muretus, “If he only believed in the existence of God as well as he can talk about it he would be an excellent Christian.” The talkers have indeed flourished wonderfully on the older notions. But when holiness is studied as the science of human life, and related accurately to the great laws which underlie the moral world, the reign of cant will be over.

Vicarious consecration should be a watchword for us all. Fathers and mothers are the moral trustees of the family. Failure of character defrauds their children of the best part of their heritage. The pastor and religious teacher is a trustee on a yet larger scale. For such a man to fail of the highest is a public misfortune, while an actual fall is worse than if the bank had broken. The malversation of funds is greater, and in a specie that cannot be replaced. We do not, indeed, know the full limits of our trusteeship. We trace some of its outlines in our earthly relations, but these are not the only ones. A wider reach is suggested in those awesome lines of Tennyson:

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide,
No inner vileness that we dread?

Whether we look up or down, it is plain there is no room for us anywhere except in goodness.

XXXII. The Touch of Tragedy

The story of a war impresses us to an almost exaggerated degree with the tragic element of life. It brings to a focus and exposes to the full glare of publicity all the most sinister happenings that are possible to humanity. The separations, bereavements, heartbreaks at home, the wounds and deaths on the field, the commercial derangements, the financial ruin that attend the progress of a campaign, are the subject daily of columns of print, and offer a theme on which the whole world's attention is fixed. Our preoccupation here is apt, indeed, to make us forget that war has no monopoly of tragedy. We have to make our account with the fact that the tragic, in one form or another, is a normal condition, an inevitable element in every single human life. Whether we die in our beds or by the stab of a bayonet, we shall not escape it. It may come clad in purple and fine linen, or in respectable broadcloth or undisguised and with nothing to hide its grim outlines; but come it will, and we shall each feel its touch. The topic should occupy a place in every sane man's thinking, the more so as, with the lights we have upon it, he may think of it with entire cheerfulness.

What at the outset seems perfectly clear is that we were, of aforethought, predestined to this experience. That we should have come into being as such extraordinary compounds of strength and weakness points to this. Possessed of soft and delicate frames, which quiver with a thousand sensibilities, we find ourselves in a universe of stupendous and ferocious forces—in a world where fires burn, and earthquakes yawn, and waters drown, and storms destroy, and where myriad minute foes, invisible but not less fatal, mine the vitals. And these physical possibilities are only the beginning. All over the realms of thought, of affectional relation, of conscience and the moral life are sown the possibilities of tragedy. To mention one of these innumerable forms, what a new forlornness has the modern scientific imagination introduced! Isolated on his tiny world, man gazes across the infinities which the telescope reveals, and shudders. Astronomy has made him realise his terrible loneliness. The

Taciturna noctis
Signa

which Horace speaks of impress us in a new way now that science has made us understand better the vastnesses they represent. Pascal's terror at "the eternal silence of the infinite spaces" has bitten deep into our generation. The "pitiless, passionless eyes" of the far-off stars seem from their cold depths to burn too deeply "his nothingness into man."

That is the tragic of the imagination. But to whatever conceivable side of human life we turn we find the road simply blocked with similar illustrations. Disraeli talks somewhere of "the hell of failure," and what proportion of us is it that has not passed through the smoke of that inferno? It seems, to say the least, an odd arrangement which ordains that for one who succeeds so many should break down; that wherever one stands strong and upright so many helpless are leaning on him. To enlarge here would be to repeat commonplaces. It is more to the purpose to inquire whether we have ever fairly considered the tragic element in success? It is the people who reach

the heights, even more than those whose fate keeps them below, who know most of that grim experience. The height is not terrible at first. Great abilities and the position they win intoxicate youth with a glorious sense of power and freedom, but the bill for all this has to be paid, and it is a heavy one. It is when the later years arrive, and the world which to a newcomer seemed a conquered world is going indifferently on its way, listening to new voices and forgetting its ancient charmer, that the tug comes. This tragedy of success is felt in all spheres. Says a great singer:

We poets begin our life in gladness,
But thereof comes in the end satiety and madness.

We are, in truth, all, greatest as well as least, dead failures when compared with our hope, and expectation. Think of Swift in his last years, brooding in his Irish deanery, as he put it, "like a poisoned rat in a hole!" How sombre the later time to Luther, with a Peasants' War, defections here and wild heresies there as the apparent results of his work; and to Melancthon, who "welcomed death as an escape from the rage of the theologians"; and to Calvin crying, "The future appals me; I dare not think of it. Unless the Lord descends from heaven barbarism will engulf us!" The world is, indeed, too strong at the last for the strongest of us. "I am trying," said a retired but once popular London minister, "to accustom myself to being forgotten." The aftermath of popularity, a lesson in the art of being forgotten!

This knack of forgetting, on the part of the world outside, is indeed a hard thing for sufferers to bear. It is a strange arrangement. In the first shock of a bereavement the one left behind is almost overwhelmed with the sympathy and affection evoked from a multitude of friends. The table is loaded with letters of condolence. The loved one is buried and great lamentation made over him. And then—well, then the weeks roll on and with the excitement over and the dull, dead grief sinking ever deeper, the stricken heart, now in its sorest need, discovers that the world has quite forgotten to sympathise, being occupied with more pressing affairs.

