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PATHWAYS TO THE REALITY OF GOD



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PATHWAYS TO THE REALITY OF GOD

BY

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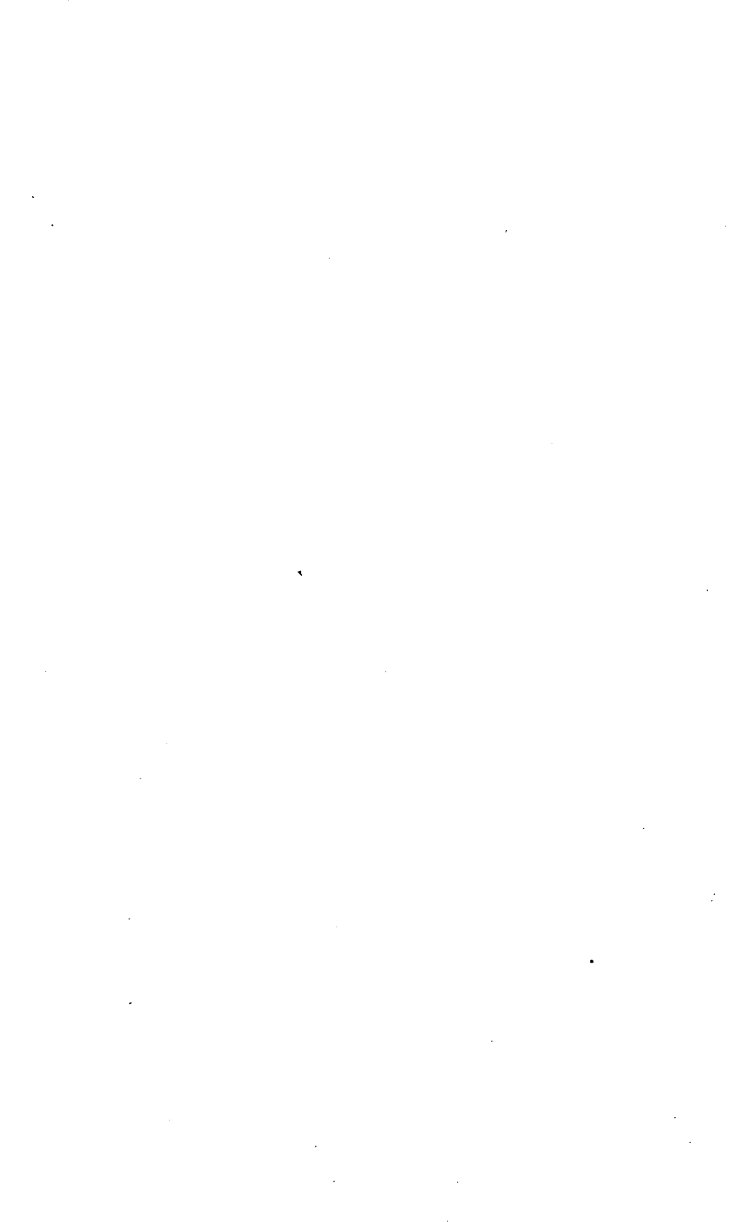
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"There is a path no bird of prey knoweth, neither hath the falcon's eye seen it."

Job xxviii, 7.

"Thither one journeyeth not in ships, nor in chariots, nor on foot. For not only to journey thither, but even to arrive there, is nothing else but to will to go."—St. Augustine's *Confessions*.

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INTRODUCTION

ST. JOHN thought that the world could not contain the books that would be needed to tell the complete story of what Jesus did. The books have gone on piling up ever since St. John wrote his Gospel and still there is no end in sight. Hardly fewer are the books that undertake to tell us about the reality and the nature of God. They are almost as numerous as "the leaves that strow the brooks in Vallombrosa." I should not add another to the long list if I were not convinced that I have something fresh and unique to say, something, in fact, which I could not well leave unsaid.

There is certainly no slackening of interest in this supreme quest. The more adventurous men have become in the conquests of the external world, the more it has dawned upon us that our inexhaustible quests and adventures are to be in the Alpine regions of the Spirit. When all the mountains of earth are climbed and all the rivers of the globe are traced back to their headwaters, we shall still be finding unexplored Himalaya peaks within us to conquer, and the sources of our great currents of inward life will still be sufficiently shrouded in mystery to send us forth on new expeditions. My eleven pathways to reality are not charted very far yet after all my efforts, and each one of them

offers adventures enough for many generations of explorers.

But would it not be better to focus attention upon some practical achievement for the race? The man who makes two stalks of corn grow where only one grew before, the person who shows how to eliminate a dread disease that has been taking its annual toll of life unchecked, the good angel who turns a hopeless section of the slums into a happy row of comfortable homes—these persons make positive additions to the sum of human welfare and we can *see* that they have pushed back the skirts of darkness and widened the area of light. It often seems to persons who are thus practical-minded that time spent interpreting the reality and nature of God in books is wasted, because it bakes no bread, it butters no parsnips. They ticket it off as words, words, words, and go on their way to get something done that matters.

I feel a good deal of sympathy with that judgment, particularly so because I have had long stretches of my precious time wasted reading books about God out of which I got no solid meat to fortify me for my practical tasks. I am convinced, however, that when the writer of a book succeeds in making God actually real to his readers his work immediately takes its place among the most constructive contributions that are made to the assets of the race. To infuse persons with faith in God, to arouse the conviction that the Heart of the universe is friendly, to help a generation to get its feet firmly

on the highroad to confidence in spiritual energies to live by, is, in itself, as practical a service as increasing the corn crop or as fighting malaria mosquitoes, or as turning slums into fine houses.

With all the heartaches and agonies that come with our finite limitations in space and time we have loads to bear which no practical philanthropist, be he never so wise, can lighten. There are moments when nothing will do for us except the assurance that God is with us as we tread the wine press. Anyone who can help in any degree to increase that assurance has served his age as truly as though he had invented a new engine or created a new type of turbine. There is, however, much more involved than that. Attitudes of faith are among the greatest of all known forces. Let a person's inner being be fortified with a faith in God and all his creative powers are quickened, his marching strength is heightened and his grip on everyday things is immensely increased. It is as though he had tapped a hidden reservoir of power. There are, on the other hand, "downs-and-outs" who still have large enough bank accounts, but who have simply lost their inner resources. The world would quickly become "another world" for them if they only knew how to open an invisible door that shuts them in.

People still talk with a thrill of emotion of the effect of President Eliot's words, spoken at the Centennial Exercises of Phillips Exeter Academy, after a preceding speaker had praised the builder of effective machines.

President Eliot stood up and asked: "What drives the steam engine? Not the engineer, but the life-giving sun which elaborated centuries ago the coal that is put under the boilers. What is it that you must learn here which will always be above all literature and all science, powerful though science may become? You must learn the eternal worth of character; you must learn that the ultimate powers of the human race lie in its undying instincts and passions; you must learn that above all material things, is man—the thoughtful, passionate and emotional being, the intellectual and religious man. Here lies the source of the power of educated men—they have refined and strengthened their minds and their souls. And believe me, the supreme powers of the universe are not mechanical or material; they are hope and faith and love."

I am not interested in any of the ways of building Babel-towers in the hope of reaching up to God, whether the towers are of brick and mortar, or whether they are of logic or of layers of Scripture texts, or of blocks from ancient creeds, or of sequences from causal proofs. All those man-built towers presuppose a remote and hidden God. The seeker, the tower-builder, on that supposition, must painfully rear his structure from below up by sheer human effort, with no sign of help, no evidence of coöperation from above. That kind of God could never be found, and such a quest would always end in confusion both of heart and of tongues.

Our entire hope of success in this search rests on the

assurance that the one who is sought is also Himself the Seeker. If we are eager to find Him, even more so is He to find us and to bring us into the holy family, the blessed community of life and fellowship.

"Grace" is no hollow word of the theologians. It is not something manifested solely in a rare sacrament, or grudgingly dispensed by ordained men. It is a cosmic largess. We have been recipients all the way up from the cradle. Presentations have poured in on us from all the lovers and sufferers of the ages back to the beginning of smiles and tears. We have had the most priceless gifts bestowed for nothing at all. Love was here ahead of us with outstretched arms when we arrived and we came by birth into the richest of dowries. Every region we range over with our eyes is crammed with beauty unpaid for. Heroes and martyrs have been brave and faithful for our sake. The blood-red line of sacrifice, which has colored all the centuries behind us, comes with its redemptive power straight to our doors.

God is not an abstract reality, an absolute Alone, at the far end of Bethel-ladders and Babel-towers. He is central in the stream of Life and Love and Truth and Beauty. The Cross on Calvary is not a solitary instance of self-giving Love. It has always been at the Heart of the time-process, for Grace is perennial and contemporary with the uncoiling of the first nebula. The reason we can hope to find God is that He is here, engaged all the time in finding us. Every gleam of beauty is a pull toward Him. Every pulse of love is a tendril that

draws in His direction. Every verification of truth links the finite mind up into a Foundational Mind that undergirds us. Every deed of good will points toward a consummate Goodness which fulfills all our tiny adventures of faith. We can find Him because in Him we live and move and have our being.

But we cannot find Him with a little fraction of ourselves. Men have tried to reach the spiritual city with their capacity for logical syllogisms, or with their accuracy of description, or with their bent for causes, or with the quiver of their emotional heart-strings, or with their will to believe or to do or to suffer. No one function of our human nature is adequate by itself. Rationality is always and altogether preferable to irrationality and we certainly shall not succeed if we begin by cutting off our supreme endowment as men. But God is too rich and inclusive to be found by a single strand of our complex nature. It is the business of the whole self, it is the task of the entire life of man. As God is not an abstract reality out beyond all that is concrete, so we who expect to find Him must drop our ladders of abstraction and go forth, like Galahad, "breathing the airs of heaven that often meet us here," and make use of all the powers of heart and mind and will that are needed for following the Star that leads to His door.

* * * * *

The chapter on "Prayer as a Pathway" has been

previously printed in *Ventures in Belief* and is published here with the permission of Charles Scribner's Sons. Some sections of the chapter on "The Immanence of God" were printed in Volume XI of Professor Baker Brownell's *Man and His World*, with the understanding that I should be free to draw upon that article as I might see fit.

R. M. J.

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PATHWAYS TO THE REALITY OF GOD

CHAPTER I

FAITH AS A PATHWAY TO GOD

"FAITH" seems to many persons to-day to be a word of weakness and to stand for a confession of defeat. In spite of the fact that faith held such an exalted place in the life and teaching of Christ it nevertheless has played a somewhat dubious rôle in the long drama of Christian history. The naïve definition of it given by the little boy in Sunday school reveals a widespread popular conception of it, and for which there has been some ground: "Faith is *believing* what you know isn't so!" More often it has meant believing something that lacks proof or demonstration or evidence, accepting something for true on the basis of authority.

In any case, the thoroughly "modern" person is inclined to consider "faith" a bad drop from the level of knowledge to a lower plane of conjecture or guess. He is inclined to think of it as being tarred with the implication of "tradition," of "dogmatism," or, what is worse, of "superstition." It forms to such a modern mind a sharp contrast with reason and science and truth. It is assumed that one has given up the possibility of "knowing," and has merely asserted something by a *tour de force*.

It cannot be denied that faith *has* been used in the

past, and is sometimes used even in the present, in this questionable fashion. Faith has been supposed to possess a sort of magical key to a realm of reality that knowledge could not reach. In this cheapened sense of the word faith means "believing" or "adopting" or "accepting" on some other basis than facts or evidence. In this sense it stands for "the faith once delivered" and it is regarded as a sacred deposit of doctrine, the *fides quæ creditur*, rather than a quickened insight and attitude of will.

Tennyson's famous lines:

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see,

and his other well-known line:

Believing where we cannot prove,

have done much to spread the impression that faith is a mark of weakness and an easy gymnastic method of jumping across an unbridged chasm. Herbert Spencer and a large group of writers in Tennyson's generation took as settled the view that "knowledge" must be severely limited to "phenomena," that is, to "things we see." Everything beyond the domain of sense-facts for them was relegated to the realm of "the great unknowable." Toward this "great unknowable" one might take up either the attitude of "agnosticism," or an attitude of "faith," but in either case there was a confession of weakness and defeat.

The effect of this attitude brought a breath of desola-

tion to many noble minds. It profoundly touched Matthew Arnold and colored all his life. He expressed what many felt when he wrote:

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

In an even sadder strain Arnold records the disillusionment that fell upon his age and blotted out the stars by which an earlier generation had steered. I refer to these lines:

Slow that tide of common thought
Which bathed our life, retired;
Slow, slow the old world wore to nought,
And pulse by pulse expired.

Its frame yet stood without a breach
When blood and warmth were fled;
And still it spoke its wonted speech—
But every word was dead.

That catastrophe is sure to follow when the foundations of our spiritual realities are seen to be resting upon a weaker basis than those which underlie and support the solid structure which scientific knowledge has built. Tennyson himself probably did not think that faith was weaker than knowledge though his readers often supposed that he did, but whatever the Victorian poet may have thought there can be little doubt that many of his contemporaries felt a kind of contemptuous pity for those who found themselves reduced to a dependence on "Faith." To them faith stood as the antithesis to reason and knowledge, and consequently it seemed doomed to ultimate defeat. No one who holds that position could possibly join in the exultant cry of triumph of the Ephesian apostle who, in the first century, flung out his challenge to the Emperor Domitian, "This is the victory that overcomes the world—the Empire that seemed eternal—even faith!"

If faith *is* victory, if it is a dynamic and constructive method of life and not a mark of defeat, we ought to discover that fact and become possessed by that conquering power for our spiritual tasks to-day. We must turn therefore first of all to a recovery and a reinterpretation of *faith* and a revaluation of its significance.

It is quite unnecessary to put faith in antithesis to reason, or to assume that it belongs on a lower plane of reality than knowledge does. Kant is undoubtedly right when he includes the highest type of faith—"a *priori* faith" he calls it—in the sphere of reason, makes it, in

fact, the very citadel of reason. He insists on the supremacy of this type of faith over the kind of knowledge that is possible through speculative reason, that is, through the method of argument, proof and demonstration. For Kant faith springs out of the essential moral disposition of the mind. There is a conviction that is stronger than any logical conclusion, and that is a conviction which rests upon a moral certainty, a moral necessity, upon the majesty of the categorical imperative—"thou canst because thou ought." When duty whispers, "lo, thou must," the youth replies, "I can." A man with an august moral disposition like that built into the structure of his being must belong to a universe that rests upon an adamant moral order. That is the stimulating way that this robust philosopher meets the challenge of the narrow limits of knowledge.

It should be noted that faith in the Gospel use of it is always on the high level plane and never as an antithesis to knowledge. Faith, as Christ Himself uses it, is an attitude of response; it is a tendency to act constructively when an appeal is made to the will. It is a deep-seated capacity in man by which he can draw upon inexhaustible resources and leap beyond all his ordinary powers of action. Through it he can do what before he could not dream of doing. A mustard-seed faith will suffice to change what appeared to be as fixed and rigid as the bases of Mount Hermon. Health, sanity, happiness, joy, even the Kingdom of God itself are all the creative effects of faith. St. John also considers faith to be the

response of the entire self to a moral appeal or to the revelation of God in the person of Christ. It is a way to truth and life, not a substitute for them. Such is also the case with St. Paul with whom, next to love, faith is the greatest human force. Outside of the Pastoral Epistles, faith is never used in the New Testament to signify the belief of doctrine. It is always an energy of will, an urge of spiritual verification.

Clement of Alexandria (*circa* 150-215) accepted this lofty New Testament conception of faith and gave it quite remarkable interpretation and expansion of treatment. It is for this noble Christian scholar "the assent of the soul" to ultimate realities. He means by that, that there are axiomatic truths and principles which must be presupposed or acknowledged by our deepest insight and vision before we can even start to "know" anything. Faith, however, seems to him not less certain than knowledge but rather the ultimate basis on which all knowledge rests. The last link in every chain of knowledge is "an assent," an axiomatic insight of reason, that is capable of no further *proof*. It is an inner response to realities that are implied and involved in all our experiences, but this "assent" is forthwith to be tested and verified by action. "Faith," he says, "is the beginning of action," it is *propulsive*, or as we should say to-day, it is a tendency to act, an *élan vital*. It is, again he says, "an unfailing energy"; it is dynamic. It is a "kind of divine mutual and reciprocal *correspondence*," that is, an adjustment or correspondence of the

deepest life in us to what is felt to be a deeper environment that is no less real than the one we perceive with our senses. Faith for Clement is thus like what modern biologists call a *tropism*, a tendency to turn toward the sources of light and life, and to "correspond" with that which is essential for life. It begins with a *pre-perception* and ends with a confirming experience of reality. It is, therefore, far removed from a conjecture, or guess, or blind assumption, which Clement calls "spurious faith."

Leaping across the centuries with a mental aëroplane, we find George Santayana, in our own generation—the young Santayana of my student days, before his drop to "animal faith"—giving us a point of view very similar to that of the fine old Platonist, Clement. Santayana in one of his sonnets calls faith "the soul's invincible surmise." He says:

O world, thou choosest not the better part!
It is not wisdom to be only wise,
And on the inward vision close the eyes,
But it is wisdom to believe the heart.
Columbus found a world, and had no chart,
Save that one faith deciphered in the skies;
To trust the soul's invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art.
Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystery and dread.
Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the mortal heart is led
Unto the thinking of the thought divine.¹

¹ Sonnet III in *Sonnets and Other Verse*.

The invincible surmise of the soul is once more a pre-perception, an anticipation of reality, discovered by insight or vision or correspondence, taken for granted by "an assent," and then tested by an adventure of courageous will. It is, as Professor John Baillie has well put it, "the projection of our moral values into the real order of things." It worked with amazing effect for Columbus, and, joined with admirable technique, this invincible surmise worked no less amazingly for Lindbergh. Nearly every scientific discovery has been made by the same process. First there is a pre-perception, an invincible surmise, an anticipation. Then an "assent." And then comes the slow process of testing and verification that establishes the truth. The swinging of a lamp in a church, the falling of an apple, the heat developed by the rub of friction, the bending of a ray of light from a star, have revolutionized modern science because an instance of their occurrence aroused the imaginations of four men of genius who leaped forward with a sudden surmise which they forthwith verified.

It may be taken as settled, I think, that religion must forever lie in the realm of adventure, not in the realm of catalogued and explained facts. A religion based on proofs, after the manner of Paley's *Evidences*, reduced to what he supposed to be ticketed certainties, a "safety-first" device, or to a vast scheme of profit and loss inducements, is a poor affair indeed. Religion does not belong in the sphere of calculations. To prove God by the methods of mathematics and to demonstrate immor-

talities as we demonstrate the cause of the tides would be to bring these supreme realities, by which men live, over into the list of external facts about which there is no call for personal vision or choice or courage or adventure. We should then accept the fact of God as we now do the moons of Jupiter or the existence of helium. No, let us rejoice that the verities of religion rest, and will continue to rest, on vision, insight, correspondence, pre-perception, surmise, quest, adventure, moral values and the conviction of personal discovery. There will always be, as there should be, a heroic quality, an adventurous aspect, to faith.

My friend and teacher, Josiah Royce of Harvard, toward the end of his life, defined faith as *the soul's insight or discovery of some reality that enables a man to stand anything that can happen to him in the universe*. Professor Royce thought of this type of faith as no less rational, no less a part of reason, than proved knowledge is—it is only reason working in a different sphere. It is what Pascal and many others in all ages have meant by what they called "the heart"—a capacity of vision by which the realities that men need to live by are apprehended and translated into action. Wordsworth called the same creative capacity, sometimes "Imagination" and sometimes "Reason"—"an auxiliary light that on the setting sun bestows new splendour." James Martineau's testimony exactly fits this type of faith as insight and discovery. He said: "The very gate of entrance to religion, the very moment of its new birth, is

the discovery that your ideal is the everlasting Real, no fancied brush of an angel's wing but the abiding presence and persuasion of the Soul of souls." ^a

It is the power in us by which we see what is involved in the mass of facts and in the values of life which confront us. It is the sudden flash of insight by which we catch the implications in the situation before us. The mathematician sees the whole curve which the tiny arc implies. The zoölogist reconstructs the whole animal from the single bone. The astronomer leaps from the variations of Neptune's orbit to the discovery of a farther planet out beyond it. Newton sees the universal principle of gravitation revealed in the fall of an apple. Goethe reads the unfinished lines of Strasbourg Cathedral and they "tell" him how the spires must be finished. Kant faces the august call of the moral imperative and sees the postulates of God, Freedom and Immortality that are for him essential implications of the majestic curve of duty.

Nothing is more common in our world than this fact that truth progresses in every field by this power of the mind *to see the invisible*. Scientists see atoms, electrons, germ plasms and multitudes of other entities, not with their eyes, but with their minds. No extension of the range of the microscope will ever bring the ultimate elements of the universe into visibility. But more and more the mind will heighten its power to interpret the seen in terms of the unseen, and the realities that are seen

^a *A Study of Religion*, 2nd ed., Vol. I, p. 12.

with the mind will be held to be no whit less real than those that are seen with the eyes. Einstein has well said that there could have been no progress made in mathematics without *intuition*, by which he means flashes of insight that leaped on ahead of the old beaten track of what was known or proved. Henri Poincaré has emphatically borne his testimony to this same truth in his account of "what happens in the soul of a mathematician." He reports "certain sudden illuminations" which flash forth after "a long course of previous unconscious work." * Browning spoke from experience when he said, "Truth may be flashed out by one blow."

Music, art, poetry and life itself can each supply us with instances where the flash of insight, coming after long gestation, has scaled a height that slow-footed argumentative reasoning would never have climbed. Professor Lowes of Harvard has successfully demonstrated that *The Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan* surged up in a flash of inspiration from the deep well of Coleridge's subliminal life. But he is not the only poet who "listening to the inner flow of things" has spoken "to the age out of eternity." There are many types of persons who in the good sense of the word are *clairvoyant*. They see through the visible and get a gleam, a glimpse, a vision of the More that subtends the visible and that accounts for it. Where one sees only a fact another eye sees the value and the meaning of the fact. One eye sees a pretty Italian face of a peasant mother;

* *Science et Méthode*.

another eye with clairvoyant vision sees in it the eternal wonder and mystery of the Madonna and her divine Child. Faith, in the sense in which Professor Royce used it, is this capacity, accumulated out of the experiences of life, to see through the mists and the veils of the finite and to discover the invisible reality without which the visible and temporal would be a show-world and a hollow sham, and, by the discovery of it, to raise life to an infinite worth.

William James, who was always prone to emphasize the function of the will, pushed this emphasis on the supremacy of will to its limit, in fact beyond the safe boundary, in his interpretation of faith. This voluntaristic faith of the great psychologist came into full expression in his famous essay, *The Will to Believe*, which was published in 1897. From that time until his too early death in 1910, James continued in a multitude of ways to expand and drive home with vivid phrase and illustration his pragmatic faith. Faith, he declares, is "an inalienable birthright of our minds." We cannot wait for all the slow returns of truth to come in and bring us certainty before we decide to act in important emergencies. We must take some risk and chance and *act before we know*. Sometimes "faith in a fact can help create the fact," and in such cases there is rational ground for going forward. At other times we are confronted with what James calls "a momentous option." The greatest issues of life are at stake. To wait for "sufficient evidence" means that we shall certainly lose

our stake, for we shall be dead before the light comes. In such a case not to decide is in fact already to have decided and incidentally to have missed the goal. Then it is, James thinks, that "the slow dead heave of the will" can tilt the beam and win the issue. In the words of Hartley Coleridge:

It is an affirmation and an act
That bids eternal truth be present fact.

James has stated his position in a telling way in what he used to call his "faith-ladder," with which he was accustomed to close his last college lecture each year:

On the first round of the ladder we say of a momentous view of life, or of the world, or of religion, that it is a possible view, it is not self-contradictory, it is not absurd; on the second round we say, it *might* well be true, so far as actual facts are concerned; on the third we say, it *may* be true now for all that anybody knows; on the fourth we add, it is *fit* to be true, it *ought* to be true, and on the sixth we affirm, it *must* be true. Well, then, we say at the top of the ladder, it *shall* be true, at any rate for me, because I am going to adopt it as my truth and live by it henceforth.

This pragmatic form of faith received a notable emphasis during the Great War through a famous popular phrase, coined by the noble English Chaplain, Donald Hankey. "Faith," he said, "is betting your life that there is a God." Here once more is a "momentous option," and one risks his life on the hazard of an affirmation. A little later John A. Hutton of London pointed out with striking effect that St. Paul had already used this phrase, "betting the life," in the first century to signify faith.

He used it in *Philippians* to characterize his friend and fellow laborer, Epaphroditus, "who for the work of Christ came nigh to death, *hazarding* his life." This phrase, "hazarding the life" literally means, "laying down his life as his stake," or "casting his life as a throw of dice," that is, "betting his life on a venture for the cause of Christ."

It must be confessed that the pragmatic interpretation of faith is a stimulating tonic. It is a stirring trumpet note, it is a clarion call. But it involves a weakness as well as a strength. It leans too strongly in the direction of implying that truth is something to be settled by our democratic vote. Lowell once said: "Perhaps the longing to be so, helps make the soul immortal," and I am quite willing to admit that the soul that cares nothing about being immortal, may miss immortality. Man's *will* in all the momentous issues of life is bound to be a vital factor. Again and again, no doubt, faith *is* the victory. The wrestling is the blessing. The *attitude* of the athlete, or of the hero, in very large measure determines the issue which confronts him. Other things being equal, the person who is *minded* to win is the one who actually does win.

But truth in this universe is something vastly more than the result of our democratic votes.

D'ye s'pose the Gret Foreseer's plan
 Wus settled fur him in town-meetin'?
 Or thet ther'd ben no Fall o' Man
 Ef Adam'd on'y bit a sweetin'?

There are certain realities in this world that are *so*, eternally so, whether we vote for them or not, and, on the other hand, there have been often enough persons who have "bet their lives" for some desirable truth that they hoped was true and that they knew was *fit* to be true—but which, as a matter of actual fact, was not true in spite of their vote, in spite of their hazard. What an array of bets and hazards there were in favor of the Ptolemaic theory of the heavens as against the Copernican, but the truth was unaffected by the vote of the scholastic, saint, reformer or pope, just because *truth is what it eternally is*, and not the capricious thing we decide to vote for.

The pragmatic test is an excellent one for *trying out*, for verifying our souls' discoveries, after they are made, but first of all there must be in us some real capacity of discovery. Faith must not be used to mean conjecture, or guess, or fond hope, or jaunty wish, or our throw of ballot. It must be an insight of the type that guides the scientist when he creates his hypothesis to interpret unmistakable facts, or of the statesman who sees the line of manifest destiny for his nation to follow in its hour of crisis, or of the moral hero who "cannot do otherwise" in the full light of his vision. No one of these insights is of course an infallible certainty. It must be in the last analysis an adventure, an invincible surmise, but it must not be a throw of dice, a chance bet, a caprice of our will. It calls for the highest technique of soul, a moral and spiritual preparation like that

which lay behind Bach's most perfect symphony or Raphael's Sistine Madonna. Faith of this creative sort, faith that is to be discovery, must be the product of experience, of discipline, of patience, of control, of training, of technique, of suffering, until the eye of the soul can *see* in the dark and can distinguish what is eternal from what is only the capricious wish of our feeble human desires.

We hear much said about marriage being a failure, because it is a "hazard." It is not always a hazard. It does not need to be a hazard, or, at least, not a blind hazard. There are favored persons who are gifted with insight to interpret the curve of character that is already manifest in the life of a possible husband or wife. Such an one does not "jump" with his eyes closed, nor does he let himself be swung off his feet by the sudden fascination of a face. He sees that life is a momentous affair and that a fundamental blunder will sadly mar it, if not wreck it, for two persons, if for no more, and that "betting a life" on a guess or a throw is an unwarranted hazard. No insight in these matters can ever be quite infallible, nor can any person be so highly gifted that he will never make an error in reading the curve of direction which a partly formed character reveals. But my point is just this that our world does present us with signs and indications of significant realities and values, and that faith at its best is capacity to read the signs that show the trails of life.

The Beatitudes in the Gospels give us an admirable

illustration of this capacity to read the signs and implications of life. This interpretation of felicity passes over all the old utilitarian rewards and selects intrinsic qualities. The blessedness in every instance attaches to the inherent nature of the life itself. It is like the reward one gets for being courteous, or loving, or sympathetic, which is, that one is all the time growing more courteous and loving and sympathetic. It is like the prize that is won for the conquest of difficult problems in mathematics, which is, the power to solve even more difficult ones. It is the "glory of going on." "Mercy" is a cumulative trait of the soul. The "peacemaker" grows Godlike until he is recognized as possessing a divine pedigree. "Purity of heart" adds to itself an increasing capacity to see the invisible and to *correspond* with the environment that enswathes the soul.

Faith on its highest ranges is that capacity to see, to discover, to read the signs that are there, to interpret the implications, to pre-perceive. But William James was entirely right in putting heavy stress on action, on "the slow, dead, heave of the will." The great interpreters of faith have always done this. It is a sign of weakness when the creative aspect drops out and faith becomes merely synonymous with *believing* some "deposit" transmitted from the past. These great interpreters think of it as *vision*, as *expectant attitude*, as the *assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen*. But in every case you do something with the insight. It sends you into action. It puts you into some

battle line. It is a signal for adventure. It is a call to heroism. "Faith," Luther said, "is living, active and powerful." It is something that makes a man "joyous, intrepid and full of cheer." "Even if the world falls to wreck, the man who has faith will be undismayed under its ruins!"

The apostle James, whom Luther did not much appreciate, but who, like the later James—our beloved William James—was no mean psychologist, put his strong emphasis on faith as action. Faith that does not go into works, he says, is "dead." If you are a hearer, a mere "believer," and not a *doer*, you are like a person who sees his face in a mirror and who the next minute forgets what his face looked like! This inability to visualize one's own face and the futility of trying to hold it in memory, furnished the apostolic psychologist with a fine illustration of the emptiness of faith which endeavors to hold an abstract view that is not translated into motor-effect and verified by deeds. One might as well expect to become a great golf player, without practice with the clubs, by reading books on the technique of successful strokes, or to be a home-run batter from a careful study of the theory of how to hit a curve-pitched ball.

Invincible surmise and practical adventure on the strength of the insight are, then, our two essentials for a conquering faith. Christ called it "the single eye" that floods the whole self with light. St. Paul called it "obedience to a heavenly vision." Professor Royce calls

it "the soul's discovery of power to stand anything that can happen in the universe."

We have offered here no proof of the existence of God. We have demonstrated nothing nor tried to do so. But we have been showing, or at least endeavoring to show, that there is a rational capacity in a keen and sensitive person to feel a homing direction toward God, to be aware of an environment that impinges on his soul as truly as the air does on his body and to see the deeper implications of an infinite behind the finite, an eternal behind the temporal.

This faith-capacity is, like all gifts and qualities of the soul, something that grows and expands with exercise and it shrinks and atrophies with disuse. It follows the law of an unused language or of the neglected exercise of any acquired skill. It is not strange that men deny its sphere or scoff at its claims. Their world is one in which only proved and described realities count, and the values which the "heart" knows sound like empty vanities. It only means that those of us who do see with "the single eye" and have invincible surmises of high moment must make them *evidential* by our dynamic lives and those of us who see only dimly and feebly must very seriously cultivate and enlarge our visual capacity.

Dean Inge is quite right when he says that if we spend sixteen hours a day dealing with tangible things and only five minutes a day trying to find God, it is no wonder that the tangible things of our world are two hundred times as real to us as God is. The Newtons and

Poincarés and Einsteins who have enlarged the domain of mathematics have prepared themselves to see the next "leap" in their field of truth. The Bachs, Mozarts and Beethovens who have built the invisible world of music have pre-perceived it by strenuous cultivation of their powers. The Raphaels, Michelangelos and Rembrandts see in human faces the something different, which most of us miss, but they *see* only because they heighten and glorify a gift which is potential in multitudes of others.

So, too, "God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear." While we are arguing and debating and proving, some rare souls are *seeing* the curves that point the way to God and are reading the signs of assurance that give conviction of His reality, and they are living with radiant faces as those who know. Spiritual truth, certainty of God, is attained as appreciation of beauty is attained, as artistic taste is gained, as tact is acquired, as moral insight is won, by the slow accumulation of experience, which saves its gains and out of them builds a character that "knows" by second nature. It becomes possible to send "a shaft of vision into the very heart of the eternal mystery."

CHAPTER II

THE GOD OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

THE interpreter of Mysticism labors under heavy handicaps. He is compelled, for one thing, to use a word that is loaded with uncertainty and confusion. For that reason he usually fails to convince persons who insist on having definiteness. Hosts of people, after all that has been written, still suppose that "mystical" is synonymous with the *mysterious*. The word is believed to stand for something dark, vague, deeply veiled and hidden. One hears "great argument about it and about," but evermore the darkness veils its meaning and the mystery abides. Still others use the word "mystical" to mean something occult or possibly uncanny. The Lady of the Lake, "clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful," with a subtle secret magic, gave King Arthur his sword, Excalibur, and that use of the word "mystic" runs through human story and history. The Gnostic movements, the mystery religions, the lore of the Cabala, the teachings of theosophy, and the weird symbolizing of William Blake, are alike referred to as being "mystic."

The word has, again, been used in recent times, by psychologists and psychic researchers, for the phenomena of the mediumistic trance and seance. It has come to

stand for table rappings and levitations and spirit-communications and ectoplasm and it often means any class of phenomena that do not come under scientific observation, or submit to careful laboratory methods. There is, too, a persistent tendency to apply the word "mystic" to mysterious voices which certain types of persons claim to hear—for example, the interior "voices" which Bunyan heard cry: "Sell him, sell him." Sometimes "communications" and "oracular messages" seem to be inwardly given to persons of this type. Then, again, the word is often used so loosely that it may mean any type of religion that is intense, emotional and vital, such, for example, as attends conversion-experience or a personal dedication to a life of self-denying service.

One of the most frequent ways of using the word, especially in the history of Roman Catholic Mysticism, is to apply it exclusively to an extreme and rare type of contemplation, which culminates in ecstasy and which seems to the person himself to be a marriage union of the soul with God. The time-process seems to be obliterated in an eternal now and the finite being is absorbed into the Infinite One. That undoubtedly is the classical use of the word "mystical." From the nature of the case this experience of ecstasy and of absorption is something unutterable and incommunicable. It transcends everything temporal and finite, and it possesses none of the marks and characteristics of our usual concrete human events. It is not *like* anything else, consequently there are no terms of description for it. The great mystics of

history who have claimed to have had this ecstatic experience, have thought of it as a supernatural gift of divine grace and have felt a peculiar exaltation of spirit as a result of it, but it is quite obvious that mystical experiences of that type could furnish no content of thought. Those who have had the experience are convinced by it that God is *real*, are certain that they have *found* Him and that they have been caught up into union with Him, but they cannot hint to human ears any descriptive circumstance about the actual character of God.

In spite of all these dark-fringed confusions which surround the word "mystical," I must nevertheless continue to use it, for there is no better term available and I must add to the general confusion by proposing still another way of using the overloaded word. If we were to give up using words because they have had a variety of meanings during their past racial history and because they carry a trail of crude and superstitious meanings in their wide range of denotation, we should be reduced to a small vocabulary. We are all the time "disinfecting" and rehabilitating words that have become corrupt or bedraggled in the age-long strife and commerce of ideas.

There is good historical ground for clarifying the word mysticism and setting it apart to mean a direct way of vital intercourse and correspondence between man and God. There are moments when one stops arguing and proving and finds himself enveloped by a Life that floods into him and "restores" him with health and joy. "I saw that there was an infinite ocean of light

and love that flowed over the ocean of darkness," is the way George Fox expresses such an experience. "I am as certain as that I live that nothing is so near to me as God," is Meister Eckhart's testimony. Mysticism may, and, I think, should stand for that type of experience in which a person feels an overmastering conviction that actual contact is attained with a divine, life-giving, joy-bringing Presence. Léonce de Grandmaison, in his important little book on *Personal Religion*, defines mysticism quite similarly, when he says: "There exist moments brief and unforeseeable when man has the feeling of entering, not by effort . . . into immediate contact . . . with an infinite Goodness."¹ One of the most convincing evidences of this vital "contact," one that seems to the mystic himself a demonstration of energies from beyond himself, is the transmutation of the inner life of the person to whom the experience comes. The mystic becomes "another man," and the "transmutation" that is wrought seems as divine as does the consciousness of Presence. The experience may rise to the state of ecstasy or of ineffable union, and it sometimes does, but ecstasy is by no means essential to mystic exaltation, nor is there any sound reason for regarding ecstasy as the loftiest form of mysticism. The construction of personality is more important than the memory of an "uplift."

The most characteristic aspect of the experience is the consciousness of what I have called divine Presence, or, at least, the consciousness of finding a new order of

¹ *Personal Religion*, tran. by Algar Thorold, p. 119.

environment, in which the inner spirit feels at home. There are all degrees of this consciousness of being "at home" in the Life of the Spirit, from a mere awareness of fresh upwelling Life, that seems to come from beyond the self, to a rapturous sense of being enfolded by a larger Life and of being in complete attainment of the goal of life. There are as many varieties of mystical experience as there are varieties of the experience of love. Sometimes the consciousness of objective presence is clear and vivid and sometimes the usual limits and divisions of thought are transcended. In the fullest and richest moments of the experience the usual duality of a subject reflectively beholding an external object, which stands in sundered relation to it, is overpassed. It is a moment of fusion like that which comes in the enjoyment of great music or of surpassing beauty or sublimity, or of perfect love, a moment when "the soul, abandoning its conscious, successive, bit-by-bit manner of knowing, responds to its object by a single undifferentiated act, all of one piece." Analysis and differentiation may come later, but for the moment the experience is fused and undifferentiated. It is what Keats called "breathing the pure serene," and suddenly feeling

Like some watcher of the skies
 When a new planet swims into his ken;
 Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
 He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
 Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

It is more than merged fusion of subject and object. With that fusion comes also an unwonted unification of the inner powers of the self. We leap beyond the ordinary step-by-step sequences of thought. The usual divergent and conflicting forces in us are overcome. Background inhibitions and marginal doubts for once disappear. "It should be" is no longer mocked by "here it cannot be." The radiations and centrifugal tendencies of the inner life vanish in an extraordinary state of integration, in which intellect and emotion and will-purpose are present in undifferentiated union. It is like the situation which Shakespeare described in the famous line: "Reason, in itself confounded, saw division grow together." John Addington Symonds has told about his own personal experience of unification in the following words:

It consisted in a gradual but swiftly progressive obliteration of space, time, sensation, and the multitudinous factors of experience which seem to qualify what we are pleased to call our Self. In proportion as these conditions of ordinary consciousness were subtracted *the sense of an underlying or essential consciousness acquired intensity.*^a

That experience admirably fits St. Thomas Aquinas' fine saying that "all the powers of the soul are rooted in the one essence of the soul." There is a fundamental depth in us that underspans our usual multiplicities. The experiences of which I am speaking indicate the reality of an unplumbed depth of life underneath the

^a H. F. Brown, *John Addington Symonds*, p. 20.

usual thinner processes of the mind. Our surface consciousness may be "a prey to distraction," but the deeper currents of life within us may remain, like the deep sea, undisturbed and undivided. Baron Friedrich von Hügel has given a very careful diagnosis of the energizing feature of such states of concentration and unification. He says:

It is only when the mind but partially attends that a part of it remains at leisure to note the attention of the other part; when the mind is fully engrossed, and hence most keenly active, there is no part of it sufficiently disengaged to note the fact of the engrossment and action of the whole mind. And, with the direct consciousness of the mind's action, we lose, for the time being, all clear consciousness of the mind's very existence. And let it be carefully noted, this absence of the direct consciousness of the self is as truly characteristic of the deepest, most creative, moments of full external action: the degree of mind and will-force operating in Nelson at Trafalgar and in Napoleon at Waterloo, or again in St. Ignatius of Antioch in the amphitheatre and in Savonarola at the stake, was evidently in the precisely contrary ratio to their direct consciousness of it or of themselves at all.^a

This great spiritual seer finds this deeper unified life present also in profound æsthetic experiences. He says:

The happiest and most fruitful moments for our æsthetic sense, those in which our mind expands most and grows most, hence is most active in æsthetic "action" (though not "activity") are those in which we are unforcedly and massively absorbed in drinking in, with a quiet intentness, the contrasts and harmonies, the grand unity in variety, the very presence and spirit of an alpine upland, or of a river's flowing,

^a *The Mystical Element of Religion*, Vol. II, p. 133.

or of the ocean's outspread, or of the Parthenon sculptures or of Rafael's madonnas. At such moments we altogether cease to be directly conscious of ourselves, of time or of the body's whereabouts; and when we return to our ordinary psychical and mental condition, we do so with an undeniable sense of added strength and youthfulness,—somewhat as though our face, old and haggard, were, after gazing in utter self-oblivion upon some resplendent youthfulness, to feel, beyond all doubt, all its many wrinkles to have gone.*

But this condition of fusion and integration does not state the whole case. Mystical experience at its normal best is not only fused and integrated but is flooded and invaded with energies which seem to come from beyond the usual margins of the self. There is a vast increase of vitality. "Overbrimming" expresses the experience, perhaps, as well as any single word does. It feels like:

Another morn risen on mid-noon.

The beyond, "the Yonder," has suddenly become "the here." What never could be, *is*. "*Das Unbeschreibliche hier ist es gethan.*" The finite is no longer set over against the Infinite, they seem to interpenetrate. The temporal appears to be lifted up into the Eternal, as a musical note is taken up into its place in an unbroken melody. The swimmer has found the sea and is swimming in it. The homesick exile has discovered the Homeland. What a recent writer has called "a concentration of the affections and a resulting experience of celestial joy" almost always are in evidence in the high

* *Ibid.*, p. 133.

tide of mystical experience. The late Poet Laureate, Robert Bridges, has well expressed the feeling in his lines:

A glow of child-like wonder enthrall'd me, as if my sense
Had come to a new birth purified, my mind enrapt
Re-awakening to a fresh initiation of life.

Grandmaison describes the experience as a "sort of¹ immediate, indisputable, inevitable, evidential quality which takes the place of dry banal abstract knowledge." He adds: "It gives a certain assurance of what is already known, like a ray illuminating a living reality in depth.") John Woolman once overheard an Indian Chief say: "I always love to feel where words come from." The depth of life behind the words is more important than the words themselves. There are depths and concentrations of life when it even seems possible to feel where *love* comes from.

The experience of the English preacher, J. Trevor, is a good example of this "overbrimming" sense of Presence. He says in his *Autobiography*:

I felt . . . an inward state of peace and joy and assurance indescribably intense, accompanied with a sense of being bathed in a warm glow of light as though the external condition had brought about the internal effect. These highest experiences [he adds] that I have had of God's Presence have been rare and brief—flashes of consciousness which have compelled me to exclaim with surprise—God is *here*—or conditions of exaltation and insight less intense. . . . When they came I was living the strongest, fullest, sanest, deepest life. . . . It was in these most real seasons that the Real

Presence came, and I was aware that I was immersed in the infinite ocean of God.

Margaret Prescott Montague in her little book, *Twenty Minutes of Reality*, describes her experience as "beholding life for the first time in all its intoxication of loveliness, in its unspeakable joy, beauty and importance." "Out of all the gray days of my life, I have looked into the heart of reality; I have witnessed the truth; *I have seen life as it really is.*"

John Wilhelm Rowntree, a young English Quaker who left us all too soon, has given his experience of thirty years ago, in these words: "There comes a time when suddenly I am on my knees, my whole soul flooded with light and love, tears in my heart and eyes, an unspeakable peace enfolding me." I know further from his own personal accounts to me that there were moments when he felt enfolded in the love of God. I am acquainted with very few accounts of mystical experience that surpass in vividness and the air of reality that which Isaac Penington gave, in the seventeenth century, of the way he passed over from being a "Seeker" to becoming a "happy Finder":

I felt the presence and the power of the Most High. Yea, I did not only feel words and demonstrations from without, but I felt the dead quickened, the seed raised, insomuch that my heart said, "This is He, this is He, there is no other: This is He whom I have waited for and sought after from my childhood. . . . I have met with my God. I have met with my Saviour . . . I have felt the healings drop into my soul from under His wings." ⁵

⁵ *Works*, Vol. I, pp. 37-38 (condensed).

Mary Austin, in *The Forum* for December, 1928, has given an account of a personal experience which many a child could duplicate, if only the child knew how to express his wonder.

It was [she writes] a summer morning and the child I was had walked down through the orchard alone and come out on the brow of a sloping hill where there was grass and a wind blowing and one tall tree reaching into infinite immensities of blueness. Quite suddenly after a moment of quietness there, earth and sky and tree and wind-blown grass and the child in the midst of them came alive together with a pulsing light of consciousness. There was a wild fox-glove at the child's feet and a bee dozing about it, and to this day I recall the swift inclusive awareness of each for the whole—I in them and they in me and all of us inclosed in a warm lucent bubble of livingness. I remember the child looking everywhere for the source of this happy wonder, and at last she questioned "God?" because it was the only awesome word she knew. Deep inside, like the murmurous swinging of a bell, she heard the answer, "God, God." How long that ineffable moment lasted I never knew.

The writer of the account declares that the world was "never quite the same" after that experience. "It has been," she says, "the one abiding reality of my life."

Walt Whitman's experience which opened the whole creation to the young poet is not so well known as it should be. After telling in the most intense fashion of a lover how it feels to be enveloped and invaded by the love of God, he says:

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge
that pass all the argument of earth,
And I know that the hand of God is the elder hand of my
own;

And I know that the Spirit of God is the elder brother of
my own;
And that a Kelson of the creation is love.

"Kelson" is a nautical word and means to a sailor the keel that holds the entire ship together and makes it able to withstand the assaults of the sea. Whitman has risen from his "overbrimming" experience with a palpitating certainty that love is the binding keel of the whole cosmic structure which the Great Pilot steers, and ever after this experience "Shipmate" is Whitman's word for the Soul of all reality.

Few more vivid accounts of a mystical experience have been given in recent times than that given by J. Middleton Murry in his book, entitled *God* (1929). The interpretation of the experience to which the book is devoted seems to me confused and unconvincing, but the experience itself is beyond question a notable one. I give it slightly condensed, as follows:

I became aware of myself as a little island against whose slender shores a cold, dark, boundless ocean lapped devouring. Somehow in that moment I knew that I had reached a pinnacle of personal being. I was I, as I had never been before—and never should be again. What happened? If I could tell that I should tell a secret indeed. But a moment came when the darkness of that ocean changed to light, the cold to warmth; when it swept in one great wave over the shores and frontiers of myself, when it bathed me and I was renewed; when the room was filled with a presence, and I knew that I was not alone—that I never could be alone any more, that the universe beyond held no menace, for I was part of it, that in some way for which I had sought in vain so many

years, I *belonged*, and because I belonged I was no longer I, but something different, which could never be afraid in the old ways or cowardly with the old cowardice.*

These instances of mystical experience, which could be easily multiplied a thousandfold from ancient and contemporary accounts of it, will, I hope, give sufficient light to indicate *the enhanced vitality and the exalted state of mind* that is connoted by the word. We are, however, now especially concerned to discover whether the experience is anything more than a heightening of vitality and an increase of emotional intensity; whether in short it brings an increment of knowledge and extends the range of insight and truth. Do we *know* any- x 7
thing more about God after a mystical experience than we did before it came? Are the experiences knowledge-bringing and truth-expanding, or do they terminate in exuberance and emotional thrill?

It can be said without question that they are distinctly more than emotional upheavals. It is certain that they bring a vastly increased stock of energy to live by. There is an immense driving power in such experiences. They supply an extraordinary dynamic and a new capacity of initiative. William James is undoubtedly right when he says, though I do not quote him exactly, that the overcoming of all usual barriers is the great mystic achievement. Of St. Ignatius Loyola he says: "His mysticism made him assuredly one of the most powerfully practical human engines that ever lived,"

* *Op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

and he declares that St. Teresa's mystical experiences formed in her a "new centre of spiritual energy." Such increase of will-power, such clarification of insight upon the line of direction for one's life *implies* that there is at hand a stock of fresh truth, though it does not prove beyond contention that the experience has brought new knowledge.

✓ But if we are to talk of "knowledge" in this connection it ought to be made frankly clear that we are not using the word to mean scientifically organized "knowledge." That is, the knowledge of facts accurately described and causally explained so that it can be treated as universal truth, the same for all minds. What happens in the moments of mystical experience is, rather, an enrichment of the individual mind, an increase of its range and depth, an enlarged outlook on life, an intensification of insight, a heightening of personality. It is much like what happens with the refinement and culture of artistic taste, or with the appreciation of beauty in any field. The thing that matters in these rapturous moments is not a new stock of facts or a discovery of what causes beauty. It is the incoming of power to discriminate with clearer insight and the formation of a new capacity to interpret what is essential to the type of reality with which one is dealing. In all these achievements of depth and power the particular, individual experience tends to reveal aspects of universality, though it cannot be ranked with the universality of scientific knowledge. The nearer one approaches to

what is *essential* to any one of the values of life, the wider is the appeal it makes to others and the more universal is the response to it. But there can be no *compulsion* in these matters. We cannot use "must" here. The authority of truth and beauty and goodness is, and must always remain, its power to produce inward conviction in other minds. And we must be content with that.

It must be admitted at once that we have no specific *sense* for dealing with the world of ultimate reality in any way comparable to the physical senses with which we deal with objects in space. If we use the word "sense" in this new connection we must use it metaphorically and not literally. We possess no differentiated organ of sight, hearing or touch by which we can know, recognize or describe realities which we call "spiritual." Mystics do speak frequently, no doubt, of "contact," or of "seeing," or of "hearing," of being "invaded," or "flooded," or "enveloped," or of having "a sense of presence." But it is usually their vivid way of saying that they have a degree of assurance and conviction of God no less certain than that which they get through sense-contact with objects. We arrive somehow at our ineradicable convictions of the reality of our inner self without the mediation of sense organs, though no doubt the feel of our corporeal bulk, the strain of our muscles, the flushing of our glands, the throes of our viscera, play an important rôle; but when all is said, I do not find my essential self through my corporeal senses. For

this experience of self-discovery there must be central interpretation of the data that come from muscles and glands and viscera, and the *interpretation* cannot be one item among the incoming data.

One of the most amazing features of human life is the "acknowledgement" which we all make of other minds and the recognition of their spiritual values. Once more, the senses have their function and play their part, but one mind accepts the reality of another mind, and they intercommunicate by an unconscious "acknowledgement" which runs far beyond the evidence of either proof or of sense-experience.

The mind has its own sources of insight, and it has ways of knowing in its own realm that are quite unlike those of sense for the realm outside. It seems likely that all specialized forms of consciousness, as well as all special movements of expansion and contraction, have slowly developed out of the simpler, undifferentiated states and movements of the entire organism as a whole, and it may well be that our minds can still on occasion *operate as a whole*, though for matters that belong in the world of space and time, the specialized senses are very convenient. Leibnitz amended the old phrase: "There is nothing in the mind except what has come through the senses," by adding the words, "Except the mind itself." The objection may be made to this unified operation of the mind that it makes man a kind of overgrown amœba. I am not pleading for a "return" to the amœba, I am going forward to the function of *a total personal self*.

Mary Austin, who has already been quoted, declared that her experience had "the feel of a Presence," but she added that she "was conscious only of force, a source of energy." "No sense was in operation." There was something happening *inside*. "A portion of my innermost deep-self," she says, "was functioning; as much a part of my constitution as the clapper is to the bell." It is what the Psalmist called having "truth in the inward parts." She adopts the East Indian phrase, "the Sacred Middle" within herself to name "the innermost deep-self," "the conscious equipment" by which a person attains his first-hand "evidence of things not seen" and his acquaintance with "the substance of things hoped for."

William James writing to his wife in 1898 of a mystical experience which occurred to him in the Adirondacks one night when he was working on his Gifford Lectures, which afterwards constituted *Varieties of Religious Experience*, calls it "holding an indescribable meeting in my breast with the moral Gods of the inner life." He speaks of "its intense significance"; "its everlasting freshness"; "its intense *appeal*" and then he concludes: "In point of fact, I can't find a single word for all that significance, and don't know what it was significant of, so there it remains, a mere boulder of *impression*." His "moral Gods of the inner life in the breast" sounds very much like Mary Austin's "Sacred Middle in the innermost deep-self." His phrase, "it remains a mere boulder of *impression*," is a very striking testimony to the bafflingly incommunicable aspect

of such experiences. It was "intensely significant" but of precisely *what* it was significant he does not know. It is as though when flying one came upon Gibraltar in the fog and knew of the *contact* without knowing what gigantic boulder had emerged out of the darkness and had produced the bare "impression" of a something there.

All the great mystics speak in similar fashion. St. John of the Cross, one of the greatest mystics of all time, says that "the soul makes its greatest progress when it travels in the dark." In what he considers the highest moments of contemplation, "God communicates Himself no longer through the channels of sense, nor does He come to a mind that is busy with fancies, or imaginations, or reflections, or processes of thought"; the soul must first attain "the dark night of both senses and mind." In other words, what we usually call "knowledge" is for St. John of the Cross transcended and the soul apprehends without specific sense data.

A hardly less famous mystic, who wrote *The Cloud of Unknowing* in the early second half of the fourteenth century and who has recently, with some exaggeration, been called "the most subtle and original spiritual writer in the English language," finds the goal of life to be attained in an experience in which "nothing remains of thy working mind but a naked intent stretching unto God, not clothed in any special thought of God, how He is in Himself or in any of His works, but only that He is as He is." That reminds one very closely of the bare

experience of a *that* without any *what*—"a mere boulder of impression."

But fortunately that is not all there is to say about the insight and the truth that are gained through mystical experience. It is assuredly worth something to attain "a naked intent stretching unto God." Our "intents" are never completely definable in terms of "content" either to ourselves or to others, but "intents" even when they do not quite come to focus in thought reveal some relation to reality and are effective as vital energies. It is out of these intensified moments of concentration that richer contents of thought and life emerge. The hush and silence, the peace and serenity, the withdrawal from the surface and the concentration at the center, do in some real way fructify the mind and give it what mystics boldly call "spiritual fecundity" and what Baron von Hügel calls "overflowing interior plenitude." This fructification of the deeper levels of the being may in the end be more important than the mere multiplication of facts. "Interior plenitude" is on the whole a greater gain than is the bare accumulation of information. An organizing, energizing, procreating force at the center of one's life counts for vastly more than would a few added items of knowledge. Concentration greatly outweighs the advantages of the easier processes of differentiation. It may be that we shall need to reinterpret the word "knowledge" and read it in terms of increased depth rather than in terms of wider range on the surface plane. The enrichment of the place

where words and thoughts "come from" is more important for life than is "saying something" or even "thinking something."

f But there is more to say of mystical experience than the fact that it brings interiorization and new depths of life. There can, I think, be little doubt that, in spite of their emphasis on "the dark night," the "cloud of unknowing" and "the contentless mental blank of contemplation," mystics have greatly advanced and increased the positive content of our knowledge of God. Interpreters of mystical experience have been too much inclined to deal only with the moment of bare contact and with its absence of content and they have overlooked the enrichment and fructification of mind that follows from the ineffable contact. William James, after telling his wife that his Adirondack experience is "a mere boulder of *impression*," goes on at once to say, "Doubtless in more ways than one, things in the Edinburgh lectures will be traceable to it." And so, in fact, they were.

J. A. Symonds declares that his experience of concentration and unification enabled him to "hire sunshine for leaden hours," and "to engender a mood of mind sufficient for the purpose of living." That does not necessarily mean increase of knowledge. It means, rather, increase of serenity through faith and conviction, and a new fortification of spirit through the intensification of the fused mental powers. But in the long run that inward condition does frequently enable the mind

to reach farther than it reached before and to gain a content of life and truth that lay beyond it until then.

It has too often been assumed that mystical knowledge consists of ready-made oracular communications, *i.e.*, secret messages, mysteriously given, or that new items of knowledge drop out of the void into the passive mind of the mystic. I do not make that claim. I am not interested in the question of ready-made communications. I do not pray for such bestowals and I make no defense of their validity. I am much more concerned to show that the human mind itself can become a sensitive spiritual organ of response than that new ranges of information are on rare occasions vouchsafed to a select and chosen few. My real claim, then, is this, that when the powers of the mind are fused and unified, overbrimmed and revitalized by intense mystical concentration and unification *the whole interior self becomes an immensely heightened organ of spiritual apprehension in correspondence with the real world to which it belongs.*

There are well-known states of mind that bring what psychologists call *hyper-æsthesia*, which means heightened power of perception. There are, too, moments when the range of memory is so greatly extended that we need a new name for it. Even the most ordinary of us sometimes find ourselves in possession of a "wisdom" that we did not know was ours. It is quite possible that some sort of internal adjustment, in ways which we do not yet understand, puts us, on occasion, into possession

of a greater *telepathic* power—that is, the power of feeling the state and condition of other minds—than usually is our lot. We find ourselves sometimes *en rapport* with someone we love, in spite of distance that separates us. Space proves to be not so important a factor in love as inner harmonization is. The spirit can have its disturbances from the noises of inside “static” as well as the radio does from outside “static.” This “hyper-aesthesia” of the unified and fructified self, with which I am dealing is no more wonderful than are these other recognized instances of increase of range. It is merely a question of what actually happens.

All advances that have been made in the field of beauty or of moral goodness or of mathematical truth have been made by persons who were capable of accumulating wisdom from the achievements of the past and then, by a sudden leap of intuition, going beyond the previous frontiers. This “leap of intuition” is nothing more than an insight made by the unified, concentrated, completely integrated self, rather than through our usual analytic or discursive, step-by-step methods of reasoning. The mind of a great musician like Beethoven becomes an amazing organ for the apprehension and interpretation of harmony.

And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a
star.

The creators in the realm of visible beauty in a similar way pass all known frontiers. They become organs

through whom the universe of beauty is enlarged. Something that was not before, now *is*. This type of thing just as certainly happens in the field of moral goodness. We could not *live* significantly if life were nothing more than a repetition of the moral insights of our ancestors. In crisis-moments some moral hero suddenly sees a direction of advance and breaks the trail forward. A goodness that never had been before, now is. The world of ends—the realm of what ought to be—has enlarged. The same sort of thing happened when a quickened mind first saw that the square on the hypotenuse of a triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides. The area of truth was enlarged. And again, it swept forward to a new stage when Einstein, with his pages of equations and formulæ before him, leaped to his insight of relativity. The unified mind itself in all these cases becomes an organ of interpretation of realities which the senses have not discovered and could not have discovered. We enter a realm that is supersensuous. It is as though the mind in heightened moments had spiritual antennæ that reach beyond the organized boundaries of thought and discover new and unexplored realms.

Something like that, in my judgment, has marked the contribution of the mystics through the ages. They have not had secret messages from sociable angels. They have not been granted special communications as favored ambassadors to the heavenly court. They have been men and women like the rest of us, only they succeeded,

better than most persons do, in accumulating the spiritual gains of the past, in building the truths of life into the permanent fiber of the soul, in forming a passionate *intent* for God, and then, through the fusing and concentrating of all the strata of the interior life, becoming a sensitive organ for the interpretation of realities that lay beyond the former frontiers of spiritual truth.

We have no way of *proving* that these advances of truth, these new aspects of the nature of God that come to us from these sensitized and harmonized organs of interpretation are in every point correspondent with the eternal reality of God as He objectively and essentially is in His own being. In fact, we cannot talk with intelligence of God as He is in His "pure" being wholly apart from us. We have no way of knowing that there is "pure" objective harmony in the universe like that which Beethoven has given us through his music, or that there was a preëxistent beauty like that which we now see on the canvases of Raphael, or that the goodness for which the moral hero dies is a copy of a prevenient eternal goodness, or that Euclid and Einstein have uncovered truths that mirror *Truth as such*. All we can say is that it is through these new insights of beauty, these new visions of the life of goodness, these fresh discoveries of the inevitable truths of mathematics, that we have builded the various stages of the world in which we live. The foundations of our universe would crack if the reality of these values crumbled. What may be the quality and character of some more eternal

reality for some other type of mind than ours we do not care to ask. We are only concerned to find here the pillars on which *our* universe rests.

And so it is, too, with the portrait of God, slowly corrected through the ages by what has been believed by mystics and revealers to be the "living Face"—"God's God in the mind of man." The slow heightening of the spiritual quality of religion and the gradual expansion and enrichment of the interpretation of God through the experiences of those who have from time to time gone forward beyond the old frontiers, and then have helped their fellows to come to their height, form one of the greatest achievements the human race has yet made. It is the way the race has passed from twilight to full day-dawn.

But the advances have in the main been made through *interpretation* and not alone by ineffable moments of contact or "clouds of unknowing." It is wholly inadequate to talk of mystical experiences unless we go farther and reckon with the enriched life and truth that come through the mystic as the result of his heightened personality and his enlarged capacity to see the significance of the divine Presence working in the world. What we find in the mystic, therefore, is not a miraculous figure, nor the instrument of a supernatural happening, but rather an intensified human organ for the affirmation of the reality of God and for the richer interpretation of His character. He belongs primarily not in the class of the logician, the scientist or the

philosopher, but rather in the class with those geniuses who have been the revealers of music and beauty and the wider ranges of the other intrinsic values of life.

* The high-range mystic comes to us first of all with *assurance*. He speaks with the authority of what seems to him to be an indubitable conviction. Where others discuss and question and doubt, he insists that he knows. And then with the "day-dawn and the day-star" risen in his own soul, he has often succeeded in giving through his interpretations vividness and intensity to the character of God—especially in regard to the *love-character* of God. "Wouldst thou wit thy Lord's meaning?" asks Lady Julian, the remarkable English mystic of the fourteenth century. "Wit it well: love was His meaning. Who showeth thee? Love. What showeth He thee? Love. Wherefore showeth He it thee? For Love." This intensified conception of the love of God reaches a very great height also in the mystical interpretations of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, with the corresponding effect of enkindling his own love to a burning flame. Richard Rolle, another English mystic of the fourteenth century under a similar impact, became a spiritual troubadour of the love of God, and a glowing witness of the burning heat of love set aflame in the soul. Rolle calls his experience "a wonderful joy of God's love." "That joy," he goes on to say, "is in the soul and for abundance of joy and sweetness it ascends into the mouth, so that the heart and the tongue accord in one and body and soul rejoice, *living in God*." Everywhere we may turn in the

great mystical literature of the world, *the love of God* is the foremost note of interpretation. The mystics unite in saying with Christina Rossetti:

Is there nothing, then, but love, search we sky and earth?
There is nothing out of love hath perpetual worth.