Plainly life, in one view of it at least, is tragic. It was meant to be so, for the element was mixed with its very essence. What are we to make of it? Men have made of it all kinds of things, according to their temperament and their faith. With some it has been the occasion for pessimism and even blasphemy. The world has been pictured as a place where men "sit and hear each other groan." Of old, Lucretius pictured a new-born child as akin to a shipwrecked mariner cast on a barren shore, its wail being fitting to a being with so much trouble to go through. What a weary world is his!

Jamque adeo fracta est ætas
Effætaque tellus!

But our moderns for strength and bitterness of arraignment can vie with him. Nietzsche applies to the Deity the language in which Charles the Bold apostrophised Louis XI., "Je combats l'universelle Arraignée." Schopenhauer gives a characteristic touch to the picture when he says: "Knock at the graves and ask the dead whether they would rise again; they will shake their heads."

Is this a sensible or a just view? To our thinking, far otherwise. It is to take one feature out of life, to exaggerate it beyond all proportion, and at the same time to refuse the light which solves its mystery. It is, in the first place, to exaggerate. Life, as we have seen, has in it indubitably the touch of the tragic, but when viewed in its wholeness, the element will be found, after all, to be not more than a touch, and that from a hand that lifts rather than beats down. In estimating its proportion to the

general experience we have to remember, for one thing, that a vast mass of it exists more in outward seeming than in inner reality. Many of us have faced the expectation of an immediate and violent death, and have found it very tolerable. Livingstone has recounted his seizure by a lion, and the lulling sensation it gave him. Whymper, dropping from point to point down a precipice, found himself occupied in calmly counting the bumps and in wondering which would finish him. To drop a thousand feet from a cliff and be dashed in pieces at the bottom is a horrifying sight to the spectator. To the victim it offers in the way of positive sensation probably little more than that of going to sleep in a feather-bed. And when we compare life's quiet days with its days of uprooting, its myriads joys with its pains, our year will be found, after all, to have had a spring, summer and autumn as against one winter, and that the winter also has had its attractions.

But the question recurs, Why is there the winter; why this residuum of the tragic? Why should such terrors have been let loose to prowl in the close neighbourhood of spirits that are so timid? There seems but one answer. Human nature has been deliberately exposed to them because it has been planned and framed for the heroic. The school to which we have been introduced, the instructors that wait on us there, argue an education such as befits only the highest destinies. It is the tragic in their life that stamps every common man and woman, the unnoted dwellers in mean streets as well as the occupants of palaces, with the hall-mark of an eternal distinction. A discipline so tremendous argues an output that corresponds. Were we here only to amuse ourselves, the arrangements had been different. As it is, the awful universe over which his gaze wanders, the losses and disappointments that smite him, the pains that rack him and the death and eternity that await him, all salute our pallid mortal and proclaim his greatness. A being on whom such forces are employed can never be ignoble, can never be less than royal.

This is the Christian view, and it is the view that alone seems to reach the level of the facts. Stoicism took the situation bravely according to its lights. To build manhood up to the height of a Marcus Aurelius, a height which bids us "part with life cheerfully, and like a ripe nut when you drop out of the husk, be sure to speak well of the season and make your acknowledgments to the tree that bore you"; or to that of a Zeno, with whom life, death, honour, dishonour, pain, pleasure, riches, poverty, disease, health were things indifferent, were in itself a sufficiently wonderful achievement. But in the Gospel human education has reached a yet loftier stage, a stage in which the soul not only accepts the tragic, but takes it as the ground of immortal hope. Epictetus asked in despair to be shown a man who was sick, or in danger, or dying and yet happy. Christianity could show him multitudes. "Our people die well," said Wesley. They have faced, as did Ignatius and many a one after him, the most hideous tortures, and yet were happy. That the tragic, as all else in life is indeed a concealed Beneficence, working on us for the highest ends, comes out in that individual conviction which, as Ritschl finely puts it, "founds its belief in Providence not so much from the study of the fortunes of others as from the study of our own." To Ritschl on this point echoes R. L. Stevenson, and we cannot better conclude than with his testimony: "If I from my spy-hole looking with purblind eyes upon the least part of a fraction of the Universe, yet perceive in my own life's destiny some broken evidences of a plan, and some signals of an overruling goodness, shall I then be so mad as to complain that all cannot be deciphered?"

XXXIII. The Soul's Atmosphere

In these later ages the world has developed a new sense, that of climate. We have become mightily fastidious in breathing. There are new medical cures which stake everything on the air. In the late autumn increasing hosts of our well-to-do people preen their wings and follow the migratory birds. They are in search of a temperature. Colonists settle for the winter on the keen heights of Davos, or pursue the sun southwards to San Remo or Algiers. We pay any price for an atmosphere. In the sights it flashes on the retina, in the fragrances with which it intoxicates, in the secret vigours it conveys, we find some of life's choicest gifts.

And atmosphere, now so centrally important to the health and pleasure seeker, has become, in other ways, a new thing to our generation. It has been transformed by science. We not only know its chemical constituents, but are obtaining glimpses of the tremendous forces that incessantly play through it. We are investigating the mystery of that luminiferous ether of which it has been strikingly said that "a shock in any part of it causes a tremor which is felt on the surface of countless worlds." The scientist is trying to measure those "shivers of undulation" in it which express themselves successively as heat, or light, or magnetism, or electricity. We stand awestruck at the stupendous energy which is represented in the conveyance to us of the light of a star. We try to grasp what is meant by the statement that one faint star ray falling on our retina represents a wave movement carried on through long years at a rate of six hundred millions of millions per second.

But when we speak of atmosphere, in the language either of the pleasure-seeker or the physicist, we are far from having exhausted the term's significance. The universe consists of something more than of solid planets and sidereal systems, and of the swift telegraphy of luminiferous ether between the interstellar spaces. Behind that universe lies another and a bigger. It is the world of consciousness, the invisible realm of souls. That we belong to both is to us all self-evident, though how the one is related to the other remains the unpenetrated and seemingly impenetrable mystery. And it is this chasm between matter and mind which makes it so difficult for us to think accurately from one to the other. As we discuss the problems of our spiritual nature our terms, borrowed from the world outside, are the very rudest of implements. At best they permit us to speak only in parables. And yet we speak "not as uncertainly." For while the mind holds secrets of its own which can never be interpreted by the physical, an instinct within, which is the unconscious ground of all our reasoning, assures us of an underlying unity binding these twain together; a unity which makes everywhere the truth of the outer to be a projection and a plain hint of the truth of the inner.

It is under this persuasion that we speak here of the Soul's Atmosphere. Our study is of a climate not mentioned in Baedeker, and yet as real as the sunshine of Nice or the pine scent of Arcachon. For as certainly as does our physical organism, so certainly does our spiritual self, live by the air it breathes. But the analysis of the one atmosphere is not nearly so easy as that of the other. When we talk of oxygen and hydrogen, carbon and nitrogen, of the atomic theory and of the law of combining proportions, we are in the sphere of weights and measures, of the accurately calculable. It is a more dimly-lighted region we enter when we reach this other side,

and our measuring instruments are all to seek. We are stumbling up against dim perceptions, adumbrations of truths which, while they impress with their grandeur, leave us only a vague sense of their outline and content. The sphere of the highest in man will never be mapped, because it loses itself in the Infinite.

And yet we can make some affirmations. As our planet is immersed in a deep, dense sea of air, that plays incessantly through our organism and carries in itself mysterious potencies which we are just beginning to discern, so is our thought-world to-day surrounded by its ether, not less pervasive and potent. We cannot tell its whole content, or the whole method of its operation. It consists, partly at least, of ideas and of influences that have for ages been accumulating. It is, for one thing, a vast exhalation of the souls of the past. The law of the physical world that no atom of matter, no unit of force, is ever lost repeats itself, we may well believe, in the realm within. If we ask what has become of the whole inner movement of the past generations, of the forces let loose by the words they uttered, the knowledge they acquired, the volitions they passed into action, the ideals they formed, the answer is that it is all here pulsing around us to-day. Some of this is stored in books, is preserved for us as what we call knowledge. A Galileo, a Newton, has in this sense been the light of our seeing. But the exact knowledge which our race has inherited forms only a small part of its thought-atmosphere. The whole past life of humanity, the soul's immeasurable movement, is in it, in forms we cannot guess. These hidden elements are incessantly moving and incessantly changing. The seemingly fixed is not fixed. We look, for instance, into ancient doctrinal systems which, in their precision and their assertiveness, appear the very images of the immovable. They are nothing of the kind. All they mean to us is the atmosphere they exhale, the element they offer to the reception of the modern consciousness. And that element is a quite different thing from the thought of the old system-builders themselves.

But we should be giving a wretchedly inadequate account of the soul's atmosphere if we spoke of it as merely so much stored up world-thought. We might as well speak of our planet's atmosphere as simply an affair of a few gases. Neither the one nor the other is quite so parochial. The air our body breathes gets most of its vitality from beyond its own sphere. It quivers with forces that stream through it from the farthest stars. It is lighted and warmed from without. It would become poisonous to us were it not for a central sun which, by the magic of its shining, turns a deadly gas into food for the plant-world and into vitalising oxygen for our human lungs. And it is something, assuredly, more than an analogy, an assurance "deep seated in our mystic frame," which points to our physical sphere as in all this a pattern of the world within. What is known to science forms the smallest half of the mystic forces that surround and incessantly beat upon our soul's life. If the farthest stars send on quivers which register themselves on our earth's surface, who can say what influences permeate our spiritual envelope, and work in ways unnoted upon our consciousness?