Together with this primary note of love as essential to the life of God, the mystics of history are very prone to couple *the self-giving* nature of God's Life. In a sense grace means that, but grace can be used, and often has been used, in a narrow and limited way, and the mystic is eager to leave no doubt in anyone's mind that God is a Being who pours Himself out in unending loving-kindness. It has often been called the "sacrificial" nature of God. But the word "sacrificial" is too apt to suggest something hard and forbidding, as though it *had to be done*. God's giving of Himself is, to the mystic, an abounding and joyous outpouring of His Life. Not only is "favoritism" overpassed, but even those qualities which seemed so lofty to Hebrew prophets, justice, righteousness and "holiness," as they used the word, are transcended in this spirit of Life-sharing and Love-sharing—transcended, but not left behind—for the supreme ethical traits can never be lost, however lofty the Being becomes.

These marks of divine character which most mystics see in God have always tended to eliminate fear from the mystic's mind. Heaven and hell cease to be motives or ends. He does not think in forensic or legal terms. Religion is sublimated in acquaintance with God, friend-

ship and fellowship with Him. Awe, mystery and wonder remain in the hushed spirit that has had a vision of Eternal Reality—and the fuller the vision the greater become the wonder, the mystery and the awe. But it is plainly noticeable that mystical experience usually brings a feeling of security, serenity and joy—a sense of “at homeness,” as I have said, in the vast spaces of the world and in the background and forward sweep of time. The soul is no longer frightened, like a lost child. It feels that it “belongs.”

It is obvious that the interpretation which the mystic gives takes its color from his life. It is once more the well-known difficulty of interpreting the greater in terms of the less, the eternal in terms of the temporal, the divine in terms of the highest human. There will always be those who will object to this procedure. They will dub it “humanism” and will deny its objective value. The loudest objectors at the present moment are the members of the Barthian school. They insist that God must be “an absolute Other.” We belittle Him and drag Him down from His true being, they say, when we say anything about Him in terms of our poor, thin, finite selves. There is nothing in us or about us through which He can be interpreted. No piling up of our empty zeros will even start on the road to infinity. Earth has no clue to offer, history has no word to say that gives any light on the exalted theme of God. *We* belong in the order of “nature” and He is utterly supernatural.

If it is so, well then, it is so. But I see no reason to be overawed by this new dogmatism, nor do I see any good

ground for accepting this new and intensified form of "Calvinizing" human nature and the order of things that is called "natural." If nothing of the divine nature can be expressed in the human then the incarnation of God in Christ has no real meaning or significance, and nothing that we say about God is anything more than a *flatus vocis*, an empty breath of sound. Religion once more withdraws from earth and becomes an irrationality—a mere surd—and is therefore doomed to be left behind.

The mystic in all periods bears witness to the truth of the transcendence of God. God is not glorified man. He is not the sum total of things—an all inclusive Pan. We do not attain Him by stretching our own stature. He is, in very truth, Other than we or the things we see. But, if the mystic is a safe guide, God is not an "*absolute Other*." There is something in us related to Him. There is a way through the soul of man to genuine fellowship and friendship with Him, and there is the possibility of a steadily growing acquaintance with His character. We are no more bankrupt in our capacity for finding God than in our capacity for finding harmony, or beauty, or moral goodness, or truth. We shall not find *all there is* of any of these values, but all we do find is real, and is good to live by. So also with our *findings* of God, they do not exhaust His being. They do not carry us to the full height of all that He is. But what we have proves to be solid building-material for life-purposes, and every spiritual gain that is achieved makes the next one more possible and more sure.

CHAPTER III

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE UNIVERSE AND OF GOD

It can be taken as settled, I think, that we shall never prove the existence of God by a purely logical, speculative argument. These arguments, in the days before their thinness and hollowness grew apparent, comforted and buoyed up many souls and performed a valuable service. Even now they are not wholly devoid of meaning. But they awaken little more vital interest in us to-day than do the pieces of broken pottery brought from the mound that was formerly Jericho and where men once lived eagerly and intensely. The juggle with syllogisms leaves us with the same lack of conviction that we have when we see the Indian fakir throw his coil of rope into the air and then profess to climb up hand over hand on the rope, for all the time we know that there is no place in the sky where the rope can catch to support itself—and the man. So, too, there is no way of getting more out of a syllogism than you put into its premises. Like the Tower of Babel, it fails to reach all the way up.

We get immense results through the scientific method, but at the same time it entails a severe reduction of the

rich complete universe as it really is discovered to be when we approach it in terms of actual life and of those interpretations of intrinsic value in which we are bound to clothe it. The aspects of reality which are of such a nature that they must be felt and appreciated in order to be known, are left out of account by a method whose sole aim or purpose is to describe and explain rather than to comprehend and interpret. "Describe" has in scientific language for better or for worse come to mean "describe in terms of mathematical formulæ," and "explain" has come to mean "explain by antecedent causes," a method which lands the explorer at last in a tight mechanistic system, and leaves him in a world in which this event and that event *appear* to be explained by another event but in which in the last resort nothing is either actually comprehended or luminously explained, for the *whole* is meaningless and incomprehensible—it clanks in orderly fashion but it satisfies nobody.

Any object that a rigid science deals with, from the most minute to the most sublime, would necessarily be a finite thing among other things—one object caused by another object, or objects—or at best the added sum of all the things there are, and that method certainly does not lead to what we mean by "God." The astronomer is quite justified in not expecting to find God through his telescope and the physicist is equally justified in not introducing God as part of his explanation of the movement of matter in space. The kind of God that science

by its present method could give us would at best be in the nature of a "cause" that would at once need another cause of that cause to explain it. J. A. Thomson was right when he said: "We cannot by scientific searching find out God." Our hearts would never be satisfied nor our lives inspired or sustained by a God of that type—a *deus ex machina* God. One of the worst disasters to religion and, for that matter, to life itself, would be the elimination from it of all mystery and sublimity, all awe and wonder, and the fringe and halo of penumbral splendor. In the end all thin rationalizations rob life of meaning and spoil it at the heart of it.

It is at the same time true that the progress of science may greatly clarify our ideas about the kind of God we have a right to expect to find in the universe. It may at least give us negative clues and tests. It will help us to eliminate child-minded and primitive conceptions of God. It will disillusion us from the doll-stage of religion. We shall not any longer expect to find God on Mount Olympus or at the top of a Tower of Babel or as a Monarch in the sky. As we grow in scientific insight we shall increasingly discount superstition and magic. We shall be dissatisfied with the conception of a God who exhibits caprice and favoritism and we shall expect to find unvarying order, enduring wisdom and intelligent purpose in the God of our new faith.

Science, too, will help us—in fact has been helping us—to get clearer conceptions of where to look for ultimate reality and what kind of ultimate reality to

expect. The fact that the visible universe which submits to our formulæ has come out of and is surrounded by an invisible universe of a type not yet clearly revealed to us may possibly be a clue of some importance. No atom is actually in contact with another atom, nor are the parts of the atom in contact with each other. They swim in an invisible realm or sphere which is crammed with incalculable energy and which apparently is the ground of consciousness as well as the ground of organized atomic building stuff. In any case, modern science has brought us much closer to an ultimate source of both mind and matter than has ever before been available for the religious thinker.

Our way of approach, however, to the central problem of the reality and nature of God must be, as I have implied, neither pure logical speculation, nor the mechanistic scientific method. Neither of these ways of approach would ever bring us to any of the intrinsic values by which we live our deepest and most essential life. Beauty and love and unselfish goodness lie just as much beyond the scope of syllogisms as God does. No one could have anticipated by any speculative argument or by "bare rationality" that moral goodness and beauty and love would one day overtop practical efficiency and introduce a new level of creation altogether.

Just as impossible is it, too, to arrive at the meaning and significance of beauty or love or goodness by methods of description or by causal explanations. No process of analysis, no piling up of descriptive accounts,

no reversion to antecedent causes, brings us any nearer to what we *mean* by beauty, goodness or love. When we have succeeded in "explaining" love, when for example, we trace it to some utilitarian advantage, or when we discover that a person's goodness is a piece of fine calculation, we are no longer talking about either "love" or "goodness"; we are back once more on the well-known level of "causal explanations" and "utility values." And yet nothing is more real, nothing is more certain, nothing is more significant to us, than any one of these so-called intrinsic values; and even those persons who on rationalistic grounds deny their standing or validity nevertheless *act* in reference to them, find joy and happiness in them and, in their best moments, *live by them*. The world we actually *live in* is unreduced and includes far more than the total items in the scientific category.

Our best point of approach to the reality and nature of God is beyond question through this type of experience. It is essentially different both from the logical method and the scientific method. We need not insist and we do not insist that the method of appreciation, or life-valuation, is "absolutely" different from the method of scientific description, just as we do not claim that a fact and the appreciation of its value for life are utterly and completely sundered. It is true, however, that the procedure in describing and explaining a fact is quite unlike the situation when we enjoy an object, wonder at it, feel the meaning and significance of it,

and raise the quality and level of our own personality and our social relations with our fellows through the appeal and the lifting power of it.

In the case of the value-experience there are evidences of objective reality similar to those of fact-experience. The universe is as truly *behind* the one as it is behind the other. Our values, our appreciations, our joys and our aspirations have been as important factors in our adjustment to the universe, in our learning how to live in it, as any biological structure which we possess has been. We should not be "men," and we should not be here at all, with these aspects gone. These aspects which make us men and which lift us above the level of fact-recording beings are thus not some capricious addendum or overplus which *we* supply to the otherwise sterile world of things. Our universe itself is built to the scale of values and is the home and habitat of beings that live that way. The main difference, however, between fact and value is that we can conceivably think of *facts* as having a kind of abstract and realistic existence; whereas it is impossible to think intelligently of intrinsic values—by which I mean beauty, love, goodness or truth—without thinking at the same time of their inward meaning to someone who cares, enjoys, lives in and appreciates the worth and worthiness of the object. Appreciation is not appreciation without a mind that appreciates and discovers meaning.

The universe in its unfolding processes from lower to higher, seems to be a basis and framework for an im-

mense spiritual adventure. For the religious attitude this adventure turns out to be the very heart and center of the whole creation. It is, no doubt, quite possible to be so busily occupied studying the framework, describing the mechanism of it, as to miss all the signs and suggestions which indicate that there is any "spiritual adventure" going on at the heart of things. But if we are to find God we must look for Him where there are indications of such a spiritual adventure.

There are large areas of our human body-system which are not directly under the control of our own will, and which appear to have slight function toward any coherent spiritual life-purposes of ours. They form, however, the wide fringe and periphery to an inner nucleus of essential organic parts that enable us to live, think, plan, forecast, work, coöperate, conserve our past, anticipate a future, create ideals and achieve them; in short, to become self-conscious persons with purposes of our own. It would be very easy for an investigator to spend all his life studying the spleen, the liver and the kidneys of a man without ever getting the least inkling that the man himself was a creator of beauty, a self-sacrificing lover of his race, devoted to truth and dedicated to ideals of goodness. The man himself, who is "captain of his soul," knows, at least in a dim way in his highest conscious moments, that he is engaged in a purposeful adventure and that he has his hand on the tiller of his central course of life, even though there are regions of his body which he does

not directly steer and which sometimes may become recalcitrant to his aims and defeative of his creative purpose.

Somewhat so, I believe, there is a vast peripheral area in the universe which only partially, and more or less remotely, functions toward divine ends. The universe is not God. Pantheism as a way of thinking is a hopeless muddle. So, too, is a thin rationalistic "naturalism." One might equally well call a circus a meeting for worship or a communion service, as to call the totality of the all "God." No, there are many things that ought not to be as they are. There are situations which at temporal moments are recalcitrant and defeative and which must be put down and be conquered before there can be final triumph of aim and goal. The universe is no doubt malleable toward ends that are "good" but it is not essentially *bound* to produce the good, any more than a block of Pentelic marble is bound to be a glorious part of the Parthenon frieze, until some Phidias sees the possibilities in it and makes it take shape and significance. There have been many wise persons in the course of history who have believed the world to be the work of a malevolent being and to have a diabolical kink in it and there is fully as much to justify this Manichæan conclusion as there is to warrant the soft optimism of Leibnitz that it is the best possible world. There are pitiful tragedies in the world process against which all our finer sentiments revolt and cry aloud. But on the whole, and in the long run, we may

believe that the universe in its wholeness is a satisfactory "basis and framework" for the spiritual adventure which seems to be going on in it. The visible universe may very well be a sphere and starting point for building a moral order. It is because we find signs of this moral order in process of creation that we are confident that God is here at work and is slowly revealing the dawning good.

We cannot, without more discrimination, turn to the successive events that occur in space and time and assume forthwith that they express the mind of God, or that we can read His will and purpose at every point of the time series. Something of God, certainly some trace of purposeful mind, at least the mark of mathematical order, breaks through every curve of every atom, and every event of man or of society that unfolds. We may well believe that not a single sparrow falls to the ground without making a real difference at the center of things, and that every hair of every head and every leaf of every tree is "counted."

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

These things could not *be* at all without conformity to a mathematical order, without coherence in a total system of things, without the constraint of that inevitable "must be so" which in our vocabulary we call "law." No events are isolated. No phenomena stand

apart and operate by themselves. It is a *universe* and not a *multiverse*.

Liver and spleen and kidneys in our bodies are coherent with heartbeats and blood stream that feed the central life where we are working out our ideals and purposes, but the central aim could never be discovered if one confined his sphere of operation alone to kidney, spleen and liver. There is much in a drama, or in a musical creation which, if taken in isolation, throws very little light on the central dramatic purpose of the author or on the *motif* of the musical piece. Nevertheless the mind of the author has touched these lesser and subordinate parts and they add *something* to the total movement which would be missed if this scene were omitted or if this musical note were absent. So, too, it may well be with the cosmic drama. Its larger meaning is easily missed if we focus attention on isolated aspects or on separated parts of the whole, and it is not strange if it often *seems* as though no drama were under way at all so long as we are occupied only with the stage-setting of the main dramatic event.

Our main problem at this point is the task of discovering what is "the central spiritual adventure" in the universe, assuming that there is one, and what kind of a God is revealed through it and betokened by it. It seems to me that we are bound to turn for our answer to those highest peaks of intimation and revelation, where the meaning and value of things most clearly come in sight, and where *the surmise of a more yet is*

most apparent. For that discovery we must take careful account of the fundamental significance of personality and its extraordinary implications. It is probable that the so-called "spiritual adventure" on our planet, which is revealed through personality, is at present only incipient, only at the starting stage, but even so it reveals lines of direction and we may catch a glimpse of the plan and the design. This sounds "anthropomorphic," no doubt. It compels us to shorten the perspective and to stain the white radiance of eternity with the many-colored dome of our finite life. Even so, religion is no more anthropomorphic than science is. The whole fabric of science is built upon the faith that we can trust the forms and categories of our human minds, that our mathematics fits the entire structure of the universe and that the organon of our logic works not only here but in Orion and the Pleiades as well.

If we refuse to take this path of anthropomorphism, we foredoom ourselves to a worse alternative, which is agnosticism and nescience and a universe devoid of intelligibility. The only way to truth that lies open to us at all is the way through our own minds. If we cannot find a clue here in our own human reason, we can find it nowhere. We shall never find any ways of proving the reality of God or of discovering His character except through the processes and the interpretations of nature, of life and of mind; and in any case no religion can help us much unless it meets us where we live and think

and love and suffer and triumph over difficulties. "The word is nigh *thee*, even in thy mouth and thy heart." With deep penetration Hans Denck said in the sixteenth century: "The Kingdom of God is in your hearts and he who searches for God outside himself will never find Him. Apart from God no one can either seek or find God, for he who seeks God already in very truth has Him."

Our mathematics for all practical purposes proves to be the same as the mathematics of what Bishop Berkeley called "the choir of heaven and the mighty frame of the earth," and it may well be a fact—as it seems to be—that our seemingly finite human reason fits in and tallies with Reason spelled with a capital, the Reason that operates wherever meaning and significance break through the facts of the world. Athanasius, who was the greatest stickler that ever lived for the view that the essential nature of God was revealed in Christ, did not hesitate to declare that *the way of truth, the path to the knowledge and comprehension of God is in the soul of man. The road to God is not far off, but it is in us—it is in the soul of every man.*¹

It will be countered in reply, no doubt, that the obvious trouble with this approach is that we are thus forced to start with a *finite* process, and consequently we can never hope to get across the chasm to an infinite reality. My answer is that there is no such chasm to cross. Man is from the start a *finite-infinite being*,

¹ *Contra Gentes*, Sec. 30 (freely rendered).

and not a "mere" finite one. Partaking, as he does, of Reason he cannot stop his quest and pursuit of truth at any finite point, for *finite truth* is a contradiction of terms. If a thing is true at all it is infinitely true, though these terms "finite" and "infinite" have genuine application only in the realm of space and mathematics. They do not correspond to spiritual realities nor do they tally with the dominant issues which attach to the realm of Spirit. A wiser term for what is meant by "finite-infinite" is *transcendence in immanence*. "Transcendence in immanence" appears wherever self-consciousness appears. Every aspect of our deeper life is embedded in more life than we are aware of. Every thought we think is a fragmentary aspect of a personal life and purpose that sweeps beyond it. It is what it is because of its place in the total life-system which overspans it with wider scope. Descartes was right when he insisted that we are conscious of finiteness only because we forever contrast it with an infinite that underlies all our thinking.

Man's moral adventure is something that, from its inherent nature, could not have a finite terminus. Every act of goodness which we perform bears witness to an ideal operating in us and that has no definable limits. To set up a finite goal at which moral adventure must come to a full stop is to make the inauguration of the adventure impossible. We cannot start toward a moral achievement unless we feel that it leads on into something *significant*. How often shall I forgive my brother?

What are the boundaries of truth-telling? When shall I have attained a moral goal that will satisfy all the possibilities of my personal nature? There is no such goal. There is no such stopping place. There is no finality to this path on which we have set our feet. "Man partly is, but wholly hopes to be." His sunsets all involve sunrises. We are *moral* just because there is an unattained "more yet" in our very being. At the same time every right deed is intrinsically a perfect deed. *The goal is in the process.* The reward is bound up with the life. The victory of faith is the faith itself. The crown of life consists in living that kind of life.

What if we still ride on, we two,
With life forever old, yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity.

The revised version of the Bible makes the Book of Ecclesiastes say: "God hath set eternity in our hearts." It is probable that this strange Book did not say that in the original. But the writer might very well have said it if he had only thought of it. The Book of Proverbs does in fact say that "the spirit of man is a candle of the Lord," which means that a kindled finite soul is a flame of the Eternal. It is every bit as true as the saying I used to hear frequently in Quaker Meeting when I was a boy: "Here we are doomed to live forever in a vale of mutability!" They are both true sayings. Here where we live, in a space-time world, the perfect

can be revealed only in process. The eternal *lives* and is expressed only in unending mutability. The infinite is both in and beyond the finite. The unseen is immanent in the seen. The "more yet" hovers on the edge of every attainment. The horizon that bounds our achievements widens out as the sky line does at sea with the progress of the ship. What ought to be is always running ahead of what is. The heavenly vision of a beyond will not let us rest in the good of here and now. One can as easily catch up with the horse he is driving from the buggy-seat as one can overtake the flying goal of his moral passion. To be a moral person at all is to be *self-transcendent*, which means "finite-infinite." No one can appreciate music who does not rise above the seriatim notes and enjoy them together in a time-transcending now, which is a gentle breaking in of eternity into our time-world.

Plato has interpreted this situation with masterly genius in the *Symposium*. In this great passage of Socrates' speech on Love—one of the most impressive passages Plato ever wrote—two points are clear. There is an Eternal Reality forever haunting us with its presence, which transcends any finite experience of it—an Eternal Beauty which neither waxes nor wanes—but at the same time finite objects, beautiful faces, beautiful souls, fair forms, noble creations and lofty actions, are windows through which the human soul here in a world of mutability catches glimpses of that Eternal Beauty, is fused and kindled with a passion of love for it, and

beholds through the finite window of here and now the infinite Beauty that is both here and yonder.

This Platonic experience of the beyond in the now and here has been remarkably interpreted by Wordsworth in many places, especially in the *Prelude*. What Plato called "Ἔρως—Love—Wordsworth called "Imagination," which for the poet was an august faculty of transcendence. There is an unsurpassed expression of this experience near the end of the Sixth Book of the *Prelude*:

Imagination—here the Power so called
Through sad incompetence of human speech,
That awful Power rose from the mind's abyss
Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,
At once, some lonely traveller. I was lost;
Halted without an effort to break through;
But to my conscious soul I now can say—
"I recognize thy glory": in such strength
Of usurpation, when the light of sense
Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed
The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
There harbours; whether we be young or old,
Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
Is with infinitude, and only there.

Our practical age has been traveling away rather far from this Platonic interpretation of life and the world, and it sounds foreign and unmeaning to many ears to-day, accustomed as they are to the rush of motors and the din of factory machinery. But the truth of self-transcendence is still a truth in the modern world as well as in the period of the glory of Athens. It is still

"our destiny," "our being's heart and home," to live in infinitude and to partake of the eternal while we are walking on the crust of the earth and working as practically as possible for our next meal of corned beef and cabbage. What I am claiming is that the finite-infinite feature of our human life—our self-transcendence—is as certainly a fact as is the pancreatic juice which furthers our digestion of the corned beef and cabbage. The universe has produced the one as much as it has produced the other, and we cannot interpret our universe adequately if we do not deal with the higher aspects as well as with the lower ones, if we do not deal with the center as well as with the periphery.

We can find the meaning of a musical note only when we appreciate it as a living part of a larger musical composition. We catch the significance of a detail of form or color in a painting only when we see that it is set in and ministers to an integral and organic *whole* that is beautiful. The unity of the whole is thus immanent and interfused in all the parts. Wherever a whole is revealed in the parts there is a degree of transcendence. The parts do not just lie alongside of, or contiguous to, one another. The whole is more than a sum of the parts and therefore each part is its own self *plus*. It points to and presupposes *more*. It is what it is because it is in and of an organism. We cannot get a whole of that type by mere addition.

There is a trend in things beyond *themselves*. It is

apparent even in an atom. Nowhere does the universe reveal this type of integral whole in such an exalted form as in the personality of a good man; that is, a person who is all the time moving forward toward an ideal of goodness. It is in a life like that that we discover at last what "the spiritual adventure of the universe" really is. The universe must have intended to produce this august creation since it has produced it, and it is in very truth, now that we see it, "the most triumphantly beautiful thing" that the universe has so far produced—a whole greater than the sum of its parts, a unity of purpose immanent in and through a time-series, an infinite operating in the finite, an eternity expressed in the midst of mutability, a continuous revelation of a Beyond that is all the time within. Bernard Bosanquet, one of the profound thinkers of our generation, said of man's self that "it is a finite being which is infinite without realizing it, and so, like all finite experience, is always beyond itself." ^a

But I am interested to show still further not only that a person like one of us is a self-transcendent center of life, but that the universe itself, at least where its meaning comes clearest in sight, is favorable to and apparently engaged in this kind of "a spiritual adventure." The long and seemingly unconscious processes of an evolving world appear now to have been preparatory stages for the emergence of beings who find a moral imperative built into their very structure, and who live

^a *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 132.

and struggle and suffer for *what ought to be*, and who are engaged, however feebly, in the task of building a kingdom of ends, a moral order for the manifestation of the Good. This consummate flower that is now in bud, and some day will blossom, is no "century plant." It is a "billion-year plant," but time is a cheap factor and the important point for us is to record the fact that on the crust of this cooling planet the universe is not only displaying a concourse of atoms and a congeries of life cells, but is engaged in the "big business" of producing victorious moral persons who transcend space and time and matter and mathematics, and partake of eternity. The natural is busy blossoming into the spiritual. The moral victory is in evidence, is in process, as certainly as is gravitation or electrical energy.

Sir Henry Jones, in his Gifford Lectures, delivered in 1921 in the midst of excruciating pain and with death staring him in the face, says, dealing with the claim that the natural world is the instrument of a spiritual end:

What remains is this—that in this world of ours, confused as it often seems, lawless and abandoned, there is in operation a force making for ends whose value is unconditional (*i.e.* absolute). We may say that its victory has not arrived as yet, but I do not think we can deny that it is in process. The history of the world in the past may possibly be regarded as giving ambiguous evidence of the presence of the Best. One is not always able to be certain that "the world is becoming better." Nevertheless it seems to me that the intrinsic nature of the moral process makes it in itself a triumph; or

in other words, that while both good and bad are real, and both a process, the former is a process of growth and attainment, the latter a process of self-refutation and deletion." *

Kant no doubt bungled his argument drawn from the implications of the moral imperative. He read the meaning of moral values too much in the light of the somewhat thin rationalism of his century. He was satisfied to find a principle which enabled him to act *as though* he knew that the eternal nature of things is morally disposed to goodness; that is, that the deepest nature of the universe backs the moral deed and is pledged to make goodness triumph. We can, I feel sure, safely and legitimately go farther than that inadequate *als ob* philosophy. We are not only warranted in acting *as though* we knew; we have good grounds for actually *knowing* that at the core and center of its life the universe is engaged in what I have been calling "a spiritual adventure," the creation and expression of intrinsic values, the achievement of victorious moral goodness as an end, and the expression of an eternal nature of things that promotes goodness and defeats evil. The reason for thinking so is that the universe is actually doing it.

The entire world-system is clearly enough related to *mind*. Whether it is steered by a controlling purpose or not, it at least submits to interpretation in terms of law, order, system, mental categories, what Plato called "ideas," and each evolving stage of its cosmic history

* *A Faith That Enquires*, p. 212.

must spring out of a *ground* that is adequate to account for its reality, its complexity, its forereach and its moral significance in terms of value. Somewhere along its upward course it ceased to be a mere *fact-system*, if it ever was that, and began in a budding way to be a world rich in intrinsic values. It is impossible for us to see how the universe could have produced *persons* if it had not already been a universe favorable to the values of beauty, love, goodness and truth.

No one could ever be a person in any rich sense of the word without appreciation of beauty, the appeal of love, a passion for ideals of goodness, and some sort of faith in the pursuit of truth. But unless the universe offered scope for such experiences and backed them with some degree of objectivity and reality, they would have been only subjective rainbow-dreams, devoid of verification and constructive power. At some crisis-moment in unfolding life, beauty dawned upon eyes that could see harmonies of color. Beings appeared that not only produced offspring, but that loved and tended and planned for the offspring that came to them. Little by little love rose to an ever higher and richer range. It became a thing not confined to offspring or mate. It took on traits that could not be referred to sex or to blind instincts. It became interfused with tenderness and sweetness, with grace and sacrifice. Self and self-seeking died away and left it touched with purity, charm, loveliness and inward beauty. But, once more, all its richness and grace and unselfishness was something the

universe produced as certainly as it did gypsum and quartz. There must be somewhere at the heart of things a sufficient *ground* to account for the beauty and love that have blossomed forth out of this slow process of the ages. Man is *man* in the fullness of his nature and power only because he partakes of and is kin to the deepest reality and meaning of the universe that has produced him. There is something moving in him that makes him different from a chance dust wreath in a windy street or from any merely curiously carved formation made out of earth's crust.

It can be no accident that an august moral imperative is planted in the center of our being. It is not a foreign command. It is not a law imposed from without. It is a tendency to transcend ourselves in ideal directions. We see beyond what is. We are dissatisfied with any temporal event that has been achieved. We at once confront it with a vision of a possibility surpassing the bare fact. We live out beyond the here and now. And for many of us, at least, the vision of the better life carries with it a strange and awe-inspiring *obligation* to achieve the better. The consciousness of ought seems to us earth-born persons the noblest and at the same time the most costly part of our inward furnishings. If *it* fell away and disappeared out of our inner core, we should plod along in peace like the cud-chewing cow and become contented denizens of our habitation here in space and time. Then we *could* live by physical food alone. But it cannot be. A spark disturbs our clod.

Oh, well it is forever,
 Oh, well for evermore
 My nest's hung in no forest
 Of all this death-doomed shore.

Whether "death-doomed" or not, it would never satisfy us. In fact it would be even harder to bear if we were immortal like Tithonus. "Going on" is not enough. A million-year Methuselah is just so much more pathetic than a nine hundred and sixty-nine-year one! It is after all not length of years but the moral imperative that tips us with glory. It is the expansion of life through the presence of an ideal that sets us on a new level above the fact-basis of "things." The impulsion of ought introduces a new creation. We "correspond" no longer merely with an environment of space and matter, but we live in a world that outreaches and transcends the physical one—"a World within the world we see."

"How did you come to be this way?" is a humorous question of the day. But it really concerns us to ask it seriously. There are two kinds of men of our genus:

He that has lived for the lust of the minute, and died in the
 doing it, flesh without mind;
 He that has nail'd all flesh to the Cross, till self died out in
 the love of his kind.

We are confronted not only by the two types, but we find something of both of them in each one of ourselves. We all carry along a large contingent of the past, a heavy inheritance from the basement processes.

But this is the cardinal point: we somehow partake of another kind of world and are sharers in an adventure that has great future promise and potency. We have got to account for this higher dawning self, this dweller in the innermost. This man with his consciousness of ought is as much a fact of the universe as are mica-schist or carborundum. Our man of the new creation, our higher-level person, who, in a world of things, stands stoutly for what ought to be, regardless of its cost, has arrived, is here, and he is not an accident of capricious matter. He, too, must have an adequate ground and basis that account for his being and nature.

In some ways the compelling power of *truth* overtops all these other values of which I have been speaking and which add such new dimensions to our life as men. I mean by truth that strange characteristic of absoluteness that attaches to our logical judgments. Our sense-facts are obviously enough contingent. They are, but they might equally well not be. We can think of them as not existing. We can think of them as wholly different. We can alter them to suit our fancy. We never know in advance quite what sights or sounds our world will present to us. We wait and see. But we know absolutely and unconditionally that a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time. No mind of our type can possibly admit that there could be an event that had no cause. That is not contingent; it is inevitable. It carries a "must be."

From somewhere there has come into the logical structure of our minds this inevitable characteristic of truth. Some truths, in fact all truths, go beyond our private scope; they are universal and necessary. Insofar as we have discovered truth we can predict in advance of experience. We know before we see. We can travel on ahead of the testimony of our senses. We must admit that the specific instances of absolute truth are few in number, and that we are for the most part in pursuit of truth rather than the happy finders of it. But we all assume in our intellectual work, in fact in that persistent pursuit, that logical form is absolute and that we can at some points transcend *is* with *must be*. That kind of a mind that can from within itself organize its contingent facts and interpret them through forms that are universal and necessary is not itself a thing among other things. It belongs to another kind of world and has its *ground* in a higher realm, a realm that transcends the temporal and the contingent.

The scientist who is often very shy of "absolutes" and of "transcendence," nevertheless makes assertions at every turn which transcend the testimony of his senses. He lives and thinks all the time beyond *is*. The "truths," the "laws" which he formulates, the order and concatenation of facts and events which he recognizes are not capricious; they are immutable. He insists upon certainties which lie beyond anybody's experience. He lives above time and space and matter as much as does any idealist or religious enthusiast, and if he

ceased to do that he would cease organizing and interpreting the facts and events of the world. We cannot proceed an inch beyond *is* and *now* and *here* without presupposing a ground of transcendent reality. But at every point, as I have been showing, it is a reality that is immanent in the process, and its nature is revealed in the great cosmic adventure of beauty, goodness, love and truth which is staged here in a visible world of change and mutability.

It may seem a long run from this Life and Mind, who is deeply interfused in all truth and beauty and goodness, underspanning the knower and the known, to the God of our heart's love and our soul's worship. All I can say here is that I find the universe on its highest levels significant and dramatic—a world of values. It suggests and presupposes a creative and artistic spirit working at the immense loom of life. There are surely signs of sunrise streaks on the higher hills. "A spiritual adventure" is unmistakably under way.