And this inner atmosphere, accessible from all worlds, has also its sun. The soul's system has its centre as surely as the planetary. The history of religion is the history of the soul's gravitation to the centre, its aspiration for its birthplace. The saints have put this aspiration into every language. Jacob Behmen's words on the new birth stand as a type of the whole human movement here. His account of the soul as a light originating in the Father's essence, *lumen de lumine*, imprisoned in darkness, feeling "a fire of anguish," until its longing for the light is satisfied by God's witness in it, when there arises within "a sweetness of rest and peace," is the common story from

Plato and St. John to George Fox and to William Law. A Catholic mediæval mystic recounts the experience in words which one of Wesley's evangelists might have used in an experience meeting: "And then do we all come unto our Lord, ourself clearly knowing and God fully having. . . . Him verily seeing and fully feeling; Him spiritually hearing and Him delectably inbreathing, and of Him sweetly drinking." To have moved into this climate is to have lighted on life's best. Michelet, in his fascinating book "Le Montagne," speaks of a certain hill-elevation where the human organism breathes freest and reaches its height of exhilaration. The soul knows that height better than the body. The luxury of climate is missed often by the deep-pursed traveller who roams from China to Peru, while enjoyed to the full by some humble artificer or patient woman whose physical boundary is a workshop or a cottage.

The question of the soul's atmosphere has, however, another side. So far we have discussed it as something which works upon us and from which we incessantly draw. But we do not merely draw from it. We also contribute to it, and it is here that perhaps the chief significance of our life exhibits itself. If we knew it, a bigger thing than our arts and manufactures is the making of atmospheres in which souls can thrive. When from the centre of us leaps out thought, desire, or volition towards friend or foe we cannot measure what we are effecting here in the eternal world of souls. We are pouring out powers that create or destroy. If waves of force, flowing from physical centres, flash, as we know they do, through atmospheres, and penetrate every form of matter, who shall estimate the effect of the forces emanating from our spirit centres, that beat upon our brother's thought and will?

It is from this point of view that we best study the significance of prayer. When a mother wrestles in spirit for her child, or a friend for his friend, we have at work the highest and the purest force the world knows. And the results? We may not see them. But unless all the discoveries both of the physical and spiritual universe are in a conspiracy to deceive us, nothing is more certain than the certainty of these results. The forces here unlocked may have a circuit as wide as that of a comet, but they will not waste themselves nor fail of their goal. From this standpoint, too, we could best discuss the whole life of the Church. Its business is to create an atmosphere. More than its assertion of dogma, more than the perfecting of its ritual, is its function of filling the area of its influence with an air which the poor, poisoned soul of humanity, as it inhales the oxygen and warms to the sunshine, shall realise as the Divine it has panted for, the very breath of God.

XXXIV. Of Self-Assertion

For the man who keeps a conscience the life of to-day is singularly full of puzzles. Our very knowledge is our confusion. Its voices are so many, and from such opposite quarters, that it is at times with the extremest difficulty we can make out, amid the babel, what are the real sailing directions. As an illustration, let us investigate a little how the modern man finds himself when he discusses the question of self-assertion *versus* self-repression, as rival maxims for the conduct of life. From what quarter shall he, on this matter, derive his mandate? Shall it be from science, or from religion, or from the lessons of his practical experience? Or is there any co-ordination between these authorities, a common element discernible from which our rule may be obtained?

When we interrogate science it seems at first sight all on the side of self-assertion. Evolution, as commonly interpreted, is a doctrine of brute force, where the strong wins and Diabolus takes the hindmost. It offers us the spectacle of a gigantic struggle, in which, whether it be among the grasses in the field, or the different tribes of ants in the hedgerow, or the speculators in a Chicago wheat pit, the victor is ever the grass, or the ant, or the speculator that shows most of sheer individual assertion. The experience, too, of daily life seems to carry very much the same verdict. Men are hourly conscious that they are in a battle. They are continually measuring themselves in comparison with each other. They examine and re-examine their position as related to rivals and competitors. How far have they gained on this one, or dropped behind that other? Here

Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will,

seems to be, amongst every class, the accepted motto.

And even when we study religion we seem to find so much in the same direction. If there is one thing which more than another distinguishes Christianity, it is the exaltation of the individual. Its message to men is the message of their own importance. It offered the slaves and slum-dwellers of Rome and Ephesus a title and an inheritance which put the pomp of emperors to scorn. Never before or since have human values been lifted to such a level. The religious feeling, too, may be presented as a form of self-assertion. "What must I do to be saved?" is individualism forced to the very front. Then, too, if we observe the leaders of religious movements, the Augustines, the Luthers, the Wesleys, what, in the final analysis, does their position mean but the sheer force of a personality that thrust inferior men aside, and reached the top because there was no one strong enough to compete with them? And the very eagerness with which men hail the leader when he appears, is it not the human testimony to the universality and essential rightness of the law of self-assertion?

But where are we now? Surely this is an impossible conclusion? Has not Christianity taught from the beginning the crucifixion of self? Is not egotism the most hateful of vices? Do not good manners consist essentially in self-repression? Are not ethics a constant war against our primitive impulses, our unrestrained individualism? Has humility then ceased to be a virtue? Were the Pharisees right in sounding their trumpet before them, and to be chided, if at all, for not blowing it a little harder?

Each one of these questions, mark, is distinctly to the point. Each one is based on an established truth of things. Unless our self-assertion can justify itself against them, it is proved a naughtiness and a falsity.