Uncounted millions of years have gone to the preparatory stages of it. Even now there is a good deal of chaos at the peripheral fringes and only an adumbration of the central meaning of the long drama, but there can be little doubt in a sincere and serious mind that a good person who appreciates beauty, who is dedicated to the triumph of goodness, who risks his precious life for the truth and who loves with a love that suffers long and is kind, is an actor in a dramatic movement that is

vastly larger than this mutable present moment, and that implies at least a cosmic spiritual Companion who is working with him and through him toward ends that lie beyond our sight—

One far off divine event
To which the whole creation moves.

As I write this I can look out of the window of my Sicilian hotel and see the smoking peak of Mount Ætna and I can trace the black line of lava that recently destroyed a near-by town of once happy peasants. Not far away are the tragic effects of a shattering earthquake disaster. They are the obvious signs of the unfinished stage of the earth on which we are voyaging. Men have built their homes near smoldering ventholes of underground fires and over the folding strata of a world in process of being built. The consequences are often serious. The venturous dweller is roughly reminded that he has come on the scene before even the basement was finished. Much more unfinished is the great spiritual adventure in which we already have our rôle to play. Some of the scenes must be acted in the dark, or in the time of twilight, but even so they have meaning, they are significant, and the piece at which we assist near the beginning of it must somewhere have a fifth act, a dénouement, that will fit and complete the long preparation for it.

CHAPTER IV

GOD AND EVOLUTION

No person who believes in evolution as the method of creation can think of God in the same way as a person in the eighteenth century, for instance, thought about Him. New scientific theories of the nature of matter and of the nature of the life-cell have inaugurated a revolution in all our conceptions of origin and process, and forced us to rethink all our ideas of the visible and the invisible.

The first effect of the promulgation of evolution was one of seeming disaster to the Christian religion in the form in which it had developed through the centuries. One of the most disturbing aspects of the evolution theory, at least to the unlearned, was the supposed persistent implication that it gave men a monkey ancestry. It seemed to many persons to cheapen and degrade human life to trace it back to low biologic orders instead of to the direct creative *fiat* of God. If by slow natural processes of development, under definable laws, the higher could come up from the lower, there appeared to be no further need for God.

In the light of present knowledge there is no good scientific ground for saying that "man is descended

from a monkey." That is a cheap popular "slogan," used to discredit the theory. The monkey is rather a very distant "poor relative" of man than an ancestor of him. They both probably had a humble common ancestor somewhere far back on the family tree, but we can dispense with the phrase, "monkey ancestry." It is true, no doubt, that evolution does make human life kin to the animal and that it admits that we have received "inheritance" from lowly forms, but it is difficult to see why this slow process of the race upward should be any more "degrading" than is the well-known embryonic history of every individual child. We have each come up, as everybody admits, from a tiny speck of protoplasm and have passed through many "humble" prenatal forms. The main miracle is that we have finally *arrived*, that we have become persons and can now reveal spiritual traits and engage in spiritual adventures. It is no more difficult to see how the "spiritual" begins in the process of evolution than it is to see how it begins in the individual child. It is no more difficult to discover the creative work of God in one case than in the other.

Evolution brought a severe strain at two other points of the Christian system, both of which at that early time appeared to be essential to a consistent Christian faith. In the first place, evolution seemed to run counter to an established theory of revelation which included the accepted story of creation in Genesis—a story which carried with it in almost everyone's mind a certain theological view of human nature as inherited from Adam;

and in the second place, the early evolutionists gave the doctrine of evolution a decidedly mechanistic interpretation which left little place for spiritual values and which made the evolutionary process appear cold, hard and cruel; in fact, made nature appear to be "red in tooth and claw with ravine."

Hosts of Christian leaders, for these and other reasons, set themselves in the early days vigorously against the evolutionary doctrine as being Godless, and a theological battle royal was staged. There can be no question, I think, that the controversy has on the whole had disastrous results for religion, and it has tended to pit faith and science against one another in hostile array and to set "faith" and "reason" once more, as in an earlier period, in sundered compartments of human life. The moment has come to face the issue afresh, to view it in the altered perspective which time has brought, and to see what bearings the new scientific conceptions of evolution have on present-day conceptions of God.

The old conflict between science and Genesis is an extinct volcano for most serious thinkers. Only the extreme literalist in the interpretation of Scripture has troubles any more over that issue. The literalist, if he were consistent, would have as hard a struggle—probably, in fact, an even harder struggle—to reconcile Biblical texts with the sixteenth-century discovery that the earth revolves around the sun, for it is positively stated in Scripture that the earth has four corners (Rev. 7:1) and that it cannot be moved (Ps. 104:5).

The literalist fails in any case to estimate either the nature or the value of spiritual literature. He substitutes infallible dictation of the words of Scripture for the genuine inspiration of the writers of it. He fails to take into account the historical factor, which means that a message, however inspired, is bound to use the current ideas of the time and to reflect the intellectual outlook of the age. Spiritual literature of this type and character is *epic* rather than narrowly *factual*. It catches the heroic episodes, the interpretations of the spiritual leaders and the wonder-aspects of the race, and it pours its exalted vision of life and of God through the narratives, the incidents and the figurative material that have become the sacred possession of the people. To drag it down from its lofty epic level and its height of inspiration, to "literalize" it and turn it into a factual scientific transcript, is to misread history and to misinterpret great spiritual literature.

That lesson has for the most part been already learned. We can patiently wait for the processes of time and education to weed out the literalist and leave him among the antiquated "by-gones." Some years ago a literalist insisted, in a great Presbyterian Conference in Philadelphia, that every single statement in the Bible was intended to be taken literally. The presiding chairman of the Conference, an ex-moderator of the Presbyterian Church, in reply said: "There is a passage in the Book of Revelation which declares that a woman sat on seven hills; now if, as the brother insists, that is to be

taken literally, all I have to say is that she must have had an amazing sitting capacity!"

A deeper and truer conception of Scripture has been growing up in religious circles that has given us back the Bible as an inspired book of religion, as the great literature of the Spirit of God and not a literal transcript of history and science; and we can, in the light of that spiritual advance, face any verified facts of nature and any discovered truths of life without being put to confusion by their conflict with revelation.

The other difficulty has been harder material for spiritual digestion. Early theories of evolution were heavily weighted with a cast of materialism and mechanism. Darwinism was born in the Victorian age which had witnessed a widespread triumph of the application of mathematical categories to the phenomena of the universe, and science had come to mean causal explanation—the antecedent causes being thought of in terms of masses of matter operating mechanically. Darwin shared this general outlook, this Newtonian point of view, and he turned quite naturally to material and mechanistic factors for his explanation of the driving forces of evolution.

One would have thought that the new-born science of *life* would have introduced new categories of interpretation and would have liberated the expanding spirit of research from the heavy and clogging weight of mechanical explanations. If that had happened, the entire world outlook would have been different. But the

physical and chemical sciences had made such far-reaching conquests along the mechanistic lines laid down by Descartes, Galileo and Newton that it was natural and easy to fight with the same weapons in the new fields of exploration. It should be said that Darwin himself introduced into his great works on evolution many features and factors that were organic or psychical rather than mechanistic. But the general impression made on the reader at the time was that "natural selection" worked as a causal external mechanical force and that life in all its stages could be dealt with in terms of the same material categories that applied in physics and chemistry.

Some of Darwin's foremost exponents who became the defenders and interpreters of evolution in its second stage were thoroughly committed to the mechanistic view and also to the "red theory" of struggle and survival. The "matter" out of which the world was built was thought of at this stage as composed of rigid, solid, tiny atomic "balls." The chasm between "matter" and "life" was unbridgeable, and yet "life" was described as though it were pushed and pulled by the same mechanical forces that for physics controlled and arranged the little "atomic balls" in their vortexes. It is no wonder that even Huxley revolted in his old age from the monster he had helped to construct, and in his Romanes Lecture entitled "Evolution and Ethics" (1893), found himself compelled to "save" ethical values by showing through a *tour de force* that they are not a part of the

natural cosmic process, which, according to his view, was entirely non-ethical or even anti-ethical.

The unscientific onlooker who saw his universe "reduced" to a vast mechanical system with no solid basis left for religion or for ethical values and who felt that his world was being treated as "a fortuitous concourse of little atomic balls," stark, cold, cruel, homeless and Godless, quite naturally grew disturbed, and endeavored to "save" his faith by methods that seemed spurious to those who were intellectually higher up. When once biology was committed to mechanistic explanations, it was quite natural for psychologists, who had biological leanings and affiliations, to join the procession and "reduce" man all the way through, outside and inside, to mechanically explained "behavior." With all the psychological processes turned over to mechanism, even Huxley with all his genius for argument, could not have "saved" ethics or freedom or spiritual values.

There always were evolutionists who saw deeper and who thought more profoundly than did the mechanists, the positivists, or the "fortuitous concourse" theorists; and slowly there has come, without any *tour de force* efforts, a gradual swing of thought in the direction of interpretations of evolution that give genuine scope for a spiritual outlook and for intrinsic values of life. In the first place, the old "ball" theory of matter has gone dead. Nobody holds it at the present time. Only a trained scientist in this particular field has a right to expound the prevailing theory of "matter," but it may

not be overpresumptuous to say that the atom is now thought of as a tiny gravitational constellation, something like a miniature solar system, and that on further analysis matter turns out to be simply a complicated form of structural, concentrated energy in action. The elemental nature of the universe is "activity" rather than "substance." As one listens to a "new scientist" expounding the nature of the atom as a concentrated knot of electrical energy consisting of negative and positive poles, one feels at first as though matter had been "converted," and was "baptized" into a new spiritual communion! It is no longer "bad company"! The discovery of radio-activity has led to one of the greatest revolutions that has ever occurred in human history. The so-called chasm between life and matter no longer yawns in the same fashion as it did when matter was envisaged as a mass of rigid atomic balls.

Life, too, is no longer "what it used to be." The life-cell has been brought to a new formulation, a new status, in a way hardly less striking than that of the atom, its companion in the fundamental structure of the universe.

The cell [to quote a famous writer of the day] is the point where matter or energy aroused itself from its slumbers and became active from within, with activities and functions which reveal its inner character and nature, so to say. It is a new structure in which energy becomes or is transformed into a new form of activity, becomes functional, becomes in some inexplicable way endowed with a power of self-help and self-control, with special characters of selectiveness and reproduction, which constitute a new departure in the universe.¹

¹ J. C. Smuts, *Holism and Evolution*, pp. 64-65.

When the cell "emerged," life began to be and, in however feeble and diminutive a degree, mind came into evidence and started on its dramatic career. It is obvious that the range of "mind" in a single life-cell is very humble and quite "unthinkable" in terms of our own minds, but it belongs somewhere in the fringe of "the mind-field." I used just now the word "emerge" with definite intention. George Henry Lewes many years ago first used it in its new sense in his *Problems of Life and Mind*, but Lloyd Morgan raised the word to a fresh significance, first in his *Instinct and Experience*, in 1912, and more strikingly in his Gifford Lectures, entitled *Emergent Evolution*, published in 1923. I do not propose to follow in any close way Lloyd Morgan's interpretation of "emergence," but I shall use the term freely to express the point of view that evolution is *a growing and creative process*.

This conception was first driven home vividly and impressively to the consciousness of the modern reader by Henri Bergson in his *Creative Evolution*, which once more, as in the case of Lloyd Morgan's theories, was tied up with conclusions that are quite alien to my way of thinking. The central idea, however, controlling both of these interpreters of evolution seems to me to be on sound lines and to be very important in its bearing. The older mechanistic way of thinking of evolution gave no ground for origination or novelty in the cosmic movement. The "new" could be treated only as the reordering, the mechanical recombination, of old material. There could be no additions to or subtractions

from what was already there. Whatever "evolved" must have been latent, or "involved," in the stuff of the universe. There was a well-known tendency to read and to interpret the higher forms of life in terms of the lower forms from which they had sprung—a tendency to "level down" and to think of the so-called "higher" as only more complex aggregations of the "lower" or "simpler" forms. The general result was a static universe, which reeled off what was there before, with no dramatic significance. The present was an equation with the past, and the future was to be the new sum of what is here now.

We are fortunately shaking ourselves free from the nightmare of that static world—a universe frozen both at its extremities and at its heart. We are passing to the viewpoint of a dynamic and dramatic world process. We are disillusioned with the juggle of equations and formulæ and we are done trying to read the new in terms of the old. Evolution, for better or for worse, has become to our minds "emergent" and "creative," and that means dramatic. The new stages of process reveal qualities and characteristics that are novel and unique. They are not the rearranged sum of former units. They are not the effect of recombinations of old elements. They are incalculable and unpredictable events. Something "creative" has occurred, and not merely the explication with an imperial expansion of what was already there. This sounds shocking, or like empty words, to the mechanistic-minded thinker. He will not

have it so. He prefers shuffling his abstract concepts, believing that he can get rabbits out of hats by using the right mathematical formulæ, or that he can build palaces of life and thought and beauty by rubbing atoms of matter with magic phrases. The attempt to "level down" and to explain higher forms in terms of lower ones has, nevertheless, broken down all along the line of life and is at the present moment entirely bankrupt. It is helpless at each crucial point where the universe reveals either life, or consciousness, or self-consciousness, or unified personality, or intrinsic values. In fact, after all the attempts at explanation it leaves the universe unintelligible and inexplicable.

The "new scientists" who stand for novelty and creative process, who welcome the unique and the dramatic, have a long way to go before they can furnish conclusions that will be as simple, as easy of comprehension and as convincing as have been the mechanistic explanations which have held the field for three hundred years. The real trouble, however, with these easy "explanations" is that they do not explain the facts which concern us most vitally; or if they do, they "explain" them by reducing them to such a degree of nakedness and thinness that we no longer recognize them as the same realities about which we are talking. These "new scientists" have in truth a long way to go, but I am convinced that they are on the right road and that they are following the pointers by which the universe itself has marked the trail.

The real clue for which all the great seekers are searching is the principle that adequately accounts for the *forward-moving* process of evolution. Darwin thought he had found it in "natural selection"; that is, in the natural process of weeding out the unfit and the survival of the fit. That, of course, is not Darwin's only contribution, but it is his major contribution, as the clue to the process of evolution. Nobody to-day thinks that it is an adequate principle of explanation. The *ground of the variation in the processes of life* has come to the front in recent years as the central problem in any theory of evolution. The survival of the fittest presupposes the arrival of it. And just there the mystery lies. Almost everybody realizes that variation transcends external and mechanistic explanations, and the search for the inward or immanent grounds of variation has done much to produce what I have called "the new science."

Another very grave difficulty with Darwin's theory is his claim that tiny fortuitous variations in the individuals of a species would be selected and conserved in the struggle for existence, until by slow increments of accumulation they become important enough to shift the level of life. The facts do not warrant the faith that such tiny, minute variations as Darwin admits would have survival value of sufficient significance to account for evolution.

Furthermore, a slight fortuitous variation in some one organ of the animal's body would be useless unless there were at the same time corresponding variations in

the correlated organs of the whole organism. To be effective either to aid survival or to promote progress, there would need to be a fairly large and widely adjusted organic variation. A variation in a sense organ, for instance, would be ineffective unless there were with it a corresponding variation in nerve, brain center and muscular structure, and such correlated variations are not to any significant extent assumed as given in Darwin's account. Darwin was not ignorant of the fact of an occasional sudden variation, but he named such a variation a "sport" and thought of it as a freak or a monstrosity. Bateson, in his *Material for the Study of Variation*, in 1894 suggested that a new species might come into existence all at once by the simultaneous appearance of several new coördinated characteristics. Hugo de Vries gave this idea a distinct forward push a few years later.

De Vries, who was an important Dutch investigator, suggested in 1901 that the variations which are significant for the new stages, the advance steps, in evolution are not the result of the age-long summation of minute differences, but are "mutations," which are far-reaching and epoch-making variations. They are not merely differences in some specific organ of the structure; they are correlated organic transformations. They often amount to a creative leap from the old to the new. Usually the variation has been somewhat prepared for by slow previous alterations, as though the internal balance was unstable and shifting, and then all of a

sudden a chasm is covered by a leap that inaugurates a new stage, a new epoch. Instead of assuming that nature "abhors leaps," De Vries would make the upward trail of life look like a biological "steeple-chase." At a given period, after a long preparation for it, "the entire species is beset with a tendency to change."

Henri Bergson seized upon this suggestion and with striking genius used "mutations" very effectively in his *Creative Evolution* to explain why and how the cosmic process goes steadily forward. He introduced the term *élan vital* to express the creative, or driving energy that works through, or bursts through the natural order of life and steadily pushes forward toward ever new levels of life. To quote the author himself:

All organized beings, from the humblest to the highest, from the first origins of life to the time in which we are, do but evidence a single impulsion, the inverse of the movement of matter, and in itself indivisible. All the living hold together, and all yield to the same tremendous push. The animal takes its stand on the plant, man bestrides animality, and the whole of humanity, in space and time, is one immense army galloping beside and before and behind each of us in an overwhelming charge able to beat down every resistance and clear the most formidable obstacles, perhaps even death.^a

The "emergent" theory directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, is also following these suggestions. It assumes that "mutations" occur in the very nature of matter itself. Great leaps, or emergent-steps, have occurred all the way up and down the entire series of events from bare "space-time" to consciousness,

^a *Creative Evolution*, p. 271.

self-consciousness and spiritual personality. The new at each stage is not the mere sum of previously existing elements; it represents a new creation. It is what Browning celebrates in his *Abt Vogler*:

And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a
star.

The world that is evolving by the energy of the *élan vital*, the world of "emergent evolution," is full of surprises. It is over-radical rather than over-conservative. One never knows what new revolution is dawning just around the corner. If you do not like your world, wait a minute, as Mark Twain said once about New England weather.

The main question one must ask here is whether there are sufficient instances of "mutations" occurring in the observed phenomena of nature to warrant the immense conclusions that have been built up on the "mutation theory." It is, I think, the consensus of biologists that the basis of fact in the mutation-doctrine is at the present stage of our knowledge too insufficient for the far-flung conclusions. It appears to be beyond question, however, that there actually are "mutations" but that they have occurred only rarely during the period of life under observation. Only by the large assumption that mutations have been frequent and abundant in the long stretches of life before observation began, can the theory be made to "march."

Weissmann, a thinker of major importance in the

field of evolution, traced variation to some mysterious process in the inmost nature of the organism itself. For him the new factors that shift the line of march of life, whether they are minute or extensive, as in the case of "mutations," are deeply hidden, spontaneous modifications in the inner nature of the germ-cells of the organism. It would seem from Weissmann's interpretation, as well as from that of Bergson, that life in itself in its inner depths has a spontaneous, incalculable, unpredictable tendency to vary, to modify itself, to produce mutations of minor or of major importance.

At this point, as the mystery of variation deepens and seems to be unfathomable, a new suggestion, which may prove to be significant, has been made by General Smuts in his quite remarkable book, *Holism and Evolution*. His key word, "Holism," is derived from the Greek word, ὅλος, which means a "whole." He insists, with a wealth of illustration, that the entire creation reveals a tendency toward the organization of *wholes* and that this tendency is the deepest and most universal principle so far discovered in the universe. Atoms emerge out of invisible energy and at once tend to form specific molecular "wholes." The moment life appears, it starts forming coöperating organic "wholes." The movement of life is steadily in the direction of more complex and more completely integrated "wholes." A self-conscious person is the highest known existent individual "whole," but there are many forms of super-individual "wholes" in the groupings of society, the Church and the State

being the most unique forms that have yet appeared. In the values of Truth, Beauty, Goodness and Love, we have extraordinary *ideal wholes* that carry us far into a spiritual order. We can verily conclude that the great creative word of the Spirit at all levels is: "Behold, I make all things whole."³

General Smuts sums up his position in this striking sentence, which is a "whole" in itself:

We thus arrive at the conception of a universe which is not a collocation of accidents externally put together like an artificial patchwork, but which is synthetic, structural, active, vital and creative in increasing measure all through, the progressive development of which is shaped by one holistic activity operative from the humblest inorganic beginnings to the most exalted creations and ideals of the human and of the universal Spirit.⁴

The organism for him is thought of as "a gateway through which the infinite stream of change flows ceaselessly." "The past, the present and the future all meet in that little structural centre, that little wayside station on the infinite trail of life."

The pull of the future is almost as significant a factor in the process of evolution as is the push of the past. Both the "pull" and the "push" are in the direction of the progressive construction of "wholes." These "wholes" are dynamic, organic, evolutionary and creative. The whole organism modifies the coöperative parts of it to meet expanding needs and conditions, and

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 107.

thus the inner variations which are significant for evolution are the product of the creative living "whole," responsive to the push of the past and the pull of the future, and acting as a gateway of the larger life that flows through it.

Quite obviously this means little without the large constructive faith that the universe is a creative process which faces toward the future, a highway of creative movement, working or flowing through these organized centers which are here called "wholes." Nobody yet holds in his hand the finished key that will unlock the mystery of evolution, of *creative progress*. The fact of evolution is as clear and certain as the revolution of the earth. The actual driving principle remains so far a good deal hidden. I hope that I have marshaled evidence enough to produce the conviction that it is not a dead mechanical operation, pushed at random by the momentum of a vast congeries of physical atoms, but that it is rather the steady emergence of ever more highly organized "wholes," revealing a dynamic, creative, onward march, proceeding from most humble beginnings toward spiritual values that surpass the rainbow dreams of all the types behind us and of many of us who are now here.

If something like this brief sketch is true, as many eminent scholars believe it to be, then important spiritual consequences follow. Our universe becomes a vast artistic and dramatic creation. There is, as Walt Whitman once affirmed, a good deal of seeming "grossness

and slag" to it. There are "spiral roads" and "long detours." The onward sailing ship is compelled to do much tacking against head winds, but, in spite of all that distresses the anxious beholder of the long course, it is a fact that the general direction is *onward* and that the universe seems on the whole to be most concerned to achieve moral and spiritual results. Anyway, it *does* achieve them. If, with the guides whom I am in a general way following, we assume that there are significant "mutations," that the universe reveals creative "emergents" that lift the level and shift the line of march, if there is a progressive tendency to produce higher, more integrated and, in the long run, more spiritual "wholes" in dramatic order, then we seem bound, I think, to take for granted the operating presence of an intelligent Mind, a spiritual Ground out of which the creative process springs. It is no more possible to think intelligently of a creative process operating without a creative Mind than it is to think of an instantaneous creation occurring without a Creator. I agree fully with what Sir Oliver Lodge says in his *Evolution and Creation*:

So far from excluding God and the Spiritual World, our present outlook—in moments of insight—leaves room for little else. We are impressed with the constant activity of some beneficent Power. There are always parts of the universe without form and void, always the brooding Spirit is bringing cosmos out of chaos, fresh worlds are coming into being.*

If one should eventually discover that the *Iliad* came

* *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

slowly to its present epic form through the artistic activity of many centuries, instead of having been created at a jet by the blind old Greek bard, Homer, we should still insist that it revealed insight, wisdom, skill, experience, emotion and creative power, and we should refuse to believe that the words were shaken out at random from casual bags of Greek letters which boys were using at play. If Hamlet should prove to have been a gradual growth and gestation of many generations and is falsely attributed to William Shakespeare, even so we could not bring ourselves to suppose that no mind whatever had ever toiled at its dramatic unfolding.

The mechanical theory of evolution is bankrupt. It is a survival of a thin, moribund "rationalism" which the eighteenth century bequeathed to us. Some type of dynamic, vital, organic, creative theory is due to succeed it and, in fact, is succeeding it, and any such theory essentially carries with it a spiritual creative Source. It may be a long time before any genius will vividly and convincingly interpret for us creatively, as Darwin did in causal, mechanistic terms, the actual specific driving principle of the mighty process; but we can guess with considerable assurance that there can be no progressive creative process marked by significant mutations and dynamic emergent steps that does not involve an underlying, overarching Mind. This Spirit of the ages will no doubt be conceived by many of those who are primarily busy with the phenomena of the cosmos as an immanent intelligent energy rather than as a transcendent personal

God. One cannot ask or expect a scientist to go farther than his facts and the implication of his facts warrant him to go. We do not want our scientists to neglect their chosen field of labor for that of homiletics. We must look elsewhere than in the realm of natural describable processes for our grounds of faith in a patient, loving, personal Father-God. What we have a right, however, to expect from science, especially from the sciences that deal with life, is that they shall not attempt to squeeze the facts into a dogmatic framework inherited from the past, but shall, with open mind, read and interpret them to fit the whole truth and significance which the array of facts reveals and implies.

Thomas Hardy closed his dark and pessimistic drama, *The Dynasts*, with a single gleam of hope and prophecy:

But—a stirring thrills the air
Like to sounds of joyance there
 That the rages
 Of the ages
Shall be cancelled, and deliverance offered from the darts
 that were,
Consciousness the Will informing, till It fashion all things
 fair.

Some of our interpreters of “mutations” and “emergence” would appear to incline to a similar view, that the creative Will in the lower stages was blind, though they would perhaps use a capital pronoun for “It,” as Hardy did. They would imply that the creative Will has

been slowly and blindly climbing up the sacrificial stairway of life toward a Consciousness which did not inform It in the earlier previous stages. That seems to me to be no solution of the problem. I cannot see how a blind Will, tumbling forward without vision or wisdom or intelligence, explains anything. We are back once more trying to account for the epic and the drama without the creative poet. I have so far never found any instances of dramas without poets to create them, and it calls for too much credulity to suppose that when the drama becomes cosmic and is increased in complexity a billionfold, then it can stagger up, without knowing where it is going, and yet can *arrive!*

We need a great deal more light before we can leap easily and safely from the facts of the cosmos to the still greater fact of God, but I am convinced that the creative process of evolution points us unmistakably to the footsteps of a Great Guiding Spirit, whom perhaps we may learn to know better at other points of life and history where the footsteps become plainer and where at length a Face shows through the veils and the coverings.

CHAPTER V

THE TESTIMONY OF HISTORY

AN ancient prophet of Israel discovered that God was not to be found in the phenomena and forces of nature. He was not revealed in the tornado, nor in the earthquake, nor in the crashing thunderbolt. It is just as true to-day, and more obvious to this science-minded generation, that God is not to be found in the external phenomena of nature, though, as we have seen, the phenomena of nature send us back to a deeper spiritual level, if we are seriously determined to discover an adequate account of things.

The same situation confronts us when we turn to the facts of history. No modern historian includes God among the *data* by which he explains past events. The historian stops with his array of describable facts and situations. He would not think of enhancing his accumulated facts by introducing at a critical moment among his explanations a mysterious invisible Agent that unexpectedly intervened and turned the natural course of things.

The ideal which dominates the mind of the historian is the same as the ideal of the scientist. He aims to report events with scrupulous accuracy and fidelity. He

endeavors to be absolutely impartial and without bias. He goes back to report precisely what happened in a given epoch; not to dramatize or idealize the events or the actors. He is not concerned to tell what ought to have occurred, but to give as clear a transcript and explanation as possible of what did occur. His explanations are, furthermore, of the same general type as those of the scientist. In other words they are in terms of antecedent causes. A historical event is assumed to be explained when we have had put before us the situations and contributing factors, the empirical conditions that preceded the event, including the natural and social environment, and the psychological equipment of the main actors. To introduce God into this historical picture would be to give up the possibility of writing history. The events must be treated as the outcome of well-known and describable forces and situations.

But there are obviously other ways of dealing with past events and happenings besides the way which is characteristic of the scientific historian. We not only want true and accurate reports of past events with their causal explanations, but we want these events *interpreted* to us in terms of meaning, value and significance. We want the events lifted up and read in the light of the ideal aims and purposes that operated in the minds of the actors. Here the dramatic aspects will come into play. Sentiments and loyalties will count for much. The scenes will be shot through with the vital forces of hope, dream, vision, aspiration, love and passion. Instead of

having a cold transcript of the past, we shall find ourselves caught up into its movement, we shall share its dramatic issues, we shall live the experiences over again and feel something operating in the events and in the actors that transcends any detailed causal description. It is thus that Shakespeare wrote history.

In the pre-scientific period this vivid, dramatic interpretation of history usually took the form of the *epic*. The facts were not carefully sifted. No technique existed yet for sifting and verifying facts. No sharp line was drawn between actual events and the faiths and traditions that had come down from father to son out of an immemorial past. Sometimes the story was told for homiletic purposes, *i.e.*, to point, illustrate or drive home a moral and spiritual lesson. And sometimes it was told for the story's sake, that is for the mere human thrill of following the dramatic surprises of the hero's life and deeds. But in any case the epic did more than report. It interpreted, it dramatized, it idealized. It made the reader feel that something more was present in the movement, and in the current of events, than what would ever have been visible and tangible to an eye-witness.

This type of epic history, though not written for the most part in the poetic form of an epic, bulks very large in the Old Testament history narratives. The writers of the Pentateuch, of Joshua, Judges, the Book of Samuel and the Book of Kings are epic historians. The homiletic interest is predominant, though they love, too, to

tell a story for its own sake and they know how to tell it vividly and grippingly. Throughout these great narratives we always have the past interpreted and made a vehicle for the revelation of God and His divine purpose in the world.

The great historical dramas, though very different in form from the epic, are like it in general purpose and effect. We do not get factual history with verifiable details, though the great dramatists intend to have their scenes conform to historical truth. Their actors move in a real world and they endeavor to portray the selected epoch with strict fidelity and with unimpeachable honesty. But first, last and all the time, they interpret rather than report. They are concerned with meaning and significance rather than with a transcript of facts causally explained. Their world is a world of ideals, ambitions, faiths, hopes, loves and passions. Their characters are free agents, realizing ends and aims which they themselves have chosen and the world of their faith and vision is larger than the one that could be seen and described in factual details.

Besides these homiletic, epic and dramatic types of history there is also another historical type of interpretation which may quite properly be called *philosophical*. Under this form of approach the ethical and spiritual ideals of history are studied and interpreted. Dominating principles of life are searched out and set forth. We have here on a larger and more impressive scale what we get in an illuminating biography, or auto-

biography, namely the springs and motives, the sentiments and loyalties which build character and thus we get from the profound interpreter of history a constructive, architectural plan of life.

More than that, through the interpretations of the genius, we can see life in the process of being tested out as in a huge laboratory. Its underlying principles are seen actually operating in the developing movement. The abiding and eternal aspects are caught and interpreted as revealed in the midst of the temporal flow of things. Events not only *happen*, but they exhibit and demonstrate ethical and spiritual realities through the happening. The stars in their courses seem to fight against a wicked Sisera and the very molecules of the body seem to mass their invisible forces for the hero who is on the side of moral advance. Days of history are days of judgment. Something more than frontiers and dynasties get settled in historical crises. The moral current of the universe gets its channel revealed and its course projected.

Nowhere before the dawn of history can we find *significance and value* revealed in the events that happened, since nowhere can we come in sight of ideals anywhere in evidence until then. The cosmic system, *i.e.*, the universe at large, even in its most physical and mechanistic aspects showed everywhere traces and evidences of a *mathematical order*. Not an atom moved in random curves. Every molecule, then as now, revealed a principle of unvarying concatenation. Organization, concre-

tion, integration, evolution are more than words in a dictionary. They are actual objective processes which our minds discover going on in a real world. These features seemed to Plato to presuppose thought-forms which he called *ideas*. They are operating forces, or "real presences," organizing and building the world we see and interpret.