But it is precisely at this point that a question emerges which changes the whole complexion of the inquiry. What do we mean by self-assertion? What, in any given instance of it, is the self that is asserted? What part of the man is at the front? Here is the crux of the whole problem, and the way also to its solution. For in a man's life-struggle the fight is not only with the outside competitors, but is also against an opposing confederacy within. There is here a perpetual collision in which some part is bound to go under. It is thus at the point of his highest self-assertion that a man's self-repression is often most conspicuous. As the hero stands there in the firing line, outwardly so cool and collected, the picture of a masterful, determined man, how much of him has had, in the first place, to be fought down! What a crowd of fears, of primitive instincts, of prudential calculations have been first met in that interior and overthrown! On the other hand, when yonder miser sweats his workman or circumvents his neighbour there has been a preliminary self-repression of a quite other kind. It is now the moral consciousness, the instinct of fair play that is under.

The whole problem, we repeat, is here. In our self-assertion the entire question is, What self? As a man marches to his battle, what end of him is uppermost? All training is an assertion of something and a repression of something else. The athlete works down his fat and develops his muscle. It is a prodigious advantage that he can watch the process and its results. If only we could do the like with our spiritual conditions! Could we only visualise our souls! It would be so enormously instructive to see the relative growths of our different sides. If, as we eagerly rush after this or that unworthiness, we could see the monstrous swelling of the corresponding inner disease! It was along this line Jerome was thinking when he asked, "What is the good of starving one's body by abstinence if the soul stuffs itself with pride? What virtue is there in not drinking wine when one gets intoxicated with hatred and wrath?" The greatest revolution in ethics the world has seen will come about when we get an X-ray that will throw our exact spiritual self upon the screen.

This study of the "what," in our self-assertion, should dispose of a good many fallacies that have been current of late, with disastrous results, in our European morals. A school of atheistic libertinism has sprung up on the Continent, and has been extensively represented in England, that regards any self-repression as a kind of disease. It argues that men and women are free to exercise all their physical faculties without restraint, and that consequently continence and chastity are a kind of sin against Nature. Nietzsche argues that conscience is merely an unhealthy introversion. It was developed by some weak race that had been conquered by a stronger, and which, hindered thus from a full outward expression, sought refuge in an artificial internalisation. It thus produced religion, which was a new and bad form of self-assertion, an ascetic and revengeful stamping upon the best part of life!

A whiff of clear thinking should be enough to blow away these unclean and miasma-bred fallacies. As we have already seen, there is no possible life-scheme that does not mean repression of one part and assertion of some other within us. The whole question is which? If we accept ourselves as merely animals, and take all the spiritual powers that are moving within as a negligible quantity, or a nuisance to be got rid of, there is no more to be said. Our philosophy will be that of atheistic Feuerbach, "to develop a healthy sensuality." The experiment has often been tried, but somehow it does not turn out well. It is so old a story that one wonders men are naïve enough to

revive it. For the assertion of the spiritual, and of its right to rule, is not dependent upon any book, sacred or secular. Humanity's Bibles here are simply the record and output of the eternal instinct. Egypt and India had learned this lesson centuries before our New Testament was written. When the Hindoo Bhagavad Gita declares that the spiritual man "becomes acquainted with that boundless pleasure which is far more worthy of the understanding than that which ariseth from the senses," it is simply uttering a truth which for ages has been a common property of the world.

All progress of every kind has come by a self-repression. A sure instinct tells us what within us is lower and what higher; the one to be held back that the other may be furthered. Whether it be a branch of learning or a physical excellence that we are striving for, we put for the time being nine-tenths of us under hatches to let this one thing get its chance. And in the sphere of morals, let the sensuous philosophy rave as it may, the common-sense of mankind recognises instinctively that the winning of all that makes life dignified and beautiful, the prizes of love, reverence, faith, of inner harmony and loftiest self-realisation, are by repression of what is felt to be lower and the assertion and free play of the higher.

It is along this line that the problems which opened before us at the beginning resolve themselves. The question of leadership, in this light, is no longer a difficulty. Every leader, in religion as elsewhere, is undoubtedly where he is by dint of a force that is greater than that of his fellow. But in the spiritual sphere everything is contained in the question, "What is guiding the force?" If a man's assertion here comes merely out of his egotism, if it is an affair of "miserable aims that end in self," to use George Eliot's phrase, his leadership is *ipso facto* a negation of the Gospel. In this sphere it is only in proportion as a man feels himself led, dominated by a principle and a Power that are using him for ends quite beyond himself, that he can at once be leader and Christian. "Why should a nothing seek to be anything?" said St. John of the Cross, and every true follower of the Master knows the feeling.

Caring ever less about himself, the true leader becomes absorbed more and more in the cause he holds sacred. He can take with a laughing humour the accidents that happen to his personality. But in defence of his principle he is the most assertive of men. One of the most noteworthy features of Mr. Gladstone, than whom in his private capacity was none more courteous, was the almost Titanic wrath that flamed in him when attack was made on the rights of which he conceived himself the guardian. To be yoked to great principles keeps one eternally young. The egotist ages quickly. When Napoleon was twenty-nine he declared, "Glory itself is insipid. I have exhausted everything." It was the Nemesis of self. It is, on the contrary, the bliss of being enlisted in the service of the Highest, that at the end of life we have exhausted nothing. We feel we are just beginning. Having linked our fortunes with the best and made it a part of ourselves, our self-assertion is simply the expression of a Divine in us that can never perish.

XXXV. The Soul's Athletics

England has no longer a monopoly of athleticism, but for generations it has been regarded as the centre and very Mecca of the cult. Abroad the madness of Englishmen used to be demonstrated by their insistence on the morning tub, and the imperilling of their necks in impossible Alpine situations. To-day, not only in our own land, but in all civilised countries, physical training has become a science. Our schools are gymnasia. The middle-aged citizen has his elaborate apparatus for the increase of his chest measurement. Amongst the masses sport is the one preoccupation. There is no call for a too critical attitude towards these tendencies. If, as Herbert Spencer has somewhere said, "one of the first conditions of success in life is to be a good animal," we must not quarrel with Nature's effort to produce him. When our people lose their love of exercise and of the open air, it will be the beginning of doom.

Yet, when Ignatius wrote to Polycarp, "Watch, as God's athlete," it was not of football or of mountaineering he was thinking. The Greeks of Asia Minor were adepts at physical training, but Ignatius had in view a quite other line of discipline. It is a line that is much neglected to-day. Our age is one of amazing activities in a hundred directions, but not in this. Men are educated to the careers that offer wealth and distinction. There are intellectual and artistic enthusiasms. The universities turn out regularly a certain percentage of Mark Pattisons, who make an all-round intellectual culture their chief aim. But the evidence to-day of an earnest, systematic culture of that side of life, which, where it appears, sheds on history its finest light is, alas! very much to seek. Man is covering the other acres of his territory with sumptuous buildings, but here there is a mere hoarding. Religion is a convention. Of spiritual exercises men know next to nothing.

They eat and drink, and scheme and plod,
They go to church on Sunday,
And many are afraid of God,
And more of Mrs. Grundy.

The satire is the simple truth. To multitudes it seems never to have occurred that behind their body, and behind their intellect, lie a mass of powers whose development of all others is the most fascinating, and whose results are of all others the most wonderful.

The present condition is the more strange when we remember with what ardour this culture has been pursued by the nobler men of all races and religions. There were Greek philosophic sects that could give points in this matter to the members of most Christian Churches. We lift our hands at the word "Epicurean," but Epicurus, with his diet of bread and fruit, would have been astonished at the ways of our orthodox deacons and presbyters. The wildest aberrations even of ancient wrestlers in this arena are worth our attention. When we read the stories of Indian fakirs, or of those Egyptian ascetics of whom Harnack says: "One man starved himself to death, a second ranged to and fro like a beast of the desert, a third plunged into the mud of the Nile and let himself be tortured by insects; a fourth, half-naked, the sport of wind and weather, spent years in silence on a pillar," something else may emerge from the

study than the mere sense of our superiority. Might it not be a feeling of the wonder of that inner life which made these men satisfied to yield all else if only they might explore this deepest of themselves and unchain its hidden powers?

But extravagances of this kind are not likely to be repeated, at least among the Western nations. What, however, we have to consider is whether the ruling motive of athletics, the delight, that is, in the difficult, might not, for most of us, with immense advantage, be transferred to this other sphere. In our mountaineering it is precisely the arduous, the painful, the perilous that draws and fascinates. Men find the Alps too easy and are in search of Himalayas. But this sort of climbing is costly, and open only to a few. There is mountaineering closer at hand, within the general reach, that has greater ascents and finer views. If we are in quest of adventures there lies in each of us a region that will furnish enough. It is possible, in this separate realm of our inner invisible, to make a history immeasurably greater than what the newspapers are recording. And this without stepping an inch out of the routine of our ordinary life. The whole business is inward, in the gymnasium of the soul.

For illustration let us take one or two of the more obvious feats. There is, for instance, the mastery of the disagreeable. To-day the masses and the classes alike sacrifice to the great god Comfort. We want a life with all the corners rubbed off, and find a deadly dulness as the result. When our ease is broken we howl, or perhaps blaspheme. Marcus Aurelius from his pagan philosophy could teach us so much better than that. And our natural instinct revolts in its innermost self against the hog paradise.

Nor for thy neighbours, nor for thee,
Be sure was life designed to be
A draught of dull complacency.

How magnificent, in comparison, have been the performances here of God's athletes! It should surely be good news for us, in this stormy world, to know of a discipline that can make men buffet-proof, a secret which, when learned, sends them unhurt and exultant through the worst that comes! That it is so is plain history. When John Woolman went to preach the Gospel to a tribe of hostile Indians, he tells us that one night, far from tent or habitation, unable to kindle a fire because of the heavy rain that was falling, he sat under a bush during the long hours, and "found his soul filled with comfort as he meditated upon God." We may put his story by that of another plain man, John Nelson, one of Wesley's first helpers, who, pressed by his enemies for a soldier, and thrust for the night into a horrible dungeon, thus describes his experience (his English is startlingly to the point): "When I came into the dungeon, that stank worse than a hog-sty by reason of the blood and filth that ran into it from the butchers who killed over it, my soul was so filled with the love of God that it was a paradise to me." This was neither poetry nor romance, but the sheer experience of honest men who had found a secret. They were in the war, but carried a charm. Their comfort was not the kind yielded by padding. It flowed from the action of the loftiest spiritual energy. Surely, in such a world, theirs is a secret worth knowing.