But even so, below the stage of what I am calling history there is no clear exhibition anywhere in the world of moral aims or of moral ideals. Stars rise and set with calculable regularity. Eclipses come off precisely as they were predicted, but they hardly reveal and verify what we mean by moral values. The vast procession of life below man throws much light on principles of heredity and on methods of adaptation and survival, but it gives only the dimmest suggestion of ethical issues. An observer of pre-human life would never suspect, would never guess, that the universe had any concern for the true, the beautiful and the good. Those aspects of life dawned or emerged with history.

It must be admitted at the outset that I shall find in the testimony of history no proofs of the reality and nature of God that will convince the dyed-in-the-wool doubter or the skeptic. The most that can be claimed is that a review and interpretation of the progress of history throws some fresh light on my general argument that the universe involves and implies a Mind operating through its processes. My thesis is that apart from Mind nature has no order, no meaning, no significance such as

at present we all find in it. If a hearer or a reader is unable to see anything in cosmic happenings but "matter" moving about in chance vortexes, and is satisfied to suppose that what we have on our hands, including our own precious selves, is only one possible accidental "survival" out of billions of random throws that might have happened, and if, further, the mathematics that penetrates and controls the entire universe out to its farthest fringes is assumed to be only another weird accident and if, once more, the unvarying principle of concatenation of molecules implies for him no permanent thought-forms, then that triumphant prestidigitator who can juggle such amazing results out of his empty hat will feel the need of no new principle when he gets to the high tableland of history.

As for me, however, I can find no origin for Mind, even for my own feeble stock of mind, out of bare molecular movements. I cannot start on my intellectual pilgrimage without presupposing a spiritual universe that breaks through and organizes the cosmic processes, and with that presupposition already taken I find a new level of evidence for the position when I come upon what I have called the tableland of history.

What I am concerned with under the head of history is not the outcome of the decisive battles on a thousand battlefields, or the rise and fall of dynasties, or the migrations of races and peoples, though they are all of course an inherent and germane part of the long upward struggle which history records. My main concern is

rather to note and emphasize the slow, steady emergence of ethical and spiritual ideals in the shifts and changes of the long historical movement. It is a possible hypothesis, as many scholars contend, that there has been very little increase in man's fundamental brain power during the period that can properly be termed the historical period. But whether that is granted or not—I personally doubt if it should be granted—there can, I believe, be no question that there has been an immense moral and spiritual advance, such a moral gain that the early centuries of history seem like a different world from this one of ours to-day.

The period of history is so short when compared with the million millions of years of the cosmic period that man seems to be even now only a new arrival and to be still in his early baby stages of development. But even so, with all his baby methods clinging to him, something very sublime stands forth revealed in him when he is at his best. Carlyle was not usually over-optimistic in his estimates, but this is what he said of man's central being: "What, then, is man! He endures but for an hour, and is crushed before the moth. Yet in the being and in the making of a faithful man is there already (as all faith from the beginning gives assurance) a something that pertains not to this wild death-element of Time; that triumphs over Time; and *is* and will be, when Time shall be no more."

That eternal aspect of man's being has grown clearer in him with the process of the centuries, though the

mere presence of it in him is after all what makes man *man*.

It may conceivably be, as Napoleon asserted, that God is on the side of the heaviest battalions. Those of us who share the modern outlook will in any case not expect to see bullets deflected by divine intervention so that the "right cause" may win the battle over those who are fighting on the "evil side," nor shall we count on having the sun and moon and stars lined up in contributive fashion on our side so that the truth may prevail. What I am contending for is that in the long run of history ethical and spiritual ideals prove to be real factors and play an important rôle in shaping events and in opening doors for new forward movements for the race. Something besides the environment of rivers, seas, mountains, soil, weather and contiguous neighbors, and the fundamental capacity gained through inherited instincts has evidently operated in the march of the race forward. Not only have ideals *operated* in creative and dynamic fashion, but they have shown a cumulative power that has rolled up a marked increment of gain to the ethical and spiritual element in the world, even during the short span of the historical period.

I do not need to labor the point that ideals are decisive factors in shaping the course of events. Nothing is more obvious in the life of an individual person than the fact that his forecast and vision of unrealized good must always be taken into account in estimating his next step. He builds his life by successive advances in the

aim of what he aspires to be and of the goal which he proposes to attain. What is true of an individual in this respect is no less true of a tribe, or a people, or a nation. The great moments in the history of a people are the occasions when the entire group is unified, fused and swept forward by some great loyalty to an ideal purpose. The material assets, the economic status, the geographical situation, climate and food conditions, and psychological traits and disposition will as always need to be considered, but the forecast of faith, of vision and of loyalty can and often does produce effects that are little short of miraculous.

Hosea Bigelow was no doubt right when he declared that "history *doos* get for'ard on a powder-cart." But it gets forward no less certainly on the ground swell of some great ideal purpose. Sometimes the ideal purpose makes use of the "powder-cart," and sometimes it uses less violent means, but in all instances of real achievement the gain will be found to have been due to the creative power of ideals. Very often, probably in most instances, the ideal was only dimly present to consciousness, as is true in the case of most individual decisions. It was in very truth a "ground swell," more or less submerged and involving more and carrying farther than any leader, or than the entire group together, *saw* or suspected at the time.

This situation raises the central question of the source and origin of ideals. If they can be reduced to the push and drive of instincts then, of course, there is no *breach*

involved between the food-seeking animal and the advantage-seeking nation. We can "explain" the new and the higher in terms of the old and the lower. We shall continue on the biological level and we shall go on interpreting in terms of "struggle for existence" and "survival of the fittest." If one is content to deal with the problem after the manner and method of mechanistic science he will incline to the view that all so-called ethical and spiritual ideals have been built up out of primitive instincts and practical interests. He will set about to explain what we usually call the higher forms of life by antecedent causes and more elemental conditions, and he will seem to find in the higher forms only more complicated combinations of the elements that were already there on the earlier levels.

The trouble with this method is that at the end of our story we have no real explanation of the real facts. A moral value is not the sum total of a number of elemental instincts. The magisterial command of duty, for which one joyously surrenders physical life, is not made up of a complex of pre-human traits. It is something *new*, as uniquely *new* as beauty was when it first made its appeal to an appreciative mind. All attempts to reduce moral, *i.e.*, intrinsic, goodness to pleasure, to calculation, or to any type of utilitarian inducements, have so far failed. They end in talking about something quite different in type and quality from the august thing which we really have on our hands.

As the taste of lemonade is not the taste of lemon plus

the taste of sugar, but something wholly unique, so, only on a loftier scale, *love* in its highest ranges is not a sex-instinct, plus a gregarious impulse, plus a tender emotion; and moral goodness is not a subtle forecast of some remote gain, plus an instinctive surrender of present want in order to secure the far-off "good." It is different from any aggregate that ever was made, just as the felt beauty of a flower, or of the curl of a wave or of the swirl of a waterfall introduces something wholly different from masses of matter in motion. We know of no alchemy that can turn the water of prudence into the wine of spontaneous and uncalculating good will. We pass over from an act judged and estimated in terms of advantageous results to an inner court where conduct is valued in the light of fitness to conform to an ideal standard. Professor Pringle-Pattison is speaking soberly when he says: "The breach between ethical man and pre-human nature constitutes without exception the most important fact which the universe has to show."¹

What has happened is that we have passed over from a biological being acting from the push of inherited structural instinct to a being that can see and feel the intrinsic worth of a deed for its own sake. An ethical and spiritual being introduces a superfluous element, that is, something that goes beyond what is needed for survival purposes. Living becomes on this level *a fine art*, a thing of grace and beauty and joy. The loyalties and ideals that have been shaping factors in the destiny of nations and peoples have had to do with more than

¹ *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, p. 8.

economic and physical advantages, though these tangible aspects are of course not to be ignored or belittled. The great national leaders of history have risen above the merely practical, the crassly advantageous for themselves and their people, they have been guided, at the highest moments, by a wisdom of what ought to be.

Instead of trying to explain the higher in terms of the lower we are on much surer ground when we read the feeble beginnings, the dim adumbrations, in the light of the completer goal that has been achieved. The meaning of the earlier conditions comes in sight only in the developed effects. The new cannot be juggled out of the old by processes of combinations or of additions. Life, when properly viewed, demonstrates the patent truth that real evolution is *creation*. We shall never understand evolution until we read it and interpret it in terms of the best and highest that it has brought into being.

It can be taken, I think, without further debate, that ethical ideals have introduced something new and creative into the stream of history as certainly as new species have done in the stream of biological progress. We must, I believe, further conclude either that they are purely human contrivances, artificial and conventional schemes, for the promotion of desired results; or that they have their ground and justification in the eternal nature of things, that is, in the fundamental structure of the universe.

There is as much evidence that the universe itself has produced the dominating and shaping ideals of history

as that the universe has produced electrons and protons, or that it has produced the amœba and the salamander. History gives as plain evidence of a continual sifting and testing of ideals as biology does of the sifting and testing of species. There is all the way down, or rather up, the line of racial progress a stern selection of ideals. There are dead and effete ideals as surely as there are extinct trilobites and five-toed horses. The universe is just as busy weeding out unfit ideals as ever it has been locking up out-worn types of life in the buried strata of the "scarpéd cliff." There are ideals that are freakish and capricious. There are ideals that are artificial and conventional and which do not survive. They cannot pass the tests when the days of judgment come, when they are tried as by fire. There are other ideals which have stood the testings of the time-processes and the siftings of the ages. They endure through long periods and become contributory factors in shaping the course of history.

Thomas Hardy with rare artistic power has presented in his *Dynasts* a picture of a great world-epoch of modern history which he believes to be the work of blind natural forces. It is a dark pessimistic tragedy which he draws, unrelieved, as we have seen, by any gleam of hope or promise until the very end of the poem is reached. Then the hope breaks in,

That the rages
Of the ages
Shall be cancelled.

The world, to his view, moves forth, "uninfluenced and unconcerned,"

The systems of the suns go sweeping on
With all their many-mortaled planet train,

at the push of "the Great Foresightless Urger." In these famous lines which follow, Hardy packs the substance of his view of world history:

In the Foretime, even to the germ of Being,
Nothing appears of shape to indicate
That cognizance has marshalled things terrene,
Or will (such is my thinking) in my span.
Rather they show that, like a knitter drowsed,
Whose fingers play in skilled unmindfulness,
The Will has woven with an absent heed
Since life first was; and ever will so weave.

And yet even Hardy, with his revived philosophy of Schopenhauer, and his recourse to a skilled unconscious knitter, has momentary gleams of an intelligence deeply interfused. There "trembled through" the ecstatic song of his "Darkling Thrush"

Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

More than once he suggests that the blind Willer is growing "percipient," "consciousness the Will informing," and he gets a vision and expectancy, dim to be sure, of

That enkindling ardency from whose maturer glows
The world's amendment flows.

But there is no jugglery by which consciousness can be produced out of unconsciousness, or Reason can dawn from a blind Will, or values and purposes can creep forth from "a Foresightless Urger." The universe with its processes of history is either intelligible or it is a dark enigma, an inscrutable X. It cannot be blind Will up to a certain moment in the historical time-process, and from there on, after "the world's amendment," become a significant affair.

That very period of human history, which seemed to Hardy to be the result of an uninformed blind natural Will, with no operative forces but the pushes of instinct, was starred and glorified at many points by the forward lift of spiritual ideals. There were life-loyalties and consecrations of a high order. There can be little question, furthermore, that the world in 1815 was on a much higher ethical level of life than was the world of 1785, and the advance was due, not to powder-carts and cannon, but to the work of noble souls possessed of vision and ideal forecasts.

Emerson, as one would expect from an incurable optimist such as he was, swings over to the opposite extreme from Hardy. Writing on the eve of the tragedy that took Abraham Lincoln from the world, Emerson said: "There is a serene Providence that rules the fate of nations, that takes no account of disasters, conquers alike by what is called defeat and by what is called victory, thrusts aside enemy and obstruction, crushes everything immoral as inhuman and secures the ultimate

triumph of the best race by the suppression of everything that resists the moral laws of the world."

I am not concerned for the moment as to whether we should use the term, "serene Providence," or "the eternal nature of things." In any case the current of history is not a capricious blind urge—the swirl of a mindless tide. The central reason for the more optimistic view is the fact that the movement of history is in the main a one-way movement. It goes steadily *forward*. There are occasionally short temporary eddies and backwashes, as in all currents, but whenever one takes a long perspective the historical advance is unmistakable. Nobody questions the gain that has been made in scientific knowledge nor in the application of the forces of nature to man's practical uses by ingenious inventions during the centuries. The advance in moral and spiritual insight and the transformation of life through this insight, is, I believe, almost as clearly marked.

I am not claiming that any one person has passed the highest point of insight ever reached in the past, but I am profoundly convinced that what once was a solitary peak of vision is now a broad tableland of insight with many dwellers on it who see. It is more than one "star that dispels the darkness," more than one "towering mind" that "o'erlooks his prostrate fellows"; there is a galaxy of lights and the darkness is shot through with sunrise. Education for spiritual ends is in its early beginnings, but it already is revealing its power and potency.

The spiritual curve of history is not a circle coming back to its starting point; it is an upward winding spiral. Man is slowly building his interior life as well as learning how to fly and to transmit information by radio. One of the most interesting signs of this spiritual progress is, strangely enough, to be found in the religious unsettlement which at the present moment is well-nigh world-wide. It is not due to waywardness, or to loss of seriousness, or to a wave of sensuous indulgence. It is not a Mephistophelian spirit of denial for the sheer fun of denying. It is due in the main to an increase of seriousness and moral earnestness. Men's deeper moral susceptibilities have made it impossible for them to continue satisfied with ideals of God that are crude, primitive and out of tune with the best ethical ideals which sway the thought of our time.

The same thing is true of the prevailing attitude to-day toward heaven and hell. The nobler aspirations for continued life after death are not dead. There are vital hopes and a good deal of living faith that somehow life of the nobler sort will complete and fulfill itself in a universe as rich and wonderful as this one of ours proves to be. Both the heaven and the hell of medieval thought not only bore but shock the alert modern mind. The medieval conception is not, either in its hopes or in its fears, an outcome of life that fits the deepest facts of our spiritual experience. We do not to-day estimate the worth of life in utilitarian terms, at least those of us who live by spiritual ideals do not, and we cannot con-

sent, therefore, to be satisfied with a reward and punishment interpretation of religion.

The same is true of the old-time theological account of man's nature as "a depraved being," "a worm of the dust," "a creature obnoxious to the wrath of God." The trouble with that doctrine is that it does not harmonize with our higher moral estimates of man's worth as a finite-infinite person. No one could accept Kant's diagnosis of the moral imperative in man's central being and still go on asserting "depravity." If man is a being who is forever building a kingdom of ends by his ethical deeds, he cannot at the same time be "a worm of the dust." The odd fact is that the acceptance of evolution as a method of creation, instead of confirming that "worm of the dust" doctrine and affiliating man more closely with the animal, has done just the opposite. For most of us there has come a nobler and diviner sense of man's worth and destiny, which makes it impossible for us to go on believing in the "ruin" of human nature and the stark depravity of the little children who are born to us.

As soon as religion is reinterpreted to fit the nobler ethical ideals of life that are intrenched in our hearts, and to fit, it should also be said, the exalted teachings of the Gospel of Christ, religion will take a new leap forward and will come to a new era of spiritual power.

Human nature, then, as history reveals it, is something more, I am convinced, than the push of blind natural instincts in the swirl of random forces. Some-

thing new has come into play. And that "something new" is *an inalienable tendency to enlarge the scope and significance of life in ideal directions*. Man is essentially a being who "looks before and after," and who from within transcends what "nature" presents to him. Instead of being "a poor finite thing," he is finite and something more. He lives on ahead of the latitude and longitude of earth. Something infinite and eternal breaks through him at least in his peak-moments and he sees beyond the meridian on which he is traveling.

It is through human ideals that history gets forward. And they are something more than man's own finite-human conceivings. At their best and truest they reveal the point of his junction with the infinite and eternal, that is to say, with the deeper rational universe, the Mind that steers the strange fleet. Rudyard Kipling cannot always be counted on to say the right word on spiritual issues. But there is a note of genuine inspiration in the following lines of his:

We were dreamers, dreaming greatly in the man-stifled town;
We yearned beyond the sky-line, where the strange roads go
down.

Came the whisper, came the vision, came the Power with the
need,

Till the Soul that is not man's soul was lent us to lead. |

It is possible, I am convinced, without "pressing," and without straining the issue, to interpret history so that it becomes an epic of the race, or better still an immense human drama of man's progress. The story is an unfold-

ing one. The process is morally *significant*. There is something cumulative at the end that was not there, and that was not even suspected, at the beginning. And the dénouement of the Fifth Act is not yet! Some creative presence has been at work as the drama has progressed. Nowhere do we find God interfering with or interrupting the natural course of events. He does not come in as a *deus ex machina* God, but everywhere we find evidence of an Over-Mind working through human minds and revealing Itself in the sifting and selecting processes that make certain ideals victorious and that winnow out as chaff the aims and purposes that are futile, outgrown and overpast.

Where empires towered that were not just;
Lo, the skulking wild fox scratches in a little heap of dust.

Some will, no doubt, challenge this "testimony of history." It cannot be *proved* in terms of mathematics, or after the manner of a laboratory experiment, but I believe that this epic-dramatic significance of history is as certain as is the fact of the Norman Conquest in 1066.

CHAPTER VI

THE DIVINE-HUMAN IN CHRIST

"THE testimony of history" is not complete until Christ is seen to be an inherent part of it. So long as Christ was thought of as a mysterious, supernatural visitant from another world to this one, so long as His humanity and the temporal events of His life were treated as unreal in order to enhance His divinity, as was done during the Middle Ages, the interpreter of His nature and His mission dwelt mainly upon His miraculous birth and resurrection, and showed little interest in the significance of His life as revealed in and through the historical process. There can, however, now be little doubt that the historical method of viewing and apprehending Him yields the greatest spiritual results and values.

The whole level of life is at once raised and the entire meaning of history is immensely heightened when it is recognized that we have not treated either adequately until we have seen that life as we know it must include Christ and that He is a living part of what we call history. His place in history, however, is not found by studying the short span of years that He lived in Galilee and Judea, but it includes as well the whole

process of transformation which His life and spirit have wrought through the centuries. History would be quite another matter if He were eliminated from its story. We do not fully know Him until we discover what He has done in and through the unfolding course of history. The abstract way of approach to His nature must yield place to the concrete way. By the former method the interpreter proceeded by endeavoring to eliminate the human factor and the historical element and to think of Him as a Being above and beyond the conditions that attach to this life-process. The climax of that speculative type of interpretation was reached in the sublime and awe-inspiring conception of Him as "the second Person of the Trinity." But the trouble with this method of speculation was that it ended with a mere assertion and left Christ still uninterpreted, at least in any way that made it possible to fit Him into the sphere of life as we know it. He moved in such a remote and abstract realm, so foreign to our human plane, that His real place among men was quickly taken by the nearer and more human Virgin Mary, or by the triumphant and yet tender saints of the Church.

We have at last begun to recover Christ as a real Person who lived and taught and loved and suffered and was victorious over temptation and misunderstanding and desertion and defeat and death. We are learning to know Him in the concrete setting of a definite historical period and through the events and deeds and words of a specific epoch and a well-known body of

literature, and in the light of what He has done during nineteen hundred years of history. The excessively scientific historian has tended to reduce His authentic deeds and His verifiable sayings to a very small compass. He is, by this process, "leveled down" and "explained" in terms of antecedent conditions, and as a result, we get a foreshortened and diminished Christ—once more reduced to an abstraction—who supplies us with no explanation of the part He had in the building, the growth and expansion of the historic Church.

On the other hand, there have been in recent times some great instances of historical interpretation of His life and mission that have made Him stand forth as the most dynamic and creative Figure in human history. Our purpose in this chapter will be to gather up the main points of such an interpretation of Him and to present Him so that He may become real to our thought to-day and at the same time make God more real to us, and that He may, because of the recovery of His reality, have genuine leadership in our lives.

The thing we need primarily is an enlarged capacity of appreciation of the range and quality of His personality. We need once more to *see* Him. The question mark has been used in this generation somewhat to excess. Problems of origin and attempted explanation of the miraculous element have bulked so large that they have often obscured the real Life. The interrogation point has been written all over the documents that transmit the facts to us. And we have blurred His

whole life with this fog of questions. We have been so absorbed in the work of criticism that we have too often lacked the power to read the Gospels as great literature of inspiration. We need to come freshly to this Life, to try to see Him with eyes of love and wonder, as we have learned to see St. Francis of Assisi, and to substitute the exclamation point for the overused question mark.

Not long ago Gerrit A. Beneker, who has been using his artistic talents to paint the nobler and diviner aspects of the workingmen and workingwomen of America, was engaged in painting a man at the crisis of testing molten steel from a blast furnace. The great swab of fiery metal was swung out and the half-naked tester was in the midst of his dangerous testing operation as the artist caught him and reproduced him on his canvas. One of the other blast furnace men who was watching the painter make his interpretation of this everyday hero called out to the other workers: "I say, fellows, come out here and see the greatest wonder in the world. Here is a man who is painting God where nobody else can see Him!" George Fox kept telling his generation that there is something of God in the life of a man, in even the plainest day-laborer. But only quickened eyes can see it in the commonplace setting of toil. Only when we can feel the meaning of "the still sad music of humanity" shall we be able to find God in Christ.

We are slowly coming to realize that God is not to

be found by abstracting from life and temporal affairs and human struggles, but rather He is to be found in and through the actual web of life, through temporal affairs and human struggles. If "a fourth person like unto the Son of Man" was seen walking with the three Hebrew children in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace in a great moral crisis, why should we not expect to see some gleam of God's life in the face of a man who does his hard work in front of the white-hot mass of glowing steel that is being tested for the girder of a bridge? And why should we not expect to see the love and truth of God in the face of the Carpenter of Nazareth, who understood little children better than anybody else ever did, who drew fishermen and tax-collectors and sin-crippled women up into a new kind of sainthood and who turned the humiliation and stigma of a Roman cross into a symbol of everlasting love and victory? But we must begin to *see* the divine in Him not by cutting Him apart from life, making Him an abstract and other-worldly being. We must learn to see it in the Galilean life of love and beauty.

A little child who was being put to bed by his mother suddenly realized his lonely plight, as the mother gave her good-night kiss, turned out the light and started for the door. "Am I to be left all alone, and in the dark, too?" the child anxiously asked. "Yes, my dear," the mother said, "but you know you have God with you all the time." "Yes, I know God is here," the child answered, "but I want someone who has a face." That

simple story expresses exactly the way we all feel. We know in the abstract that God is Mind and Spirit and that He is near us, but we want to have a more vivid sense of His reality and His presence in our world, and above all, we want to *see* Him and to discover Him as a real Person with an actual Life and Character. It is *that* that Christ does for us. It is in Him that the Face is seen and the personal character is revealed.

The medieval interpreters of Christ ascribed to Him far greater ascetic traits than really belonged to His actual life. In other words they did not see Him in His historical setting. The Renaissance painters, again, with all their genius for form and color, represented Him as they thought He ought to have been, not as in fact He was. The sad, worn, emaciated, other-world Figure took the place of the Person who was drawn for us with such marvelous insight in the Gospels.

A friend of mine was standing in Copley Square, Boston, looking at St. Gaudens' monument to Phillips Brooks. Behind the preacher as the source of his inspiration the artist has represented the form of Christ standing with outstretched hands of blessing, very much as He was drawn by those Renaissance painters. As my friend stood in silence and reverence looking at the statue, a washerwoman with a heavy basket of clothes came up to the place where he was standing. She put down her basket and gazed with appreciative face at the figure of Phillips Brooks whose tender words had apparently many times touched her heart. Suddenly she

turned to my friend and said: "Who is that person standing there behind the great preacher?" "That is Christ," he said. "Well, anyhow, it doesn't look a bit like Him," was the decisive comment of the woman. And she was right. But, unfortunately, the homiletic Christ—the Christ who has been used for preaching purposes—is not much nearer the original Person of history. He has been "theologized" almost beyond recognition. One might come back after many a sermon and say, with the honest old washerwoman: "It doesn't look a bit like Him!"

And yet the modern attempts to "rationalize" Him do not succeed much better than did these earlier attempts to present Him. We get, once more, an artificial construction, not the spontaneous, living, natural, marvelous Person who captivated His friends and followers and who poured His life and spirit into the men who built the Church. An excessive fear of the miraculous dominates the "rationalizer." He takes too much pains to explain away the marvelous and reduce the picture to a dull naturalistic scene. He carries his world of scientific law back into an environment in which no single law of nature had yet been discovered and verified, and he fails to appreciate the ease with which faith in miraculous happenings filled everybody's mind. He ignores the characteristic features of the period and of the country where the scene is laid and the oriental traits of mind. He forgets the richness of life in its imaginative color. He fails to allow for the unique quality of

genius. It would be impossible for such a Person as Jesus was, in a historical setting such as that one was, not to be enveloped in a dim magnificence of the wonderful and marvelous. We cannot find Him as He really was by a process of stripping. We shall never get back to the historical Christ by the severe reductions of a cold rationalism. One might just as well try to "rationalize" the greatest poetry.

The time may come when no new personality will have a chance to become "enveloped in dim magnificence." His pedigree will be exactly traced and scrutinized. He can be photographed in every important event of his life. Every step and stage can be cinematographed and made unalterable, every tone of his voice and its inflections will be preserved on dictaphone cylinders. The entire biography, if one wishes, may be reduced to a behavioristic account of muscle-movements and the operation of the glands. But then all interest in the person will be gone and he will simply take his place among the utilitarian forces which get pieces of necessary work done. We shall have a robot and not a person.

In his humorous book, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, Mark Twain tells of a saint who prayed almost continuously, swaying his body forward and back again under the fervor of his pious emotion. The "Yankee" could not bear to see all this motive force wasted and so he contrived an ingenious harness which he fitted to the saint and then attached to a sewing ma-

chine and managed thereby to make forty-four dozen shirts by means of what before had been wasted motion! Men may some time in future utilitarian ages be able completely to "rationalize," "describe," and "use" great personalities and they will then no longer live in a halo of wonder and admiration, and they will cease to accumulate fervid glowing accounts of their lives and deeds. But the ages behind us were not made that way, and they cannot now be "sterilized" and made to fit into such a scheme.

Christ must be accepted as the kind of Person who could arouse the kind of faith and wonder that He did arouse and who could do what He has done to inspire and revitalize lives through the centuries of history—and that the Christ of the cold, thin rationalism could never have done, nor, I am bound to add, could the purely "theologized" Christ have done it either.

If we are to find Him in reality and truth we must conform to the historical method of interpretation. We must by sound constructive imagination recreate the period in which He lived. We must try to see Him, not as the ascetic of the eleventh century believed He was, or as the theologian or the rationalist has conceived Him, but as the Person He really was, who lived joyously, happily and lovingly in the Galilean towns of the first century. We must not expect Him to anticipate in His teachings, the social and economic problems of our industrial age, and we must not violently lay hands on His message, take it out of its setting, and then cut

it short or stretch it long to make it fit situations that were nowhere in sight when He was preaching to Galilean peasants. But at the same time we can, and no doubt we should, seize upon the central principles and the eternal aspects of His life and His message, and find in them a Christ-ideal that is good for any age and that goes on forever in front of us.

It is impossible to produce a genuine *biography* of a Person with the first thirty years of His life a blank. Modern writers incline to the view that the consciousness that swept over Jesus and surged up within Him on the occasion of His baptism at the Jordan formed a new stage and epoch in His life and is the crucial point of beginning in His spiritual career. I am not convinced of that. If we had a diary out of those lost years, or even the insight and comment of someone who could report those hidden years for us as the evangelists do for the short later period, we should almost certainly get the impression of a steadily growing consciousness of intimate relation with God and of a dawning mission. The sudden leap, the instantaneous flash, is of course, quite possible, but there is every indication, I think, that the calm, balanced life, with its immense inward depth, rests back upon a long period of slow formation, and that the unfathomable wisdom revealed in even the simplest and most casual words He spoke springs out of years of experience and insight which had been shaping during the hidden Galilean years. It is useless, no doubt, to attempt to reconstruct

a period of life for which we have no biographical data, but the curve of the later years does throw some light back on the unreported arc at Nazareth.

The aspect that seems to me richest and ripest at the very beginning of His public ministry is His consciousness of God as Father. Luke's single incident out of those "lost" years supports that view. "Did you not know that I was sure to be occupied with my Father's affairs?" or, it may be, "sure to be found in my Father's House?" This reply has just that directness and simplicity that characterize His later words. And that first cardinal experience, which the evangelists report in connection with the baptism, does not seem like a sudden discovery, but rather like the surging up into consciousness of a long matured inner experience of intimate sonship with God as Father. We have come to realize through our psychological studies of to-day how often what seems to be a sudden emergence into consciousness is the result of a long process of unconscious or half-conscious gestation, and we may be pretty sure that the flash of insight at the Jordan and the corresponding call to a mission were the culmination of a long preparation that preceded.

In fact, the most unique thing to my mind about the Jesus of history is, not a new ethics, or a new interpretation of society, or a fresh message about the Kingdom of God, important as these are, but a new and most wonderfully rich experience of God that apparently had been growing and deepening through all those silent

background years. The moment, therefore, that one takes out the radical, revolutionary ideas of the Sermon on the Mount, as Tolstoy did, and treats them by themselves, as a literal way of procedure for any period of human history, without the background experience which gives them their meaning, they become abstract and unworkable in the world where we are living. The same thing applies to much of what has, with doubtful propriety, been called "the ethics of Jesus."

The first stage of "entry into life" for Jesus is learning to *love*. To start executing a "social program" without the creative and motive power of a great love behind it is like building a factory and forgetting to attach the machinery to any driving energy that would turn the wheels. It is like trying to separate "form" and "content" or "substance," in a poem and then discussing which constitutes the poetic quality, the "form" or the "content" of it. It is forever impossible to find the poetic quality in either as soon as they are cut apart, for then the poem ceases to be a poem.

So, too, Christ is not to be found in a new social, economic or ethical scheme of life cut apart from a personal discovery of God as a living, loving Father and the source of all love. He seems to me to be immersed in that experience. The great saying, "No one knows the Father except the Son," would appear to be the most natural thing for Him to say. Nothing is truer or more real, as we all know, than the fact that only one who loves deeply, and with the inward insight of love, can

ever know or fully appreciate the genuine nature of One whose character is essentially Love. Experience is the only door to such a Life and the insight of love is the only key. Every word that comes from Christ about God comes weighted with the inner depth of an experience of love. One feels immediately the difference between a knowledge about God, acquired from books and rabbis, and a knowledge of acquaintance with Him through intimate fellowship, until at length the Father is seen through the eyes of the Son—and love knows love because like knows like.

The Life of God was for Him an enveloping reality. It clothes the lily. It watches over the sparrow. It flushes the sunset with its glory of color. But the most amazing thing Christ has to say about the Life of God is the way God gives Himself to recipient souls and works with them and through them. The moment a face is turned toward Him He floods it with light and life. You men, Christ says, are to become saving salt to the world, you are to be luminous lives among men, because your Father's Life and Light will shine through you. As soon as you are transparently pure in heart you will see God. As soon as you become true peacemakers men will recognize that you are children of God and that you have a divine pedigree. The Kingdom of God will be yours when you attain humility of spirit and an unlimited passion of hunger and thirst for complete goodness of life and spirit. You must not be satisfied with a type of goodness that focuses on some quick utili-

tarian reward. You must live, as God does, a kind of life that is its own inherent reward and your perfection must be like your Father's perfection. The Kingdom of God which you are called upon to attain and realize consists in doing the Will of your Father here on earth even as it is done in the realm and sphere where He is.