But this is only one conquest out of a hundred. The man who has found the fascination of inner athleticism will want to climb every peak there is. His New Testament opens them, range upon range. To learn how to forgive his enemy; how to cease from evil speaking and evil thinking; to pick up that marvellous habit of living without care for the morrow; to know how to laugh with the joyous and to weep with the sorrowing; to find out how to make one's word, one's presence, and one's secret

influence a constant potency for good—these are exercises he will mark down in his note-book as part of each day's inner business.

But the athlete who begins on this track will not stop at the lower altitudes. His appetite will grow by what it feeds on. From Alps he will pass to Himalayas. The region he has entered he will discover to be illimitable, and its wonders ever more astonishing. The superficiality of our age has made these higher ranges invisible and almost incredible to it. We have forgotten how to meditate and how to pray. The Church's devotional literature of all ages is almost a sealed book. Yet what marvels does it contain! Let anyone turn over the Devotions of Bishop Andrewes. They are written in Greek and Latin, yet through those dead tongues we feel in every line the mighty movement of a soul at its highest energy. The results of such energy, upon both outer and inner life, are hardly to speak of here. They are the secret of the saints. Yet some day the world will recognise that of all the forces moving in this universe, that which operates along these uppermost surfaces of the spirit, while most subtle is also the most powerful.

From such a study follow all manner of deductions, but we will hint only at one in closing. The power of the religious teacher, whatever his Church or his position in it, will be strictly in accordance with his proficiency in the soul's athletics. Men talk of originality in the pulpit—make often grotesque and frantic efforts to acquire it. The only originality worth the name is that of a growing soul. There is no preacher worth his salt whose greatest daily work is not here. It is the training of his own spirit that constantly freshens and enlarges him. The hearer is thrilled by something undefinable. It is the new power evolved from a soul's ascent. Unless this process is going on, a man were better dumb. Think of Christ's couple of years or so of ministry, and thirty previous years of silent inwardness! In their libraries men may find new facts and new arguments; but these will be useless unless in the deeps of their own spirit they seek for new powers.

Any one, layman or cleric, who sets forth on this quest, will come speedily to a point where we may here leave him. He will find that his own solitary strength is nothing. For in the spiritual world, as in the natural, a man becomes strong only as he links himself to the great outside powers. Science makes him mighty by harnessing his personality to the cosmic forces. Faith makes him mightier yet by linking his feebleness to Divine Omnipotence.

XXXVI. The Human Paradise

One could fill a moderately-sized library with the literature on Eden. What a collection it would be! Geography, anthropology, natural history, theology, criticism, poetry of sorts, in endless volumes. And the pile accumulates. New men continually approach the theme with new enthusiasms. Quite recently there have been learned discussions as to the site of the Hebrew Paradise, some writers deciding for Mesopotamia, a spot between the Tigris and the Euphrates; while one explorer, in a volume enriched with maps and minute topographical details, declares for a site discovered by himself in the heart of Africa.

What we have here to say, however, does not deal with questions of topography. The topic is so much wider. The Eden story, men now say, is a legend. But in thus speaking it is well to remember the dictum of Victor Hugo: “History has its truth. Legend has hers. Legendary truth is invention that has reality for a result.” When we have discounted to the full the Genesis narrative, does it not remain a thing of wonderful significance that its tradition forms one of innumerable testimonies, cherished and handed down amongst all different families of mankind, to a golden age at the beginning of human history, when the gods communed with men, and the gates of intercourse with heaven were wide open! Whatever of substance these beliefs may have contained, there is no doubt they have been generally held. Mr. Andrew Lang’s investigations into the primitive faiths of savage tribes the world over, while they may not point to so absolute a conclusion as he suggests, are nevertheless a marvellous body of evidence. Man has put his start everywhere in a paradise. He holds that he began with God.

And the modern science of human origins, with its doctrine of evolution, in nowise militates against this belief. It only modifies its form. To say that we have reached our present stage through a long development would be simply to give an added detail to the statement in Genesis that God created man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into him a living soul. It is in any case a union of above and beneath, of dust and spirit. How long the process may have been of fitting the one to the other, and the precise methods of the operation, are, we say, a detail. The soul at least has no sordid origin. Whatever ways of lowliness it has travelled in its earth history, it carries in its consciousness the secret of its birth. Of the race as a whole may we not say what Wordsworth said of the child:

Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come,
From God who is our home.

But human belief has not been content with a paradise behind it. It ever creates one in front. The most wonderful thing in the history of literature surely is this, that the Bible, whose materials are the deposit of millenniums, a slow evolving literature of ages, drawn from the widest sources, with no “able editor” to co-ordinate the materials and give them unity, should yet come to us in its completed form with a paradise at each end! Prodigious coincidence, to say the least of it! And the marvel is that what lies here in so strangely related a fashion in the Book, is precisely what,

through all the world and through all time, has been lying in the human heart. Man has carried everywhere in him these two things, his Paradise Lost and his Paradise Regained. There is a greater thing than the world we look upon. It is the hidden picture man carries in the depths of his soul of a world that is to be.