"Why are you men so fearful?" He asked His disciples with natural surprise. "How little you trust in God!" "Courage!" He called out to the frightened, the wavering and the distressed. "A grain of faith no larger than a mustard-seed would be enough to clear your path of the mountains of difficulty that confront you." Do not worry, do not fret, do not load yourself with anxiety, your Father is as ready to care for your needs as He is to clothe the lily or feed the sparrow. Your heart will always be where your central treasure is. If your eye is clear and single to see Him and His love you can rest quietly in it.

That, and vastly more like it in His teaching, has all the calm and solid assurance of an inward experience and it could come only from experience. He is speaking, not as a theorist, nor as a scribe, who buttresses His words on books and "authorities"; He is speaking, as His hearers confessed, with the first-hand authority of personal insight. It is life and teaching saturated with the consciousness of God as Father. Take away that consciousness and reduce the words to an abstract theory of "non-resistance" and it becomes merely one

possible ethical theory in competition with a multitude of other theories.

It seems to me that *that* is the master-light which illuminates the Gospel narratives. It is not adequate to talk, as so many do, of "Jesus' conception of God." We have not touched the heart of the matter when we declare that He taught "the fatherhood of God." The real secret lies deeper. It is an intimate acquaintance and personal fellowship with God that form the atmosphere in which He lived and breathed. It was not alone at the baptism and on the mountain of transfiguration that the consciousness of personal relationship with God surged up. Those hours of lonely communion at night; that tender moving cry of "Abba" in the garden, give us sufficient suggestion to allow us to feel the reality of the intimacy and to know that we are dealing with something more than *ethics*.

The Christ who primarily concerns us as we turn back to study Him is a Person who lives in a world in which God is experienced as a loving Father who is still engaged in His creative work, making a realm or kingdom of men, who trust implicitly in His love and who join with Him in the spiritual work of creation. With this background of life already formed for His work, Christ found His practical program set forth in the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah. He read it in the synagogue at Nazareth at the opening of His ministry and then He quietly added: "This day this is going to be done!"—"These words are fulfilled in your ears." It was a

mission of love and redemption—"good tidings for the poor, release to captives, sight for blind eyes, liberty for the bruised and defeated." Whatever more the Kingdom of God may have meant to Him this divine work of love and healing which He undertook as an instrument of God was at least a part of it. Whatever He may have thought about the place and the time of the consummation of the Kingdom, He seems very clearly to have taught that it was a certain spirit and attitude expressed and revealed *in men* that made a Kingdom of God possible, and a trusting, loving, wondering little child, living in simplicity, confidence and joy and devoid of hate and suspicion, was His most vivid symbol of "fitness" for it. You must be like *that* before you can be in the Kingdom of God.

Through all His teaching about the Kingdom, in sermon and parable and prayer, it is constantly thought of, not as a new system of ethics or economics, but as a type of life, penetrated, interfused, saturated with the life and love of God. The God of the Kingdom of which Christ talks so much is surely not a remote and abstract Being, living in lonely splendor in a heaven infinitely removed from earth. He is assuredly where His Kingdom is, and that is among men, in men, too close for "observation" of His coming, as near to the heart of man as love is, for God is love.

Christ's vivid experience of the love and gentleness of God made Him extraordinarily *tender* toward everybody who was in any kind of trouble, especially trouble

that sin had produced. He often seems like a mother with a sick child, particularly when He was dealing with sin-spoiled persons. He always relieved the pathos of the hard situation of any life with which He had to deal by seeing through the failure or the mistake that confronted Him to the possible life that could yet be raised up out of the seeming wreckage that was there, if only *faith* could still be awakened in the soul.

The story of the prodigal, surely the most moving narrative that has ever been written, could have come only from a tender heart. How could anyone apply the oil and wine of love more tenderly to a life that had been sorely wounded by the archers than He applies them to the sinning woman whom her "accusers" proposed to stone to death, in fulfillment of the letter of the law? The Pharisee at whose house He was dining one day listened with amazement to the announcement which He made that the many sins of the woman who had come in to bathe His unwashed and neglected feet were all forgiven her, "for she loved much." It was a new principle of life which baffled the legalists that an awakened spring of love in the soul made it possible for the one who had been a great sinner to "go out into the field of life and sin no more."

The birth of love in the soul, the sharp *crisis* of a new insight that moved the will was, in Christ's thought, the one essential condition of entrance into a new stage of life. That principle with His tender insight behind it explains the frequent emphasis which Christ put on His

mission to call sinners to repentance. It is much easier for them to be brought to a "turning-crisis" than it is for the dull, one-level, once-born, pious man. They get the sudden back-thrust of the consequences of their way of life. They come to the end of their rope with an unmistakable *pull-up*. Disillusionment dogs their experiments of folly. They come to themselves. They get shaken awake. The pious persons—"the righteous who have no need of repentance"—are in much more serious danger. They have no crises. They keep on the same level. They have no jolt of awakening. They are lulled to peace and contentment by their conformity to sacred and time-honored performances. It is only to these pious persons, who are in grave danger of "losing life" without ever knowing that they are losing it, that Christ seems to take on an attitude of sternness. Gentleness would not help them. Tenderness would only push them along on the path they were taking. They must be awakened with a shock and a thrust, and be made to discover, to their surprise, that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents, and has a crisis of love, than over ninety and nine pious persons who have no conception that they need to repent.

The way of the Cross at the end of Christ's earthly ministry has had such a prominent place in the history of the Church, and seems so essential to an adequate interpretation of His life and mission, that we are apt to overstress the element of suffering, sorrow and tragedy in the story of His life. The words of the prophet, "a

man of sorrows," have uncritically been taken out of their setting, brought forward, and made to cover the whole period of His life on earth. The actual narratives present a different picture. The Christ of the Gospels feels Himself naturally at home in His Father's world. He enjoys the flowers and birds, the hills and the lake, the rain and the sun, with the calm and peaceful spirit of a true lover of nature. His parables are all alive with the insight and appreciation of one who notices every moving aspect of a scene. He watches the children at play in the market place with the eye of a lover of them. He shares the neighborhood joys and sorrows of a country village—the girls going to a wedding feast and forgetting the oil for their lamps. He eats with tax-collectors and sinners without any scruples. He is criticized for being too free and easy in His associations with eaters and drinkers, as though He were "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber!" He declines to "fast and mourn" after the conventional manner of the time. He shows none of the strictness of conformity to custom or to the law of the Sabbath that was supposed to be necessary for the attainment of righteousness. For Him this is only a first mile that one goes because he must. There is an unmistakable air of peace and joy in His life. It was, consequently, not unnatural for Him to bequeath His peace and joy to His friends at His farewell supper with them, for peace and joy were characteristic aspects of His life, and they were the truest legacy that He, who had not where to lay His head, had to give them.

And yet, the Cross is none the less there as the actual manner of His death and as a central fact of human history. Everything in Christian thought and interpretation would have been sharply different if He had gone on with His ministry undisturbed for thirty more years, and then had passed away calmly and quietly in the ripeness and maturity of a well-rounded and completed life. We somehow cannot *think* of His life coming to a close in that normal way. The Cross has come to be in our minds an essential part of His way of life. There would certainly have been no Church without the Cross, and that word "Christian," which I just now used, would in that case never have been coined.

There is much evidence in the narratives of the Gospels that the shadow of the Cross lay across His path almost from the first stages of His ministry. He saw very early what was involved in His way of life. That fact is part of the ground for speaking of Him as "a man of sorrows." There can be no doubt that this forecast gave depth and solemnity to His words and deeds, but I see no reason for thinking that it spoiled His joy or that it disturbed His peace. "Take my yoke"—take my way of doing work—He said, "and you will find rest for your souls." It was impossible for anyone to have come into that first century environment in Palestine and say what He said and do what He did and be the Person He was, without coming into irreconcilable collision with the authorities that represented the religion of the nation. The new wine could not be held in those old

wineskins. The new ideas could not be added as patches to the old and somewhat tattered garment. It is plain enough that He saw *this* with ever-growing clearness and it is not strange that in the moment of His completest union with His Father, on the mount of transfiguration, He should have "talked of the decease which He was to accomplish in Jerusalem." What He called His "cup" and His "baptism" came step by step in His thought to be an inherent part of His mission. So, too, it was.

The significance of the Cross has always been interpreted in the light of the deepest prevailing conceptions and spiritual issues of the different historical periods of Christian thought. St. Paul read its meaning in the light of his central problem, which was the method of the abrogation of the legal system of Israel. Grace, for him, has forever annulled the Law and made us *free*. Anselm saw in it the payment to God of the infinite debt man owed on account of his sin and rebellion. At the epoch of the Reformation the central problem for the reformers was the satisfaction of divine justice, so that sin might be forgiven without, at the same time, weakening the august governmental authority of the Infinite Sovereign of the universe. In every instance, however, it should be said, the Cross meant much more to the great spiritual interpreters of the time than the specific aspect which stood out predominantly in the interpretation that peculiarly suited the age in question.

To-day the most significant aspect which we find for

our time in the Cross of Christ is its identification with and its revelation of *the suffering love of God as Father*. It seems to me, as I study the story—"the good news"—which Christ's life presents, this aspect of His mission stands out in clear relief from the beginning to the end of the story. The unique feature everywhere in evidence in the experience of Christ is the marvelous comprehension, in fact the actual experience, of the love and tenderness of God as Father. Love of that sort, from the nature of the case, could never "run smooth" in a world where there was sin and blunder and imperfection. The "Law" had met the situation by thinking of God as Sovereign and by pointing out the way in which God's divine rights and His sovereign justice could be met and satisfied. But Christ divinely leaped to a wholly new interpretation of God. His nature, His character, for Christ, is essentially that of tender, loving Father. He does not *become* loving, as a result of human efforts to satisfy Him. He does not *cease* to be loving, through man's blunder, sin and failure. He simply *is* Father, eternally and unalterably Father. That means essentially that grace and not justice, is the deepest fact there is about God—and grace is love, spontaneous, uncalculating, going the whole way through, never letting go, never despairing, never losing patience, and suffering as one must suffer when the person who is loved goes wrong. Christ is this amazing grace of God made vocal and incarnate.

It seems to me that from the revelation which broke

upon Him at His baptism, on through the days of temptation in the wilderness and the acceptance of His program at Nazareth, He is, consciously or unconsciously, identifying Himself with this character of God as grace. It becomes His mission to inaugurate a way of life that expresses that discovery of the true nature of God. He feels Himself in a very real sense to be the revealing place of that love and grace. It floods out to the world through Him, and He makes it actual in living words and in vital deeds. The Cross is the consummation and completion of that revelation of love. Its full meaning cannot be told until the depths of agony and heartbreak are reached. The pathos and tragedy of genuine love come full into sight only when love meets with blindness of vision, hardness of heart, waywardness of will, stolidness of mind, the fixity of static religion, and still goes on loving, whatever the cost of love may be.

It is one thing to love sweet and innocent little children who respond with merry laughter and who run to climb upon your knees in happy mood and it is quite another thing to love unfeeling, ungenerous, unresponsive natures that show only delight in annoying and in paining the sensitive soul and putting on a mocking crown of thorns. It is one thing to interpret love to a rich young ruler absorbed in his riches and his work, but nevertheless deeply serious in his desire to find the way to enter into life, and quite another thing to interpret love to a shrewdly calculating zealot like Judas, or a

crafty, cunning Caiaphas hardened by long self-deception and by a lifetime of political chicanery. It is one thing to touch the quick heart of an impulsive Peter, or to reach the answering chord in the soul of a Magdalen who passionately needed a friend to understand her and to open to her the door to life and love, and it is quite another thing to make *grace* real and significant to formalists, legalists and dry defenders of orthodoxy. Wherever sin abounded in its hardest aspects, there grace through Him still more abounded in its tenderest suffering love. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing," may be taken, I think, as the expression of the farthest limit of what grace can say and do in the midst of pain and misunderstanding.

If we are to suppose, as I am compelled to do, that the universe in its loftiest aspects shows "a spiritual adventure" already in process, we shall find the clearest evidences of such an adventure in the revelation of love which breaks through the life and death of Christ. It must be borne in mind that He is not a visitant or a stranger here in the world. "He came unto His own." "He knew what was in man." He fulfilled the divine idea of man. He revealed the "Adam" that was meant to be. He is the type at last fully expressed, the adventure brought to its successful goal. He inaugurates the new humanity. We have not seen what the universe could do, until we see Him. We have not read the whole story of history until we have fitted Him into the historical process. It is not until we turn to this highest

revealing-place that we are able to get a clear sight of the deepest, the eternal, nature of things.

Atoms can reveal mathematics. Flowers and stars and mountains and sunsets can reveal beauty. The biological order can reveal life in its ascending series. Historical events can present a dramatic story that expresses and vindicates a moral order. But it is only through a concrete person who is divine enough to show love and grace in consummate degree, and human enough to be identified with us, that we can be assured of love at the heart of things. Christ is the coming of God in and through the process of history—God revealed to us in the persuasive terms of personal life and loving will.

The resurrection will always remain a mystery and it is best to leave it so. There can be little question that something occurred which convinced the circle of believers that the Person whom they had loved and followed was alive again after His crucifixion and was a vital presence and power in their midst, at first visibly and then inwardly. This faith of theirs turned them from defeated and despairing men into courageous and irresistible missionaries of a new hope for humanity. That faith built the Church and conquered the Roman Empire, and at the heart of the new religion, as it went out to the ends of the earth, there burned an unquestioning faith that Christ was victorious over death and had become *the power of the resurrection* for all who live in Him. That victorious and creative faith has been one of the most dynamic factors in the life and thought

of the Western world during the last nineteen centuries. It has become an indissoluble part of the historical process. We must, once more, think of Christ in terms of what has flowed out of His life. He was the kind of Person who could do what He has done.

It has always been difficult to hold fast at the same time to both the divinity and the humanity of Christ. They have, again and again, been thought of as exclusive terms. Human nature has been interpreted downward as belonging to a low and undivine order. Divinity has been interpreted upward as belonging wholly to the nature of another world order. There was an unbridgeable chasm between these dualistic orders. Divinity and humanity were in theory so widely sundered that they could not be united, or at least could be united only by a stupendous miracle. This is, I believe, a bad start toward a solution and a false assumption.

The view that I am presenting holds the ground that the universe from the beginning onward and upward is *a revealing process, is a spiritual adventure*. There are "peak-moments" in this long process when the meaning and significance of it break through in a unique way and when something *new* comes in sight. In Christ the unique feature that breaks through is that of tenderness, love and grace—and *God* is like that.

CHAPTER VII

THE NATURE OF REVELATION

PHILO, the famous Jewish philosopher, in the first half of the first century of our era formulated a theory of revelation, so far as it concerned the Pentateuch, which made it practically the same thing as *divine dictation*. Every word in that collection of books was considered by him to be a word of God. The writer was supposed to be a passive recipient of a "communication" from beyond himself which he as a faithful amanuensis reported precisely as he received it. This theory, which was afterwards taken over by many Christian interpreters, is often called "plenary inspiration," or more properly, "verbal inspiration." "Inspiration" is, however, not the right word to use for such a theory of revelation. Inspiration means the heightening of the capacities of personality. This theory of Philo insists on nothing short of "dictation" and it claims that we possess through the passive reporter the actual words of God—*ipsissima verba*—transmitted to the world without alteration and without any tinge of color from the hand of the scribe.

The Jews of Philo's type, and the Christians who

have adopted his theory and extended it to the New Testament, are not the only religionists who have claimed to possess the word of God in this plenary and infallible sense. There have been many writings in the history of the race that have been raised in the minds of their possessors to the high level of "sacred scriptures," and that have been treated as divine communications.

There might, no doubt, conceivably be such a revelation as that. There is nothing inherently impossible in the transmission of the will of God to the mind of man, though it would be difficult for us to conceive how *infallibility* could be attained through finite human minds and with words that were coined for human speech in a shifting world. But in any case there is no satisfactory evidence that the world possesses anywhere in any books a revelation of this extreme type—a revelation which bears the unmistakable marks of dictation. The noblest books of our Scriptures, and the same features are true of other sacred writings, show an unmistakable human factor. They show the climate and tint of the temporal age and the historical background through which they have come. They have tell-tale labels of the moral and spiritual stage and height of the era in which they were born. There is an unmistakable quality of style in the message which each particular author has transmitted. This is nothing against the true value and authority of the revelation, but it does manifestly damage any theory of "dictation" or "verbal inspiration" or "infallibility."

Every fiery prophet in old times,
 And all the sacred madness of the bard,
 When God made music thro' them, could but speak
 His music by the framework and the chord.

We cannot, then, hope to maintain, even if we wanted to, any such easy, cut-and-dried, ready-made theory of revelation as that of Philo's. It involves an undesirable automatism. We must go on, therefore, and find a better, truer theory; one that faces all the facts and that supplies us with a key to the supreme literature of the race, and then we must try to see what light this highest literature of revelation throws on the reality, the nature and the character of God. It must be a question not of "dictation," but of genuine "inspiration." A. C. Bradley, in a valuable essay on Inspiration, has given many happy suggestions toward a definition of it. The main fact indicated by the word inspiration, he says, "seems to be the unexpected appearance in the mind of something strikingly different from its general contents and habitual course"—"something breaking in with incalculable effect upon the familiar tenor of our thoughts."¹ "It is something," he says farther on, "which we cannot attribute to ourself, it is given to us, and in it we lose ourself; that is one aspect. It is something in which we find ourself, and are at last our true self; that is the other aspect." Hardly less suggestive are the words of Professor J. A. Stewart in his *Myths of Plato*: "The narrow, matter-of-fact, workaday experience, which the argumentative conversation puts in evi-

¹ A. C. Bradley, *A Miscellany*, 1929, pp. 226-227.

dence, is suddenly flooded, as it were, and transfused by the inrush of a vast experience, as from another world—'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' ”^a

Nothing is more certain than that some persons at some moments in their lives are carried beyond the usual level of their range of thought and reasoning, and arrive at flashes of truth and insights into the meaning of life and the nature of God, which seem to the recipient like spontaneous gifts of wisdom from above. Sometimes these "flashes" and "insights" come like sudden meteors that leave only a brief train of fading light behind, and sometimes they are linked up, in favored persons, with a great creative literary gift, which enables the inspired writer to put them into permanent form for the use of multitudes of others who are thus able to climb to a similar height through the medium of the literary creation or the artistic form.

When anyone is enabled to rise above himself and to produce some form of creative expression that, for successive generations, lifts men to higher levels of truth, wisdom and life than they could otherwise have attained, that may well be called "inspiration." There are many degrees of it and those instances of it which are worthy to be called "revelations" are the creations that know no limits of date or regional space, but that continue age after age and in all lands to speak to men as though out of eternity.

As there is obviously a human factor present in the

^a *Op. cit.*, p. 2.

revealer, so, too, there is bound to be a corresponding human element in the reader and interpreter of the inspired message. It does not drop in capsule fashion into a receptacle type of mind. Apprehension and appreciation of truth can occur only through the stock of ideas and imagination-material which the reader possesses. In a land like Japan, for instance, where no one ever sees a sheep or a shepherd, the beautiful imagery of the Good Shepherd will fail to produce the effect which is sure to be produced in a country where sheep are daily led to pasture.

Revelation literature stands or falls with the power of its appeal to the minds of men age after age. The test which Coleridge applied to the Bible in his remarkable little book, *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, nearly a hundred years ago remains as vital a principle as ever. His test of its power is the way it searches the deeps of his inmost being and *finds him*. "The words of the Bible," he said, "find me at greater depths of my being than any other book does." And then he goes on to conclude: "Whatever *finds me* brings with it an irresistible evidence of having proceeded from the Holy Spirit."

The basis of Coleridge's position rests upon his underlying axiom that there is a divine root in man—a spiritual center answering to a higher spiritual Center in the universe. Deep calleth unto Deep and these spiritual deeps find one another as two corresponding electrodes do.

There are without question types of literature which work almost like a spell on the minds of men. The reader of such literature is held by a power which he cannot analyze nor fathom. It conveys a sense of reality. It seems to have come out of a depth of life in which the reader himself is also rooted. It finds him because in some real way it is kindred to his own nature.

Our first problem in the field of inspiration or revelation will be to specify, if we can, the ground and basis in the life of man from which it emerges, the mode and manner of its manifestation and birth-process.

Many years ago Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote a charming essay, which is still vital and valuable, under the title, "The Mechanism of Thought and Morals." The main criticism one would have to make in reference to this essay would be a criticism of his use of the word "mechanism" in the title of it. Whatever else one can say of the explanation of either thought or of morals we can assuredly assert that they are not the product of any kind of "mechanism." In the realm of thought and morals we are, to say the least, at the point the farthest removed from mechanism or mechanical explanations. Dr. Holmes, of course, used the word loosely and he meant by it what I have just called the mode and method of manifestation, the gestation and birth-process, of thought and morals, the ground and basis from which they *emerge*.

There are two quite different levels or stories in what we loosely and popularly call our personal self, though

it would be absurd to try to cut them apart. We perceive, know, analyze, think, reason, prove, explain or understand, on one of these levels. We have no ready word which covers adequately all the processes and operations of the mind which take place on this thought-level. It is roughly what Kant called "pure or demonstrative reason," what the eighteenth-century writers usually called "understanding," and what Bergson in our time calls "intellect." But almost everybody knows to-day that we have hardly got below the surface of ourself when we have dealt only with the understanding, the mode and method of thinking, reasoning, categorizing, proving and explaining. We should never have any "inspirations," nor could we ever talk about "revelation" or even of "poetry," if life were confined to this single story level of the inner "me."

Life exhibits a far greater richness and fecundity than the "intellect" alone can ever give birth to. We have deep down within us *a subsoil wealth*, as certainly as have the oil regions of Mexico, Oklahoma or California. Once the possessor of the soil in those regions knew only of the wealth which the surface could produce. The deeper wealth was undreamed of. It has often been so, too, with our own inner subsoil treasures. They have been discounted, or even ignored, in favor of the more vivid and "practical" analytic processes of the mind. And then anon there comes a revulsion from the extreme emphasis on rationalizing. With that revulsion there is always danger of an excessive swing to the other

extreme. An era of "romanticism," or something worse follows. We need the activity of both these "levels" for the full expression of our "interior plenitude." One is only half a man with either story gone. Let us turn, then, to examine briefly the features, dim though they may seem to be, of the subsoil level. J. A. Stewart, with his usual insight, has called this deep level "the bedrock of human nature." "At that level," he says, "man is more at one with Universal Nature—more in her secret, as it were—than he is at the level of his 'higher' faculties, where he lives in a conceptual world of his own making which he is always endeavoring to 'think.' " *

There can be little doubt that our clearest and most practical "ideas" emerge out of a deeper life that underlies them, as the root underlies the tree that is bathed with upper air and sunlight, or as the ocean underlies the wavelet or the bubble, that appears for a moment on its heaving bosom. Our deeper, completer, richer self, is always there behind our ideas, behind our rational processes, and the so-called "idea" which swims into consciousness is a luminous peak to an invisible pyramid with a very deep-lying base. If we could explore the whole of the "base," we should find the whole of ourselves and perhaps more! The deep zone underneath is a region of energies, activities and mysterious processes where much that later appears above, at the "peak," has been matured and got ready for birth.

* *Myths of Plato*, p. 21.

A mind that had no bottom-zone like that would be utterly shallow and its "ideas" would be puerile, if not abortive, or "still-born" as Socrates would say. There is, in short, no rational activity of any sort, no analytic processes, which the deep subsoil life of the soul does not influence or affect or color. Sometimes it boils up into, or boils over and inundates, our otherwise "cold and severe" intellectual states.

Just when we are safest, there's a sunset touch,
A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
A chorus-ending from Euripides,—
And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears
As old and new at once as Nature's self.

In other words, something "boils up" from below and pours its flood around the previous calm, rational conclusion which we had made in quiet reflection.

The human race, in its long, slow development, has discovered many ways of letting this subsoil life utter and express itself, otherwise it would have "blown off the lid" and made havoc of life long ago. The poets and mystics—who at bottom belong pretty much to the same order of being—have succeeded best in giving expression to this *deeper-level wealth* of life. It is well-nigh universally recognized to-day that no theory of poetry that locates the essential feature of it in some rationalized technique has any standing. Such theories suffer from senile decay. They are antiquated.

A. C. Bradley is one of the premier authorities in the world on this subject and he says:

Although poets often have unusual powers of reflective thought, the specific genius of the poet does not lie there, but in imagination. Therefore his deepest and most original interpretation is likely to come by the way of imagination. And the specific way of imagination is not to clothe in imagery consciously held ideas; it is to produce half-consciously a matter from which when produced, the reader may, if he chooses, extract ideas. Poetry (I must exaggerate to be clear) psychologically considered, is not the *expression* of ideas or of a view of life; it is their discovery or creation, or rather both discovery and creation in one. . . . The opinions, reasonings and beliefs of poets are seldom of the same quality as their purely imaginative product.⁴

Speaking in the same general connection of the transformation which Shakespeare wrought in the old stories that formed the germs of *Hamlet* and *King Lear* and the other great dramas, Bradley finely says:

What was brought to them was the huge substance of Shakespeare's *imagination, in which all his experience and thought was latent*; ⁵ and this dwelling and working on the stories with nothing but a dramatic purpose, and kindling into heat and motion, gradually discovered or created in them a meaning or a mass of truth about life, which was brought to birth by the process of composition, but never preceded it in the shape of ideas, and probably never, even after it, took that shape to the poet's mind.

This last passage throws much real illumination on the true meaning of imagination as it is used in the writings of modern poets and critics—what Logan Pearsall Smith has finely called "imaginative dominion over experience." It is, one sees at once, not the image-

⁴ *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, pp. 172-173.

⁵ *Italics mine.*

making faculty of which psychologists have much to tell us. It is a vast, deep-lying creative power, "in which experience and thought are latent," and which fuses, remolds and re-creates, according to a pattern that never was before on land or sea, the material out of which the poem is born. It is wholly unlike the mode and method of analytic reasoning in which the steps and links of logic can be traced. The poet on the other hand cannot trace the processes of his creation. He can tell perhaps where he got the germ-plasm out of which his poem grew and he knows what meter he is using for it, but how he got from the original particles of star dust with which he worked to the finished star, of that he can give no clear account. "Imagination" is only another name for "creative genius" and *that* is only another word for what I have called "subsoil wealth" or "deep-level fecundity."

Wordsworth is perhaps the supreme modern interpreter of the exalted poetic functions of creative imagination. *The Prelude*, his greatest poem, has "imagination" for its central theme. "Imagination," he says at the end of the poem, "having been our theme,"

Imagination, which, in truth,
Is but another name for absolute power
And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
And Reason in her most exalted mood.*

He uses "imagination" throughout the poem as "the creative agency"—

* *The Prelude*, Book XIV.

This faculty hath been the feeding source
Of our long labor.

It is plain enough in *The Prelude* that "imagination" corresponds not to "analytic industry," but rather to what the poet calls "the prime and vital principle in the recesses of human nature."

Professor Livingstone Lowes of Harvard has recently shown sufficient evidence to convince every reader of his remarkable book, *The Road to Xanadu*, that Coleridge's two poems, *The Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan*, perhaps the two most metrically perfect poems in the English language, were "made out of the *débris*" that had been deposited in the poet's mind from a long list of books of travel which he had recently read. Many words, phrases and even whole sentences can be positively traced to their sources in these books. They were the scraps, the *detritus*, the raw stuff, of the poems, as were the "old stories" for Shakespeare's genius. They lay in what Professor Lowes calls "the deep well of the poet's sub-conscious mind," where they were fused by the creative flash, the kindling heat, of the poet's imagination. Suddenly these scattered fragments, the ashes from many books, are given back to us transmuted, remolded, and turned into immortal beauty and imperishable melody. Here, in this subsoil life within,

Beneath the stream, shallow and light,
Of what we *say* we feel,
Beneath the stream, as light,
Of what we *think* we feel,

the silent, unconscious process of gestation and birth goes on. What was only a germ becomes a full-fledged creation, and it is given back to the surface mind builded far better than that reasoning mind could have done, and builded, too, in a way that that mind of the upper story can never fully "explain."

Daniel Webster, trying to tell later to a friend how he was able to speak for four hours on the meaning of the Constitution of the United States, in his famous "Reply to Senator Hayne," for which he had had no time for "preparation," said: "It was perfectly easy; I stood up when all of a sudden a smoking thunderbolt came by and I seized it and hurled it at Hayne." It was another notable instance of the creative energies of the "deep well" in which Webster had deposited the wealth of a whole lifetime of work, and under the fusing power of his kindled imagination the "thunderbolt" was forged. There was no one else in the Senate Chamber, we may be sure, who saw "a smoking thunderbolt" floating in front of him and asking to be hurled! Nor would *The Ancient Mariner*, or *Kubla Khan* have emerged from anyone else's reading of the same list of books! We all have "deep wells" into which we put "detritus" and "ashes from our reading," but it does not always come back for us remolded into beauty? We all have subsoil wealth, but we cannot all mine the raw wealth and transmute it into imperishable form, as the poets and prophets do. The range of "imagination" could, I feel sure, be greatly extended in us all if we

could perfect the right educational technique for the true culture of little children, but even so the supreme creative power would still have to wait for the coming of the *genius*, who differs from the rest of us in his rare capacity to transmute, in the deep-level regions of his inner life, the raw material of his experience, and give it back to us refashioned into immortal forms of beauty and with an eternal aspect interfused into it.

One is astonished [to quote Bradley again] at the apparent ease with which extraordinary effects are produced, the ease, if I may paraphrase Coleridge, of an angel moving with a wave of the hand that heavy matter which men find so intractable. We feel this sovereign ease in contemplating Shakespeare's picture of the world—a vast canvas, crowded with figures glowing with color and a superb animation. . . . We observe . . . how the artist, though he could not treat history like legend or fiction, seems to push whole masses aside and to shift and refashion the remainder, almost with the air of an architect playing with a child's bricks.*

"A poem," Shelley declared in his *Defense of Poetry*, "is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth." It is life interpenetrated with a diviner nature, or, in Shelley's own words, a way of "redeeming from decay the visitations of the divinity in man."

This power to transmute, remold, refashion as with an angel's wand, create and interfuse an eternal aspect, is what we mean by "inspiration." Something wells up from the obscure deeps within the soul, or surges in from "that mystic ocean whose rim no foot has trod." It

* *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, p. 280.

comes as surprise, a divine splendor, an *élan vital*, or *élan mystique*, but always with the release of creative energy—

A flash that has revealed
The invisible world.

From time immemorial the poet and the prophet have always felt that the source of light and of creative energy was beyond themselves. They have given the impression of a visitation—a divine kindling spark has lighted up, with new colors, all the material that had been laboriously accumulated, or, to change the figure, some touch from beyond had in a moment fertilized with life what until then lay dead or dormant. All the supreme creations of genius point away to a higher source of inspiration. They open with a reverent "hail" to the divine muse, the heavenly stimulus, that first gave them the creative impulse. Sometimes, no doubt, the inscription to the muse is formal and conventional, but where the inspiration is greatest and most genuine the finger of the poet points upward with perfect naturalness. The most important effect of the "inspiration" is a superordinary unification of all the inner faculties and powers of the being. Everything that has been gathered by the experiences of a lifetime seems to lie at hand for use as though they were "presented" by a magic valet. A sorting and shifting of the material is done without effort for the hand of the workman as though he had a retinue of invisible helpers. "Fecundity" is once more

the right word. The frantic strain and effort which characterize second-class work vanish and the "creator" produces his masterpiece in an atmosphere of serenity and peace.

Let me quote the words of a wise French critic, Edmond Arnould, describing the effect of inspiration:

In these rare but sublime moments, time and space disappear; the work thus created has no limits, or, if it has, the poet does not see them. *His thought embraces and penetrates him at so great a depth*, that for a moment he is set free from conditions of the human lot. . . . This is the first note of inspiration. It does not last long, but nothing can take its place when it is over. It gives to a work of poetry that primitive swing, that unlimited movement, which is necessary to it; for it must have begun by being too vast in the soul of the poet, in order afterwards, to be great enough in the eyes of other men.*

The world possesses a large amount of literature that plainly reveals a high degree of inspiration. Those who are determined to maintain for their individual religion a certain type of infallible authority are inclined to insist that their peculiar sacred books show a wholly *unique* degree and type of inspiration. Be that as it may. I am not defending any citadel. I am concerned here only to point out that inspiration of the genuine sort always carries the writer, or creator, beyond the range of his thinking and reasoning powers and introduces an element into his creative work which seems to be divinely

* *Essais de théorie et d'histoire littéraire* (Paris, 1858), pp. 20-21. Quoted from Henri Bremond's *Prayer and Poetry*, 1927, p. 99.

given, as an act of grace. As we have seen, the stock of raw material in the work, the main body of ideas which it expresses, the stage of intellectual and moral culture which it reveals will have the color and climate of the epoch and the local setting of its habitat, but the inspiration gives a new quality of unity and depth, a poise and power of certitude, an air of peace and serenity, an elevation of the particular experience to its universal significance, and the infusion of an eternal aspect which liberates it from the narrow limits of its time and place, and gives it a perennial quality of truth.

It is important, of course, to pass quite beyond the traditional stage of thought in which the mind uncritically accepts whatever is included within a certain body of writings as a revelation of God by the very fact of being in a sacred canon. This dogmatic bibliolotry has proved to be an unfortunate burden for religion to bear. It always keeps religion from attaining a pure spiritual quality through free and untrammelled insight. The time of maturity has come when it is safe to leave man's spirit free to discover where in the ranges of the world's literature the divine quality comes into sight, and where only the thoughts and prejudices of men are written down. The ultimate test, now as in Coleridge's day, will be whether a passage, or a book, *finds us*, and finds us moreover at our deepest levels. Whenever we read something which searches us as with a candle and makes us condemn our failures and our sinning and which raises up in us to new potency our capacity for goodness,

we shall feel sure of its inspiration and we shall call it revelation.

Any work which bears the marks of inspiration does reveal. It brings a new richness of meaning to life. The greatest creations are consummately beautiful and for that reason they produce perennial joy and enthusiasm. They transmit serenity, certitude and power, or, where they arouse, as they sometimes do, an element of awe and terror, it works what Aristotle called a *catharsis*, a cleansing, a purging and purifying of the soul that brings afterwards greater health and unity of mind, and in the end a clearer vision of the realities by which we live. This means, I think, that some persons, especially those persons who have the high qualities and rare gifts that raise them to the type of a spiritual genius can become *organs of an eternal reality and interpreters of transcendent values of life*.

Out of the heart of Nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old;
Up from the burning core below
These canticles of love and woe.

These lines of Emerson fit perfectly into the conception of inspiration which I have been here developing. This "burning core below," of which the poet speaks, is that deep ground-swell surge, the energies of which we have found operating wherever immortal creative literature is being produced. Sometimes "the ground swell" comes up from the submerged life of the individual and seems to reveal hardly more than the accumulated ex-

periences of that particular person, but sometimes, on the other hand, it seems to be immersed in a larger Life of the Spirit, and to become in a mysterious way the organ of that Life. It seems most likely that the spirit in us is close within reach of the Spirit who is Truth and Life. The heart of Nature—the eternal Nature of things—seems to roll through the person who is inspired and to find a voice and utterance:

The silence of eternity
Interpreted by Love.

It is notable that where the burden of truth is greatest and the range of revelation reaches farthest, suddenly the style of the passage rises in grandeur and beauty to fit the sublimity of the thought. Take, for example, such a flash of insight as that in Deuteronomy 33:27, "The eternal God is thy home and underneath are the everlasting arms." It is one of the most exalted revelations of God in all literature and with surpassing beauty the words and form of expression fall into a natural harmony and melody that perfectly correspond with the truth that lies at the heart of the words.

Many of the Psalms are signal illustrations of this depth and unity. There are a few of these majestic Hebrew poems which in thought and form are as perfect and unalterable as is the Parthenon, and there are parts of many others that rise to an equal height. The twenty-third Psalm, with its three stages of life, the simple, naïve stage of implicit faith, the middle period

of struggle and hard experience, and the third period of disciplined faith, has wound itself into the love and affection of the race. The child babbles it with joyous rapture and the old man looks death calmly in the face as he recites it with his latest breath. It almost says itself on our lips.

Both in quality of truth and beauty of literary style the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is unsurpassed. The height of inspiration would seem to be reached in those perfect words which reveal perfect love. They were written in the city of Ephesus in the midst of agonizing struggles. The writer was "fighting beasts" and "dying daily," and suddenly as he worked away in some quiet room of this wicked ancient city, endeavoring to solve the intricate practical problems of this new-formed church across the *Ægean* on the Corinthian side, the melodious poem about the greatest thing in the world "surged up" and "rolled out," as though it were brought to him by magic hands. Quite obviously it will always be possible to hold that this creation of St. Paul's was worked over for many weeks, carefully rewritten, filed and polished and made perfect by labor. Both of these methods of writing are well known and they both have produced immortal creations. It is difficult to tell with certainty from the outside which one of the two ways was followed in a given case. St. Paul seems to me to be a striking example of a person who was subject to inspirations like that which Philo has described in these words: "Many a time I have come to

writing empty and suddenly have found myself full, for ideas were invisibly rained down upon me from above. . . . I have had a stream of interpretation, a gift of light, a clear survey of things, the clearest that eye could give."

There are other passages in St. Paul's writings which come close to this pinnacle height, notably the closing section of the eighth chapter of Romans; the last four verses of the second chapter and the last seven verses of the third chapter of Ephesians, and the seventh and eighth verses of the fourth chapter of Philippians. There are numerous passages in the Gospel and First Epistle of St. John that attain to this same finality of truth and beauty. I should be inclined, too, to include in the same class the description of the New Jerusalem in the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of Revelation, though the pictorial imagery of the scene has often enough led to a crude and materialistic interpretation of the glowing ideal vision.

In picking out a few chosen passages which seem to me to reach an unusual level of inspiration I do not mean to slight the revealing quality or the harmonious beauty of the rest of the books that are left unmentioned. There is something in this literature of the Bible that surpasses the entire range of thinking and arguing and proving. It is, in the best sense of the word, *literature of revelation*. It has, in truth, rolled out of the deepest heart of Nature, it has surged up from the burning core below.

But all the highest and noblest creative work of the world unites both levels of the mind, the "intellect" and the "sub-soil" processes. It is more or less fatal to cut the bridges that unite and integrate the self into one living whole. Books written by "automatic" hands, of which there are many, have a tone of weakness, an air of futility about them. They miss the censorship of the critical judgment. They fail to correlate with the gathered and sifted wisdom of our practical and social consciousness. On the other hand, a book that is the sheer product of intellect, a book that has had no hot subterranean lava shot through it, lacks depth and is doomed to be temporary, if not ephemeral.

Plato's *Dialogues* furnish one of the best illustrations of the fused and united operation of "mind" and "heart"—dialectic and imagination—in a supremely great genius. His writings have more than once been called the most perfect prose the world has ever seen. Whether that highest praise be granted to them or not, the consensus of literary judgment would put them well up toward the top of creative literature. And throughout their whole range they exhibit the work of a great intellect that was able to bring to bear the gathered wisdom of the entire philosophical movement in Greece from Thales to Socrates. But none the less they show in a rare and marvelous degree those peculiar mystical and poetic traits that attach to the deeper subterranean life of a great genius. J. A. Stewart has admirably studied this latter side of Plato's genius in his *Myths of Plato*,

and he maintains that Plato's peculiar power and fascination lie in his ability to throw the reader into what he calls "transcendental states" of mind, which, for Professor Stewart, is precisely the function of all inspired poetry. These transcendental states of mind are states in which one rises above mere "thinking" and *contemplates* reality as though its real presence were experimentally attained.

What is true of Plato, is also true in a marked degree in the writings of the great Hebrew prophets, the culmination being reached, I think, in the suffering servant passages of the great anonymous prophet. They are the "revealers" par excellence of their race. They brought to light a fresh and unique interpretation of God. But they did not arrive at their goal by logical and dialectic proceedings alone. They were predominantly of the mystical or poetic type. They had "flashes," "openings," "incursions," "upwellings," which seemed *given* to them from beyond. They were, however, not "automatic" instruments, they were not "frenzied" speakers, or "oracular" mouthpieces. They were able to raise the religion of Israel to a new level because they united and bridged the two aspects of the mind, the critical, the historical, the intelligent, aspect, with the extraordinary functioning of the submerged life within them.

They felt that their own interior deeps were in contact with deeps beyond themselves, that they brought forth a more than human wisdom. They believed, in other words, that they were "inspired," and that they spoke

and wrote as "revealers." The "prophet-element" is even more striking in the New Testament than in the Old. St. Paul and St. John, I personally think, represent the highest type of literary "inspired revealer," and, once more, we have in them a perfect union of the thought-level with those upsurging processes which carry the writer beyond himself. The whole being operates in indivisible unity and the completely unified person appears to be, and feels himself to be, the responsive organ of the living Spirit.

How far and how truly their inspiration enables them and the other revealers of the ages to reveal God is a question that can receive no quick and easy answer. We are here in the same situation with this problem as with the general problem of the expression of beauty and truth. There is no other way for creative truth and beauty to be revealed except through gifted persons who can become the organs of it, and there is no way by which the life of God can break into manifestation except through persons who can in a peculiar way become the organs of His Spirit. It seems to me clearly evident that those persons of the *genius class* who succeed in uniting in one indivisible self rare intellectual gifts with unusual fecundity of the interior life become, or at least have become in the past, the supreme revealers of God, the best and most complete organs of the Spirit.

CHAPTER VIII

SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS FROM THE NATURE OF EXPERIENCE

THE word "spiritual" has usually meant anything that the user of the word has wished to have it mean. It has been a kind of gear shift by which one could go high or go low or swing into neutral as one's fancies ran. All vocabularies have words of convenient looseness into which almost any content may be poured. Words of this type sweep the heartstrings, stir the blood and raise the emotional tone, now with one significance and now again with another, as the words become charged from within with a meaning peculiar to the individual's total stock of ideas. "Mesopotamia" is not the only "blessed word" that possesses the quality of stirring the interior deeps. The word "spiritual" has always set certain persons a-tingle with a mysterious spell of hidden meanings, as the word "Pentecost" also does.

This looseness, vagueness and tingle of mystery are, from my point of view, a disadvantage rather than an asset in the use of words, and I want to hasten toward a definition of "spiritual" that will enable me to employ the word quite intelligently and specifically rather than

for the purpose of quickening the pulse. Our everyday experience reveals plainly enough to us a stream of thought and interpretation busied with our world of external facts and events. The "facts and events" themselves may for the moment be considered without further discussion to be *real* in their own right, to be external to us as beholders and to be part of a stubborn world-order which does not owe its existence solely to our thinking. But the flow of "thought and interpretation" in the mind of the beholder seems obviously to belong to a different order of reality from that stubborn external realm. It is our very own personal reaction made to something "out there." The interpreter is *inward* in a sense in which the so-called "facts" and "events" are not. It is something mental; it belongs to the operation of mind, whatever that may in the end turn out to be. The interpretation never can be brought out into the open and looked at in the same way as we observe the facts and events which confront us. The so-called facts and events belong to a world of common group experience, they are there for a hundred persons to see, they conform to methods of exact description, they can be tested and verified in well-known ways, but the inward, mental interpretation, without which no experience has any meaning or significance, is there for one only, it is private, personal, peculiar to me, and "windowless" as far as any other beholder is concerned. This private, mental, personal, inner process of interpretation of our external facts and events—this con-

sciousness of meaning and significance—belongs to a “spiritual order.” It is not the shifting of masses or the play of physical energies, it is a process of thought with the incontrovertible feeling attaching to it that it belongs to a persistent *me*, that is active in the thinking. It may very well be a fact that the process of thinking is linked up with physical processes of a brain cortex that is composed of matter, of masses and motions and energies, but thinking in its essential aspects is wholly other than physical processes and can be reduced to nothing but itself. It can be dealt with properly only in terms of what it reveals itself to be, and that is in terms of ideas and insights and meanings and significance and purpose, all of which are “spiritual” aspects, since they involve *mind* and can be truly known only from within.

I am not in any sense discounting the importance of that solid stubborn external material world with which we have constant commerce, nor do I intend to imply that “matter” or “material” things are of a low and ignoble order. I hold very different views from that old gnostic, dualistic attitude. All that I am concerned to claim for the moment is that we cannot have any external world, material or otherwise, without making our own *interpretation* of the series of facts and events that compose that outside world for us, and that the “interpretation” is not one of the “events.” It belongs to a different order from the events which we describe as external and material, for if they are “external” and “material,” they are so *for us*. They are something that

can be, and can be known, only where mind is operating, only where "meanings" and "interpretations" are experienced. The *mind* of the observer must all the time be reckoned with as an essential feature in the knowledge of facts and events. What may be granted as seemingly a mere physical fact before the experience occurred, is now, through the experience, lifted up, sublimated, interfused with meaning and brought over into a different order of reality—namely into a spiritual order. We can think (*i.e.*, think clearly) only by means of ideas which are communicable thoughts, and we can interpret our world to ourselves and to others only through ideas, charged with meaning. The "world" is thus all the time submitting to the mediation of ideas. If we grant, as the common-sense man does, that the physical order has an existence of its own, we must, nevertheless, hold that the world for us, the world that is crammed with meaning and significance, has passed through the alchemy of an interpreting mind, which is of another order of level from any kind of physical process, even a brain process.

"Spiritual" may mean, and no doubt should mean, much more than that inward interpretation of ours, plus the self-conscious interpreter, but in any case that inward testimony to another order of reality is a sure starting point in the direction of something that may be called "spiritual." There is no argument by which anyone can make this unique inward mental interpretation of meaning and significance over into an outward con-

course of atoms and physical energies, for to do *that* is still to *interpret*, and the interpretation remains as before a unique inward event, which must be experienced in order to be.

We are prone to forget what an enormous factor interpretation is in our most ordinary everyday experience, even in the most elementary processes of it. It *seems* as though objects of sense were "presented" to us full-formed and ready-made. That naïve belief has had a long history in the primary faiths of the race, but it has no leg to stand on and it proves to be thoroughly unsubstantial, as soon as it is submitted to a searching critical examination. The process of interpretation is so nearly instantaneous that the object perceived seems to be "impressed" upon us and to be "given" to us without any active coöperation on our part, as a seal is impressed on wax. And we constantly talk of "impressions" as though they were stamped in.

As a matter of fact, the raw material which comes to us through sense in any experience, constitutes only a minute aspect of the total perception. The color patch on the retina, the auditory stimulus, the contact of finger tips, are "signs" to us which we instantly proceed to interpret in terms of association and memory. If we lost our memory and our associations we should forthwith lose our objects, and our world would slip away from us into sheer fog, mere "grins without any face." Our habit-formed tendency to *act* in a characteristic way in response to the sense stimulus is another important fac-

tor in our interpretation. As Professor Royce happily puts it: "Whoever believes himself to have a correct general idea of a tiger merely because he has an image of a tiger, has only to ask himself whether his general idea of a tiger is such as to permit him to believe that when you meet a tiger you pat him on the head and ask him to give you his paw."¹

Most important of all the factors in our interpretation of the objects of sense is, I think, our unescapable tendency to interpret in terms of a universal concept. A particular object is not perceived by us as a concrete thing until its meaning is apprehended and clarified to our mind through the universal class to which it belongs and by which we name it. If we fail to classify and name an object we fail to perceive it. In other words, perception and conception cannot be separated into two temporal stages, or reduced to two different levels, for neither process can go on without the other, and both are always involved in our interpretation of any fact or any event which we experience.

One of the most interesting features of our human life is the way we accumulate an ever-growing stock of memory material by which we interpret in instantaneous fashion all our new experiences. This has been technically called the formation of an "apperceptions-mass." It has also been called the creation of a "psychological climate." It is in any case the cumulative building up of a stock of associations, of mental fringes, a halo of re-

¹ Royce, *Outlines of Psychology*, p. 289.

lations, through which we organize and translate the "signs" and interpret the tiny mosaics of sense. The important point to note is the fact that our outside world is always seen through and colored by a stock of interpretation-material, which is the very stuff of our inward self, an essential feature of our *spiritual me* and without which there could be no "knowledge" for us at all.

The expert scientist, for instance, meets every new fact which he is studying with an immense accumulated background of theory, hypothesis; formula and body of laws and principles, which at once makes the said "fact" wholly different for him from what it would be for a rural observer on the farm with no such accumulation of "inside material." This slow accumulation of "meanings" for an observant mind is, I am insisting, a different order of reality from the world of space and matter. The experience of the observer always introduces into the order of events a novel and unique aspect. The "raw," "brute" physical processes as they are in themselves, may perhaps (if one wishes to think so) roll on relentlessly with the push or pull of blind forces that have been operating for millions of years in unalterable "causal links," but the moment I come on the scene and *apprehend* the external fact, I interpret it in the light of my stock of ideas—my interpretation-material—and in doing *that* I produce something that never was before. My reaction has an element of novelty. It is unique. The inside situation now counts for something

and nobody else would think or could think of the event, just now occurring, precisely as I think about it. The inside world of the spiritual order gets its innings here and makes its unique contribution and there is no grade of knowledge possible without that contribution of uniqueness, without that apprehension of meaning.

Not only do we interpret our sense mosaics through a stock of "apperception-material," but all our thinking as well, even when it is most abstract, emerges out of a mental background within us which we have slowly accumulated. Ask a person, for instance, whether he believes in the "freedom of the will" or not, and instantly his answer begins to take shape from his background theory or underlying conception of the universe as a whole, and the place of man's mind in the immense congeries of things. Every thought in the unfolding process of his interpretation of his position springs up out of his inside mental world which the years have been building, and that "inside world" is just as real as crowbars or railroad trains are, though it obviously is a different order of reality.

It is strange how little we concern ourselves with this subsoil realm of our thinking. We somehow suppose that "ideas" are ready-made things, like the old-fashioned view of "perceived objects." We got them, we assume, from somebody, or somewhere, or God gave them to us, or they were innate. What really happens is that these ideas of ours emerge out of a deeper, inclusive, mental life within us which we have been

accumulating ever since we greeted our entrance into life with our first bitter cry of cold and fear. Always, no doubt, there is a physical basis involved in this situation, but just as certainly there is a psychic core without which none of our interpretative experiences happens or could happen. The quality and richness of the subsoil life is a matter of first importance and will some day be so regarded by all good educators, but I am satisfied now with the insistence that this deep region in us decidedly belongs on our "inside" map and entitles us to be enrolled as spiritual beings in a way that we could not be, if we had only passing flashes of uninterpreted thought, devoid of meaning.

We should do well in this connection to note that we become experts in any field by this same method of slow accumulation of insight and judgment. William James says: "We become saints in the moral, and authorities and experts in the practical and scientific spheres, by so many separate acts and hours of work." So we do, but we acquire wisdom and judgment because we are piling up a deep subsoil world within like the masses of coral insects that in the end make the visible island reef appear. "Wisdom and judgment" are spiritual operations, not molecular processes, and we get nowhere until we pass over from the one order of reality to the other.

What are we doing all the time as we pile up this interior stock of expert wisdom and judgment? We are building the core and nucleus of a new and unique per-

sonal self. Once, in our primitive stage, we should have gazed helplessly at the confusing maze of things and events with no more insight of solution than a ruminating cow would have had. Now, however, with our subsoil wealth we know just what to do and what to say when confronted with a situation. The multitudinous threads that seem so confusing are pulled together, order comes out of chaos. The solution seems to roll out into consciousness ready-made. We rise superior to the situation. We know what it *means*. How do we know? Because we have slowly built up a mental world within which holds the key. We bring the cumulative insights and constructive power of an inclusive mind to play on the maze of things and events.

The situation becomes more luminous for our spiritual trails when we proceed to consider the function that *ideals* play in shaping life and thought, character and action. I mean by an "ideal" that *forward-looking and expectant attitude of mind* that characterizes anyone who has attained to the status of a person. We might conceivably have been beings that could merely save up and conserve the past and use our memory experiences of the past to interpret present events, but without any capacity to think beyond or transcend what has been already known and verified. Such beings would be utterly unlike our present selves, so utterly unlike us that we should be hopelessly "lost" if we were suddenly "translated" into the skin and corporeal bulk of such a limited and truncated being as that.

Our "life" lies all the time in what is before us. We roll up our past and from it by the alchemy of mind we create a vision of something that never *was* before and perhaps never could be without this unique vision of ours. This expectant attitude is one of the most miraculous aspects of our human nature. Whatever kingdoms of God we build, we build them, as we do our bridges over great rivers, because we see a possible more yet that may be, in advance of what is. We travel on ahead of the world of fact and construct a possible event by mental prevision, which we next proceed to translate from mental insight into what we call a "real event."

This trait is not something rare, not something peculiar to dreamers and idealists. There is no person living, from the tramp who is forecasting his next meal of broken victuals up to the purest saint on earth who is aspiring to attain a redeemed inward nature wholly free from all defilements of sin, who is not expectantly traveling on ahead of all achievements and attainments that now *are*. All victories are won within the soul before they become actual conquests in the world of fact. Sometimes our ideals are hardly more than feeble forecasts beyond a present good and again sometimes they are deep ground-swell purposes that influence almost every decision of life and silently pull, like the moon on the tides, all the events that touch and concern us in the direction of our manifest destiny. It is a wise person who absolutely knows what he *wants*, but many of us who could not wholly formulate and

utter what it is that we want are none the less moving forward toward a goal that is inwardly glimpsed and dimly visioned, and whether we consciously know it or not the expectant attitude is all the time operating as a creative factor in our life decisions. The new poet laureate has expressed with fine feeling the grip and pull of this invisible force:

They died (uncouthly most) in foreign lands
For some idea, but dimly understood,
Of an English city *never built by hands*
Which love of England prompted and made good.

In no other way, perhaps, are our ideals more momentarily influential upon us than as the latent organizing power in our supreme loyalties. Loyalties are very complex creations. They have received heavy contributions from instincts and emotions. In fact, they could not be effectively formed out of pure rationality. The driving force of any loyalty springs in large measure from instinctive roots. But the rational mind also has been busy, otherwise there would be no loyalty. Instinctive and emotional tendencies have been drawn together into a unifying system of interest with as many strands as an Æolian harp. The tendencies have not only been "drawn together and unified." They have been suffused, sublimated and lifted up to a new level by an ideal vision and an expectant purpose. A full-fledged loyalty *holds* like adamant. It carries the possessor of it directly opposite to the line of least resistance. No rugged steep ascent is too hard and difficult if the vision of loyalty

sees the path to lie in that direction. It defies all laws of survival. It burns its way through to its goal without any regard to safety. It may be a loyalty to family, or to clan or to some person who is dearer than life. Or it may be loyalty to one's nation as it is interpreted in the light of its ideal possibilities, or it may be loyalty to eternal truth or to the invisible Church or to a categorical imperative of duty in the inmost sanctuary of the soul. In every case, the thing that matters is the "imaginative dominion over experience." The mind through its idealizing expansions has traveled on ahead of actual fact and has seen something that ought to be which it proceeds to create and make real.

Here once more realities of a different order from those that constitute the physical world are in evidence and *count* immensely, though they are imponderable. This world of inner loyalties is very slowly built and could not be built at all without those natural "forces of instinct and emotion" which St. Paul would have called the forces of the "flesh," forces that had no doubt an animal origin and are tied up to "matter." But somehow, again, the alchemy of mind has come into play and has transmuted what was raw material stuff into the unique substance of a spiritual order. Pure unalloyed mind as a thing apart is nowhere discovered or discoverable. Mind is always revealed in and through "something other," as Plato would say. Wherever we are working for ends that are unseen but forecast, wherever we are building here on earth "cities with foundations,"

that just now were only heavenly visions, we are drawing upon a unique world within, which we have been slowly creating by the expanding processes of our mind, through its conquest over instinct and emotion and "the heavy and weary weight of all this unintelligible world." The moral and social structure of the world is all the time being rebuilt and reshaped by expectant visions and by ideal loyalties which have their being in our inside realm of the spiritual order. That it has a physical basis is, of course, readily granted, but molecular processes, however refined and sublimated, give us no comprehensive clue to a solution when our problem is a mental and spiritual one.

When we pass over to the sphere of æsthetic enjoyment and appreciation there is a large element of undifferentiated feeling fused in with our sense perception and our ideas of beauty and form and harmony. "Appreciation" is a decidedly different type of process from that of "knowledge," *i.e.*, knowledge in terms of cause and description. The inward, subjective, personal factor is much larger in appreciation than it is in knowledge, as we generally use that term. Appreciation lacks the universal and compelling power of knowledge. Knowledge seems to be irresistible and inevitable, or, as the Stoics used to say, it "drags us by the hair." Appreciation, like the knowledge of fact, involves of course an element that comes through sense, but the unifying and creative power of the mind plays a rôle in the former case quite out of proportion to what happens in the latter case.

We have a larger range of free play. A flower may "give thoughts that do lie too deep for tears" to one person while it leaves the next comer wholly unmoved. What the beholder brings to the scene is fully as important as the "scene itself." We perceive in the field of beauty in large measure what we have already *pre-perceived* in our minds.

This principle of pre-perception operates, to some extent, as we have seen, in all fields of experience, but it rises to a new level when we go over the line from knowledge of description to the appreciation of what is beautiful. Æsthetic taste has no such rigid categories of experience as knowledge has. "The tender grace of a day that is dead" can be *felt*, can have a world of meaning, for one who is missing "the touch of a vanished hand," but there is no way known to man by which that situation can be described through exact categories which fit everybody's mind.

But here in the field of appreciation no less than in the processes of exact knowledge, there is a steady growth and creation of insight and judgment that become in the end authoritative and almost infallible. We pile up a psychic core of apperceptive wisdom. Once more there is a cumulative process of mind-building. Out of crude responses to color and sound in the early primitive stage of life the individual rises to a refined enjoyment of unities born out of divergence, coöperative harmonies that triumph over endless difference, and

fusions of multitudinous forms and varieties into integrated wholes that *feel as though they were exactly as they ought to be*. That can happen only through the formation of an inward power of personality that at last operates instantaneously in the presence of beautiful objects. There is something within which makes all the difference. The feeling-element is highly developed, as I have said, the imaginative power is greatly enlarged but with these aspects are also joined an important capacity of insight and judgment and an ability to hold many items together in one unbroken totality, the synoptic or *totum simul* type of experience. Without these gifts and traits of organizing wholes æsthetic culture would be impossible. All these features when they are present are due to the gradual accumulation of an appreciative self that is rich with the gains of long experience and which is essentially of a spiritual order.

An English writer, W. Tudor Jones, in his valuable book on *The Reality of the Idea of God*, has well expressed this view. He says:

The æsthetic view of the world often brings into existence and favours the growth of dormant qualities which may become great, deep and permanent in human nature. Feelings of oneness with the universe, of joy, trust, hope and faith are actually brought into existence within the experience. It is doubtful whether they could be brought into existence without the presence of a physical universe stamping something of its intuitive, primal significance on man. Whenever such impressions are made a change is produced in human experience.*

* W. Tudor Jones, p. 28.

What this writer is contending for is not only that we build up within ourselves a spiritual order of reality but that the universe itself in its deepest aspects is of such a nature that it coöperates with us in producing this type of inward being that corresponds in essence to its own fundamental spiritual nature. We do not *impose* something "spiritual" upon a universe which is in its own nature non-spiritual. The "spiritual" is not foreign to the "natural." On the contrary, the natural is always potentially spiritual and our minds find everywhere material to feed upon which can be transmuted into the spiritual. The point of my emphasis, however, is to the effect that our spiritual world within is being slowly builded and that it is an order of reality that is constantly revealed, not only in our states of knowledge but in our appreciation and enjoyment of beauty as well. The noble word reason, in its proper meaning, applies as truly to the one of these aspects of our life as it does to the other.

One of the most unique things about our finite human life is surely the religious response which we make to unseen realities. It is just that attitude in us which would most completely puzzle the traditional visitor from Mars, assuming that the Martians are what the Gnostics used to call "hylic men," *i.e.*, men without any spiritual traits whatever. It is always extremely difficult—in fact it seems impossible—to account for religion of a spiritual order when one starts with the assumption that men are sheer "hylic" beings, what the

theologians used to call "mere men." That old eighteenth-century guess that religion owes its origin to the crafty work of rulers and priests, who invented it as a scheme and means of human control, is so completely exploded that no one with historical insight is likely to make that guess again.

Whether religion is a pathway to reality or not, there seems at least no question that its springs lie deep down in the elemental nature of human life itself. It is not something foisted off on man by clever manipulators. It is a response as native to his being as is his unpredictable response to beauty or to harmony. There may conceivably be "hylic men." I have seen dangerously close approaches to the "hylic." But it is more probable that where the religious attitude seems lacking the absence of it is due to the excessive cultivation of the theoretic or the practical side of life and to the starving out of potential spiritual aptitudes.

Whenever religion is found in its loftiest development, and in its richest types, it seems to be a vital correspondence with reality and we may safely assume that worshipers have felt that way about it in all ages. It heightens the whole value of life and it seems like the most complete form of life-adjustment that man knows. The consciousness of objective reality is as great in moments of joyous worship or of intense mystical experience as it ever is when we are beholding beauty or enjoying harmony, and the reality aspect often rises to a height as great as in any form of sense-experience.

The conviction that one is having direct dealings with realities beyond himself in his highest religious moments is frequently as clear and as compelling as is the conviction that something beyond the beholder is there when he is seeing a mountain. Religion has almost certainly lived and flourished not on the transmitted "deposits" of a dead past, but on the vivid testimony of the quick and vital souls of men who somehow have succeeded in achieving present correspondence with a Life greater than their own.

This unique response of religion to what is felt to be a real beyond, like all our other fundamental reactions, roots back into deep-lying instincts and emotions, though there is apparently no one original religious instinct. It is not a sound psychological fact that "fear has created the gods," as Lucretius thought, but fear and those kindred instinctive tendencies, awe and dread, mystery and reverence, together with wonder, curiosity and what Professor Otto calls a "numinous attitude" have always been underlying or embedded native springs to religion. But here, as in the case with loyalties and appreciations, the instinctive and emotional springs are gradually lifted up, transfused and recreated through the slow accumulation of ideas and ideals in the unfolding process of experience. It has seemed to some interpreters of religion that it is essentially intellectual—something due to man's rationalistic outlook. That view is almost certainly one-sided, but it is probably nearer the truth than is the attempt to base reli-

gion *wholly* on the instinctive or volitional side of human nature. Religion, when it comes to ripeness and complete development, gathers up all the essential aspects of man's nature, instincts, emotions, intellect and will. It is an immense unifying and integrative power and, like the highest loyalties of life, it holds like adamant and carries one forward to goals as though nothing else mattered.