One of the most pathetic and yet hopeful of studies is that of the short cuts men have tried to make in search of their paradise. The pioneers have been constructing their Utopias in every generation. The New Jerusalem has shone in the eyes of every dreamer. What a different world that which a Sir Thomas More has pictured for us as compared with the one he lived in, and from which he was to make his exit by the block! And Condorcet, with his dream and scheme of human perfectibility, ends similarly. Charles Fourier, too, with his phalanstery, which is to plant every human being in Eden straightway, but whose theory when put to experiment turns into such hideous failure; and Comte, who predicts that in thirty-three years after the date of writing the religion of Humanity is to be universally established—with what expectations do they come, and how poorly they seem to end! They died, "not having received the promise." To-day we have our apocalyptic seers, who give us figures concocted from Daniel, which indicate to a year and a day the date of the millennial dawn. The prophecies are all wrong, and yet there is something in the prophets that is not wrong. Ever between his two paradises, the one behind and the one in front, man the pilgrim continues his march. His failures daunt him no whit. His wild schemes are being built into a scheme that is not wild. They are all helps to the realisation that is yet to be.

When Alexander the Great set out from Macedon the lavish presents he made to his friends caused one of them to say, "But what are you leaving for yourself?" The reply was "My hopes." And his hopes still remain man's greatest asset. But while this is so, it is well to remember that the human paradise is by no means all in front. It is good to think of the sheer human happiness that is being enjoyed at this moment. Paradise is yonder, but it is here also. That the world has greater things in store should not close our eyes to what it already offers. What multitudes there are of us, not high in station, not specially favoured, who work for a livelihood, who have little leisure, who are of the rank and file, who expect soon to pass away and be forgotten, but to whom each new day as it comes is so utterly beautiful, so richly dowered with benefactions that we are amazed at our good fortune in being permitted to taste its moments! We have found that, as Mr. Gladstone put it, "life is a great and noble calling . . . an elevated and lofty destiny." There wakes in us from time to time that surprise of delight which old Traherne so quaintly puts:

Long time before
I in my mother's womb was born,
A God preparing did this glorious store,
The world, for me adorne.
Into this Eden, so divine and fair,
So wide and bright, I come, His son and heir.

For let us take note that the world itself as God made it is a paradise. It is so to the man whose soul is in tune, though he may never have gone beyond the boundaries of his own parish. Many of us have taken the same daily walk for years, and find each morning a new rapture in looking upon the sun, the trees and the green fields. We say with Cowper:

Scenes must be beautiful which daily viewed
Please daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years.

But the wider range has only deepened that sense of the world's loveliness. If man would only behave decently to his fellow, ours would be the planet an angel might choose! Take Nature where you will and it is the same story. England, as we know, is full of beauty. How pleasant is sunny France! Italy bewitches us. The Alps! What hours of trance have we enjoyed looking on those shining peaks, those eternal snows! In Turkey, which has been made a hell by human barbarity, are scenes innumerable which lie in the memory as images of the very plains of heaven. Surely, on his journey to the Celestial City, our pilgrim has been royally lodged in this "Interpreter's House" of a world!

We have been doing our best to sully our paradise, to turn its beauty into ugliness, but there are signs now of a better mind. England is in parts a combination of slag mountains and of cinder heaps, an astonishment and a hissing to the artistic soul. Our social system in too many particulars matches this deformity. We have not learned the true art of living and working together. But the defects are at last becoming visible to us, and we are making experiments. It is good to hear men talk of garden cities; of places where people may do their work and yet see trees grow. And More's Utopia, where no man was unemployed, and where none wanted for food, clothing, or education, is already, so far as these things are concerned, coming steadily into view. The Anglo-Saxon race, more indeed in its new territories than in the old, has largely, through all its ranks, conquered for itself the means of decent living, and the world outside is following in its track. And who knows what science has yet in store for the human welfare? Its every discovery brings our paradise nearer. It is the great philanthropist. Endless vistas open before its triumphal march. Men talk of the complete extirpation of disease; of the use of water as the great heat producer of the future; of the tides, of gravitation and a dozen other forces as taking the place of human drudgery. The world is yet in the raw material stage. Man will some day have manufactured it into a finished article.

And yet, when all this is done, will that be paradise? The question brings us back to the point we started from. The German poet, Grabowsky, in his poem, "Sehnsucht," bids us

Nicht auf der Erde sucht das Eden
Sucht das Eden in euch!

In ourselves, he continues in some exquisite lines, not in the outer world, are, after all, the golden fruits, the smiling harvests, the glowing skies, the snowy heights, always in ourselves. It is a true word. The outer exists for the inner. First the natural, then the spiritual. Never shall there be so fair a scene for the eye as that the soul sees. It is not the world that consecrates, but the spirit that dwells in it. There is no heaven outside of goodness. Where that is, the earth gains a new beauty, quite other than that of rock and hill. Says Martineau: "Palestine was a piece of plain geography till One came who transfigured it with the inner light of His own sanctity and made it a holy land." The enlightened soul in search of the Best will turn willingly, if need be, from the grandest scenery, from the world's utmost luxury, to join the society, however humble, where Christ's secret of love and purity have been learned. It is when the human spirit has been educated to this level, has in this atmosphere opened its inner powers, and unfurled its wings of ethereal texture, that Paradise lost

will be regained. This is the New Jerusalem which is to come down out of heaven from God.

THE END

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