Once more we must call attention especially to the fact that religious experience, peculiarly so where it is vital and first-hand, rolls up and accumulates, step by step, a central stock of spiritual insight and wisdom. Just as we gather our "apperceiving mass" for the interpretation of new sense data, and as we build up our expert wisdom in matters of æsthetic taste and judgment, so, too, we form within ourselves a spiritual core of life that is rich with the gathered wisdom of years of correspondence with God. Single flashes of insight may be illusory, sudden "inrushes" may be due to a temporary subjective state, a sporadic ecstasy may be a sign of some abnormal trait, but the slow sifting and testing processes of a life of correspondence with a wider and deeper environment than the physical one, gradually build up within the soul a pretty reliable body of expert wisdom which gives the mind of the religious man confidence that he is dealing with a More of reality kindred to and not utterly unlike his own essential nature—"a Beyond that is akin." A moral expert sees the eternal significance of his deed by an intuition as sure as the

mathematician's flair for a curve that completes a given arc. A person who has had long experience in interpreting the lines of character in a life feels as sure of his insight as though he were plotting out the orbit of a planet. Somewhat so the great mystics feel the illumination of a conviction within their souls based on the experiences of a lifetime, that their little lives are rounded by an unseen world of the Spirit, as the tiny islands of the Pacific are environed by the waters of the sea.

All knowledge that reaches beyond the momentary and particular and *actually apprehends truth and reality* implies the existence of a much wider range of spiritual Life than that of the finite knower. There must be a spiritual Environment in coöperative accord with the mind that is able to say, *I know*. Finite human experience always presupposes more than consciously appears in the experience itself. To know that a truth is universally and eternally true implies much more than the temporary state of mind in which the knowledge occurs. The consciousness of the moment, to begin with, must have its place in a wider setting of before and after. There must be an accumulation of past experience, preserved in the present, with, at the same time, a reference to an anticipated future. Only a mind inclusive enough to look back upon the original experience, to hold it in comparison and contrast with the facts that give it verification, and to acknowledge its coherence with permanent reality can demonstrate and maintain a

knowledge of truth. It is not an animal function; it belongs only to beings that possess what the Greeks called *nous*, spiritual capacity. Something more than a mind of the thin knife-edge type of momentary experience is necessary before one can talk, except in parrot fashion, of truth, or of beauty or of goodness.

But still more than *that* is involved in this mighty business. Minds that know cannot operate in a vacuum. They cannot spin experiences like a spider out of their own substance. The reality of the object is just as essential as the reality of the subject. At every step the mind that knows and interprets truth is embedded in and correlated with something more than itself. It is in coöperative response with objective reality of some sort.

Not long ago a worthy gentleman in Philadelphia was visiting an insane asylum. In it he found an inmate who was busily engaged in painting a picture on an extensive canvas, dipping his dry brush into an empty paint can. The gentleman asked the inmate what he was painting. "The children of Israel crossing the Red Sea," came the answer. "Where is the Red Sea?" "Oh, that has rolled back," was the quick reply. "Well, where are the children of Israel?" "They have gone on." "Where, then, are the Egyptians?" "Oh, they have not come up yet."

That featureless portrayal of a famous historical scene is no more insane than is the expectation that a finite mind can build its world of time and space, of form and order, of coherence and permanence, of beauty

and sublimity, out of its own subjective strivings. The universe is rational and significant. It fits the knowing mind as a glove fits a hand. Things out there are understandable, intelligible. They come under categories of the mind. They organize into wholes. They obey universal principles. They conform to *must be so*. Experience of our type at every point is dealing with *reality*. There is some kind of foundational reality that under-spans our minds which know, and that rich world which supplies us with the material of our knowledge and with the filling for our aims and ideals of life. There are everywhere implications of

A Spirit that impels all thinking things,
All objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

CHAPTER IX

THE IMMANENCE OF GOD

THE direction of the quest for God has in our times turned emphatically from outside in space to the realm of the spirit within man. This change of direction is not a sudden and complete revolution in thought, for there have always been some persons who have had the conviction that God is to be found within rather than without, that He is here rather than in some remote realm. In all periods of man's intensive travail for truth there have been some seekers who have had at least a dim surmise that we have our dealings with a pervasive and deeply interfused Spirit rather than with an absentee Being. All the major religions of the world have borne some testimony, however feeble, to the fact and the presence of an indwelling and resident Life, with whom we are kin and who comes into communion with man's spirit. The Stoic movement often gave a crude and confused account of the indwelling *Pneuma*, or *Logos*, the Soul of the world, but the movement succeeded in carrying to all Western lands a confession of faith in an omnipresent Spirit, a faith which is nobly expressed in the 139th Psalm, "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there

shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

But the doctrine of the Spirit was raised by St. Paul to an entirely new level and to a new intensity, and it was, again, taken up by St. John and carried by him to its loftiest ancient expression. There is, no doubt, a Stoic influence apparent in both of these apostolic interpreters, but it was almost certainly an unconscious influence and that strand of Stoic thought is so completely outweighed by a mighty personal experience of spiritual energies that the interpretation becomes at once unique and original.

The famous words from St. Paul's sermon on the Areopagus: "In God we live and move and are," have a distinct Stoic quality and they are followed almost immediately by a quotation from a Stoic poet, but the moment we turn to the great passages in the Epistles that speak of the Work of the Spirit, the Life of the Spirit, the Power of the Spirit, we quickly discover that we have left Stoic levels of thought far behind. Who else would have dared to say: "In Him we are builded together into a holy temple for a habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. ii:21). St. John's outlook is at many points quite different from St. Paul's and the former writer expresses his faith in a unique form, though they have much in common. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Johannine conception of the Spirit of Truth is one of the most wonderful interpretations that anyone has proclaimed anywhere at any

time, for it rises to the clear and positive insight that God Himself is essentially Spirit, and that all true worship must be *real and spiritual*—"in Spirit and in Truth."

But in spite of this exalted teaching at the headwaters of the Christian stream, the prevailing tendency in the history of Western Christianity has been in the direction of a distinctly transcendent conception of God. Wherever the influence of Aristotle was effective on Christian thought it was quite natural for God to be conceived of as remote and absentee, and the Jewish thought of God as Creator working from the outside also pointed in the same direction. A combination of powerful movements of thought during the first three centuries sharply emphasized the dualistic aspects of the universe. It became the fashion to think of an undivine world here below and a far-away God beyond the seven circles who could effect His purposes for this lower realm only by miraculous interposition and by interruption of the natural order of things. The great controlling systems of Christian thought were formed and built around that basic idea.

And yet there were all the way down the line of historical Christianity frequent outbursts of pentecostal faith and fervor. Something like the experience that occurred in the upper room fifty days after the Crucifixion has swept more than once over the lives of smaller or larger groups of believers, and whenever the experience occurred it gave the groups assurance that God was

here as Spirit and not a remote Sovereign in the sky. St. Paul's personal testimony, and St. John's spiritual interpretation, have been quick and powerful influences in all centuries, however dark and medieval, and Pentecosts have been repeated with fresh outbursts of enthusiasm and kindled fire. A mystical writer in the twelfth century announced the beginning of the *eternal Gospel*, by which he meant the good news that God is Spirit and works as Spirit directly on men's lives, and not alone through ecclesiastical channels.

The modern emphasis on the immanence of God is therefore not something new and revolutionary. What has happened is that this view is no longer a rare exception, or an occasional sporadic outbreak of fervid experience. There has come through a fusion of many lines of thought a well-ordered interpretation of the universe that is essentially *immanentist*. That does not mean that God is swallowed up and lost in the vast congeries of things. It does not imply that He is a mighty Pan, or the Allness of the All. It does not blur His reality or thin it away to a mere energy or driving power or blind urge, for Mind, or Spirit, by its essential nature is transcendent as well as immanent. Whenever spirit appears, even in the finite form of our own personal minds, it always outreaches and goes beyond its given expression and embodiment. We always transcend ourselves. We always live beyond our margins. We leap beyond anything that *is*—the here and now—and we are by the necessity of our being concerned with a

more yet that ought to be. A God who is immanent, if He is to be thought of as Spirit, is just as certainly transcendent. A God who is the foundational Life of our lives must be the eternal guarantor of all that can be or that ought to be as well as of all that is. He must be both within us and beyond us, within the world and beyond it, in the midst of time and yet beyond it.

Let us now endeavor to think out our connection with God as immanent Spirit.

Few religious problems in man's long history have received so much effort of thought as has the formulated doctrine of the Trinity. It is in its sphere as great an achievement of genius as was the creation of the Gothic cathedrals of Europe. The time and labor and genius bestowed upon its elucidation might, if turned in other channels, almost have rebuilt the social fabric of humanity. I am not inclined, however, to regret that so much pains was taken to clarify the essential nature of God. It was in the main, I humbly think, a problem worth all the effort it has taken. I only regret that so little clarity and such meager practical results have been achieved by all these ages of agonizing speculation. The creeds of the churches bear quiet witness to the long travail of thought, but the rank and file of those who compose the communions of Christendom can point to very little in their actual thought of God that has been contributed to their mental insight by these centuries of fierce debate. And of all the aspects of the endless trinitarian problem the one that has received the least

measure of clarity and elucidation is the nature of the Spirit. The creeds are almost silent on this point, or go no farther than to say: "And I believe in the Holy Ghost." Individual interpreters of the Holy Spirit have added a little increment to the growing wisdom. Some excellent studies have been made by modern writers, but even so we have thus far hardly got beyond the fringes of what ought to be the central topic of religious thought.

There has been some careful work done in recent times on the conception of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, especially in the wisdom literature and in apocalyptic literature. C. Anderson Scott has given us an admirable article on "What Happened at Pentecost," in Canon Streeter's important volume entitled *The Spirit*, and the nineteen hundredth anniversary of Pentecost has seen a number of vital books appear on the operation of the Spirit. There are sound and scholarly contributions available on the conception of the Spirit as found in St. Paul and in the Johannine writings. What the modern reader needs most is an enlightening study of the Spirit of God as revealed in immediate relation to our finite human spirits. I shall keep the divine-human relation as revealed within in the lives of men at the center of consideration in this chapter. It has been customary in the past to begin above, with a dogmatic definition of the ultimate nature of God and to interpret the Spirit as the "procession" outward and downward of the Life and Love of God as defined.

I shall be inclined to begin my account here below, where we actually live, and to move upward step by step toward that great inclusive Life that explains our highest aspects and that completes us. The soundest method is to start with the indubitable facts of our own experience and to discover what is implied by them.

We need to learn how to think of God as a resident presence coöperating vitally with us and in us here and now as an Emmanuel God, and at the same time we need just as urgently to see how our human lives can and do open out into a Beyond within ourselves. Almost every person who has attained to a mature spiritual life has had experiences which convinced him, at least in high moments, that he was *more than himself*. Help comes from somewhere and enables us to do what we had always thought could not be done. We find somewhere power to stand the universe when its water-spouts are let loose and even when they have gone over us. We discover strength from beyond our own stock of resources in the midst of our crises.

We do not know how far our own margins of being reach. We cannot completely map the full area that properly belongs to *us*. No one can with certainty draw the boundary between himself and the beyond himself, any more than we can tell where the tidal river ends and the ocean begins, but we unmistakably feel on occasions that tides from beyond our own margins sweep into us and refresh us.

Charles Bennett has happily told us of persons who,

"in the conscious presence of the perils of life know themselves secure, and who as they squarely confront evil, know that it is not the final word."¹ Another friend of mine—now lamentably, as is the case also with Charles Bennett, no longer with us—has very well stated this important fact of life as follows: "Only when we discover that there is an inexhaustible reservoir of moral power not of ourselves but accessible to us, do we rise on stepping stones of our dead selves to higher things. It is this well-spring of moral energy beyond himself, of which he may partake, that makes a man capable of achieving the superhuman."² We want to know more about "this inexhaustible reservoir of moral power." We need more light about this Beyond by which we confront the perils of life.

We are only now, after four centuries, gradually becoming aware of the spiritual consequences of the revolutionary discoveries made by Copernicus and his scientific followers. For untold ages, before the Polish monk in 1543 upset the ancient theory of the celestial revolutions, the sky was believed to be a crystalline dome with many concentric layers, all of which turned around the central earth, carrying along in unvarying regularity the sun and moon and stars which were supposed to be set into one or the other of these rotating domes. The planets wandered about with considerable latitude and consequently gave the suggestion which led

¹ Bennett, *A Philosophical Study of Mysticism*, p. 161.

² George Cross, *Christian Salvation*, p. 8.

Copernicus to his startling conclusion. The occasional comets which swept the sky seemed to conform to no system at all and quite naturally produced fright and terror. They exhibited the very height of irrationality, something in the sky that did not obey the order and harmony of the heavenly realm. The falling meteors, too, suggested revolt and disobedience in the upper regions. The story of the fall of Lucifer and the war in heaven, told in the most vivid style and in faultless poetry in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, goes back in its original form to the imaginative reaction in the popular mind to the downward plunge of a falling meteor, which appeared to break away from the divine order and to leave its heavenly abode forever:

From morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day; and with the setting sun
Dropped from the zenith like a falling star.

This ancient system of thought furnished a happy solution of many of the central problems of religion. The sky, with its perfect order and unvarying regularity, except in the above-mentioned instances of seeming variation or rebellion, appeared to the ancient world to be the vestibule of the spiritual realm. Above the beauty and the glory of the highest sky-dome was thought to be the pure region where God dwelt in supreme majesty. The empyrean beyond the revolving spheres was naturally conceived to be the eternal home of the saints of all ages, and all the imagery of heaven in hymns and

poetry is a pictorial creation which conforms to this general scheme of thought. In short, the basic structure of religious conception throughout almost the entire history of the race has been built around this sky theory. A great many of the words in the spiritual vocabulary of the widespread Aryan family are words that originally had to do with the *sky*, and we still go on using the word "heavenly" as though it were synonymous with "divine."

Slowly these last four hundred years of astronomical research have forced us to realize that there is no crystal-dome above our heads. There is no localized dwelling place for God or for the saints above the sky. The "empyrean" is a creation of imagination. The region *up there* is no more pure or perfect than the region down here. Stars, planets, suns and moons are just as crudely material in construction as is the earth on which we tread, or as is the stuff of which our bodies are made.

Twinkle, twinkle little star,
I need not wonder what you are;
For seen by spectroscopic ken
You're helium and hydrogen.

While we are "looking up" for our sky the earth dwellers in the antipodes are looking in precisely the opposite direction for their sky. Their up is our down.

We have plainly enough outgrown the imagery of the sky for our spiritual realities, and yet we have formed no substitute for it. We know in theory that God is not to be found in any peculiar or essential way by an ascent

into the sky. Most of us have an intellectual insight that the spiritual heaven of our aspirations is not a space-occupying place at the top of the crystal canopy over our heads, but we go on using the old terminology, because we have no substitute for it. We teach our children to think of God and of heaven in terms of the sky, and we make little progress toward working out a new system of thought or toward creating new imagery that will better fit the facts of life and experience as they actually are.

One reason for the breakdown of the faith of so many high-minded and serious-minded persons in the present time is the collapse of the *imagery* through which they had at an earlier stage of their lives done all their religious thinking. That imagery has lost its meaning for them and they have found no other form for their creative imagination to work through. It is almost impossible to overestimate the part which pictorial imagery plays in the early life of the child, as well as in the primitive stage of the race, and when the pictorial imagery that has been acquired ceases to correspond to *reality* there is always serious trouble to be expected. That situation has now arrived.

There is no harm in continuing to talk of "sunrise" and "sunset," for when we use those ancient terms we always subconsciously interpret the words to mean that the earth moves rather than the sun. But when we pass over into our religious vocabulary, we have not yet made the adjustment, and we have formed no deeper mean-

ings by which to reinterpret to our minds the old words "sky" and "heaven" as the dwelling place of God and His family of saints. Too often we are left without any reality corresponding to the words.

Where are we to turn to find our clue that will lead us back to the reality of God? How shall we think of Him so that He has for us the warmth and intimacy of a real Being? We can probably never find any imagery in any other domain that will be as vivid and impressive as the sky-imagery has been. The blue dome itself seems to the child's mind as it did to the primitive man's to be a perfect paradise for God. The rainbow, rising from earth to heaven, is a glorious sign of loving promise, or a bridge of many colors which links earth and heaven. The lightning in primitive pictorial imagery easily seems to be His stern messenger and the thunder, quite naturally, becomes His warning voice. But all the time this imagery is carrying the mind over unconsciously to a *spatializing* of God. He is all too easily and naturally thought of as a great man sitting on a throne at the apex of the sky-dome and acting as a man of might would act. With this imagery one is almost forced to think of Him as an absentee God. If he ever wants to reach the earth with a message of His will He must send someone across to bring it to us from the sky yonder. He is up there; we are down here. One has only to run through the theological thinking of the past to see how child-minded its imagery is, and what a large rôle this spatial-concept of God has played.

Our new imagery, as I have said, will perhaps be less vivid, but perhaps also it may succeed in making God real to us without at the same time making Him to quite the same extent foreign to our world and so completely a space-occupying Being. Of course we shall never get altogether free from the relations and necessities of space and time, for if we succeeded in doing that it would carry with it the futility of all our imaginative and visualizing capacity. God would be relegated to an order of reality wholly unlike the one in which we feel at home. We need a spiritual order that means something real to us, and we must consequently succeed in finding some way of thinking of God that is not incommensurable with our own central forms and ideals of life.

Space and time are not unreal and untrue, they are only—particularly space—inadequate for any order of spiritual reality. A reality to be *spiritual* must be more than a space-time reality. It must transcend space-time and attain a unity in which the “parts” do not lie outside one another but form an integral whole, in which past, present and future are not sundered but form a single *living now*, rich with all the gains of the time-process. A spiritual being is a being that can expand itself in ideal directions and that lives essentially in the experience and the achievement of beauty, goodness, love and truth, all of them timeless realities, rather than in movements from place to place or in changes on a clock-dial.

That type of spiritual achievement is possible for all of us who have reached the level of personal life, for to be a person is to have an inner life which cannot be adequately spread out or expressed in parts or space forms, and which binds time—past, present and future—as only a unifying mind can bind it, into a super-temporal experience that is charged with the intrinsic values of a cumulative life. Those traits and characteristics of life, at the very least, we may be sure belong to the nature of God as Spirit. Whatever more may be real and true of Him in His fullness, He cannot be less than that. It would seem then that our own essential spiritual qualities offer the best point of departure for our consideration of God as Spirit. He is more truly like the deepest reality in us than like anything else in the universe and we are nearest Him when we rise to the fullest height of our spiritual possibilities as men. At the heart and center of our being we as beings capable of moral autonomy partake of Him and open out inwardly into His Life. In so far as we are ourselves spiritual we have come from Spirit and carry with us and in us “the image and superscription” of our Source and Origin, the badge and mark of conjunctness with Him.

Tennyson has happily expressed this truth in one of his noblest poems, *De Profundis*. He wrote it on the occasion of the birth of his first child. The opening of the poem deals with the physical origin of the boy and then the poet turns to speak of his deeper origin from the Spirit of God, in these profound words:

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
From that great deep before our world begins
Whereon the Spirit of God moves as he will—
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
From that true world within the world we see,
Whereof our world is but the bounding shore—
Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,
With this ninth moon that sends the hidden sun
Down yon dark sea, thou comest, darling boy.¹

Tennyson, throughout his life, when speaking of the soul's origin, frequently used the phrase, "drew from out the boundless deep," or the similar phrase, which is used near the end of *In Memoriam*:

A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds.

In "The Ancient Sage" he refers once more to "the World within the world we see" as a deeper world of Spirit:

The Abysm of all Abysms, beneath, within
The blue of sky and sea, the green of earth,
And in the million-millionth of a grain
Which cleft and cleft again for evermore,
And ever vanishing, never vanishes,
To me, my son, more mystic than myself.

Tennyson's "World Within" is plainly enough a universe of Spirit which gives intelligibility to all that is and that environs the soul of man. The visible and tangible world, that is, world in space, for him is a separating reality rather than a uniting one. The *real*

¹ *De Profundis* (italics mine).

world is of the same type and order as our inner conscious being; the world of things, on the other hand, introduces space and separation:

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Tennyson in the main was popularizing and poetizing Kant. It carries him farther in the direction of a separating dualism, I think, than one needs to go. "The solid stars," "the weight of body and limb," may just as well be thought of as an essential part of the divine process by which God as Spirit is accepting the limits of space-time and is revealing eternal reality in the midst of time.

The French philosopher, Émile Boutroux, has supplied us with a valuable phrase which may help us to link up this underlying world of Spirit with our own interior life of consciousness. He maintains that the "Beyond" that we have always been seeking is not in the sky, or in space somewhere. It is a "Beyond within us." We are no doubt still using a space word, "within," for we cannot altogether shake off our space-goggles, but we are not using the word "within" crudely to describe a *locality*. We are only calling attention to the fact that our conscious experience all the time reveals or implies junction with a More yet. William James in his famous Gifford Lectures came up from his review of a multitude of personal experiences of God's Life within to the conclusion that man within himself "is conterminous and continuous with a More of the

same quality [as the higher spiritual part of himself], which is operative in the universe outside of him and which he can keep in working touch with." * In another passage James says that "the conscious person is continuous with a wider Self through which saving experiences come." *

In his latest and maturest period of life James came back to this hypothesis of a More within us.

Every bit of us [he says in *A Pluralistic Universe*] at every moment is part and parcel of a wider self, it quivers along various radii like the wind-rose on a compass, and the actual in it is continuously one with possibles not yet in our present sight. And just as we are co-conscious with our own momentary margin, may we not ourselves form the margin of some more really central self in things which is co-conscious with the whole of us? May not you and I be confluent in a higher consciousness, and confluently active there though we know it not? *

And finally he draws his own positive conclusion in these words of affirmation: "I think it may be asserted that there *are* religious experiences of a specific nature . . . which point with reasonable probability to the continuity of our consciousness with a wider spiritual environment." * I am not here endorsing James' well-known conception of God which I do not share, I am only borrowing some of his luminous phrases to help supply vivid imagery for making God as Spirit *real* to our minds.

* *Varieties of Rel. Exp.*, p. 508.

* *Ibid.*, p. 515.

* *Op. cit.*, pp. 289-290.

* *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300.

The major mystics in their own experience have always borne their testimony to "that wider spiritual environment." The philosophical mystics of the Middle Ages, especially those who had come under the influence of Aristotle, held that *the ground of the soul* in man is essentially divine, and that it "never has gone out from God." Sometimes the point of conjunction is called the "apex of the soul," sometimes it is "the soul-center," and sometimes "the ground of the soul," but in each case the point insisted upon was that there is something in the deeps of man which makes him essentially linked up with God, or at least unsundered from Him so that "spirit with Spirit may meet."

St. Augustine, in a famous passage of his *Confessions*, has tried to give an account of his experience of the Beyond which opens out from within. This passage from the great Carthaginian saint became a model and a pattern for almost all of the later mystics of the Church. The saint and his mother, Monica, were sitting together in the twilight, at Ostia by the Tiber, meditating and communing in one spirit upon the nature of "that which does not change but remains eternally self-same." They were yearning and aspiring for the homing stairway between the finite and the infinite, when suddenly in a flash of insight they saw that the way home was not a Jacob's ladder in the sky, but only an ascent of the soul by the inward way. They were filled with a flame of passion for the Real and the True and the Beautiful, and straining forward in their thought and

desire to rise above all that is visible and tangible, "we came," the Saint says, "to our own souls"—like the lost boy in the parable who *came to himself*. In short, they gave up expecting to find God in things or above things or behind things. They left the outward path upward for the interior one through the highway of the soul. "Thither, on the way to God, one journeys," St. Augustine says elsewhere, "not with feet, nor by ships, nor by chariots" (and we may add "nor by aëroplanes"), "but only by the momentous will, for to will completely to be there is already to have arrived." It is an affair not of distance but of spiritual attitude. And so, here at Ostia, St. Augustine says, "In one swift leap—in a sudden intuition—we soared out beyond our souls and arrived at *That which is*—the God who is our Home." In this "trembling flash" God was felt to be "closer than breathing, nearer than hands or feet."

He is, we may well conclude, not away somewhere in another sphere, or above the circle of the sky. He is where we are when we are attuned for His presence, as the music of another continent suddenly is where our radio set is, when that radio set is "keyed" rightly to report it. The mystery of this type of experience is no greater than the mystery of any other type of experience. At the last we always touch mystery at some point. It comes down, in the last resort, to a question of *fact*, as is true of everything in the sphere of experience. The taste of sweetness, or the color-vision of redness, are just as unanalyzable and just as mysterious as is this

instantaneous flash of God into our souls. We see stars billions of miles away, only because something from the star is actually operating on the retina and in the visual center of the brain; and so, too, we find God, only because Something that is God—God as Spirit—is actually in contact with the spiritual center within us that is kindred to Him.

There is no good reason why we should shy away from such an evident fact as self-transcendence, or why we should be afraid to own it as a fact. Every case of sense-perception is a case of self-transcendence. If we could not leap forward and grasp an object from beyond us, and know it as beyond us, all our experience would be doomed to be shut up in an inner subjective mirage. We could never have dealings and commerce with a real world beyond our inward seemings. We should forever remain victims of the "egocentric predicament." In a trembling flash, when we perceive things, we manage to leap beyond ourselves and know a reality that is not of us, but of a world beyond us. Nobody knows *how* we do it. It is another mystery—like sweetness and redness—but it is none the less a fact. The moment we *know* anything whatsoever we prove to be self-transcending beings. It is no less obvious that we are self-transcending in all our deepest relations with other *persons*. The moment we reduce the reality of other persons to subjective states within ourselves we have lost our world and are wanderers in a dreamland. It is a poor, thin psychology that sees in pity, sympathy and

love only a glorification of the ego and not the finding of a new and higher self in and through an *alter*—another person—that is just as real as the ego is. It seems to be impossible to go out into a real world of social values—in other words, to have a real life—unless a self can transcend itself and can actually deal with a beyond.

Why then, should we assume that the mystery of the spiritual Beyond within us is the only mystery of self-transcendence? We are never mere “empirical” selves, describable selves, shut up within the hollow circle of our own flighty seemings, which are born of the futile beatings of our own hearts. To feel that one has arrived at *That which is* is no more strange or improbable or miraculous than it is to feel that the person whom one loves is a real person and that love is a genuine revelation. Do the St. Augustines and the St. Monicas give any convincing evidence that they have arrived? The evidence seems to me pretty clear and fairly convincing that they find something that reshapes and rebuilds the interior world within them—and eventually the larger social worlds around them—as truly as our experience of sense-facts shapes and constructs for us our world in space and time.

St. Paul, writing to his Corinthian friends, talks of “the demonstration of the Spirit.” He does not tell in any systematic way how the “demonstration” is to be recognized. At Pentecost the most convincing *sign* was, no doubt, the startling aspect of the occasion. The noise

of rushing wind, the radiant points of fire, the sound of the tongue-speaking were marvels which moved every beholder. Something unique and novel was happening. Peter declared that the wonderful event was "the demonstration of the Spirit." This, he says, is what the prophet Joel foretold—the outpouring of the Spirit. For St. Paul, however, "the demonstration" is not to be found in wonders and marvels—"I had rather speak five words with my understanding than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." The "demonstration" for him is revealed in the heightened *power* of the life. It is what he often calls "a new creation." The new fruits of the Spirit for him are "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control," what we to-day call *values*. These things are not spectacular nor startling. They are not "psychic phenomena." But they are laboratory evidences of something spiritual and not of something animal. There is "a new creation" within; "old things have passed away and, behold, all things are made new." It is "demonstration" of an ancestry unlike that which is found in the biological chain of descent.

The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is St. Paul's supreme account of the "demonstration." He looks beyond the marvel of speaking with tongues, whether of men or angels, beyond wisdom and gnosis, beyond spectacular facts of endurance or of martyrdom, and picks out the simple, humble trait of love—a love that suffers long and is kind, that never fails, is never

provoked, that endures all things and keeps right on loving—as the mark of the new creation, the demonstration of the Spirit.

There is as much evidence in men's lives of this higher aspect of love as there is of the lower instinctive forces. There is as much evidence of an inward striving after God as Spirit within us, and that, too, a successful striving, as there is for what Dr. Freud and his disciples call the vast instinctive "urge" that colors, they believe, all thinking, wishing, striving, dreaming, all wit and humor as well as all the deep emotional springs of action.

There is no surer evidence for this world of surging "Freudian wishes" down below the threshold of consciousness than there is for spiritual fellowship with a Beyond revealed within us. The idealizing tendency in us is as fundamental to our being and as ineradicable as is any "Freudian wish." If we had all those "wishes" satisfied in one great glut and orgy of attainment we should still be as far as ever from our goal of life as men. We should not yet have discovered *what it is we live by*. I suspect with a good deal of reason that there is a divine push, a Godward striving, a divine *urge*, revealed in the central nucleus of my being. The instinctive "urges" explain only a fraction of me and a minor fraction at that. If Jung is right in thinking that these "urges" are due to ancestral inheritance, including the ape and the tiger, it may be that I am right in believing that I have also a higher pedigree and that I partake

directly of the divine Spirit who so mightily attracts me and draws me toward Himself. I cannot explain the whole of myself without bringing in God as part of my ancestry. And I do not look toward finding Him by going back in an infinite regress in time, but rather by going forward toward a Beyond within that forever draws me.

I find that I love the good and hate the evil. The more I try to explain this fact, and the inward operations of my moral judgment, by my biological ancestry, and the customs of the past, the more I am convinced that it cannot be done. Some of the facts can be explained that way. We do carry the biological past along with us, but again there is a nucleus of moral and spiritual realities that demands another type of ancestry for its explanation. I can understand why we should be imperfect and why we should have propensities for evil, if we have come up from a long line of historic development. But how does this slow evolution from below account for my devotion to ideals of goodness and for my consecration to *what ought to be but is not yet*? What is the origin of my love of truth and my passion for purity of heart and my readiness to give my life for a cause that ought to triumph? Somewhere along the line upward something has *emerged* and is operating that was not here before. In the face of obvious material conditions that surround us we have persistent confidence in spiritual realities, just because we are inwardly allied to the Spirit that works in us.

The monumental evidence of God is, I believe, the fact of spiritual personality through which divine traits of character are revealed. Stars and mountains and ordered processes of nature reveal law and mathematics and beauty, but they reveal and can reveal no traits of character, no qualities of personality, no warmth and intimacy of heart and mind. If we are ever to be convinced that self-giving love is a reality of God's nature, we shall be convinced by seeing this love break through some human organ of His Spirit. The supreme revelation of the ages was not in the thunder and fire of Sinai, but in the life of a Person who was born of a woman, who increased in wisdom and stature, who was tempted as we are, who struggled and suffered, who battled for truth, who gave His life out of love for the rest of us, and who felt through it all that He was the organ of the Life and Love of God. Here on the highest level that has been reached since the race began God as Spirit has broken through into visibility and has shown His true nature in life and action. But it is an unending revelation. Christianity, in the best sense of the word, is eternity revealed in time,

The silence of eternity
Interpreted by love.

As the sap flows through the branches of the vine and vitalizes the whole organism so that it bursts into the beauty and glory of foliage and blossom and finally into fruit, so through the lives of men and women, in-

wardly responsive and joyously receptive, the life of God as Spirit flows carrying vitality, awakening love, creating passion for goodness, kindling the fervor of consecration and producing that living body, that organism of the Spirit, that "blessed community," which continues through the centuries the revelation of God as love and tenderness and eternal goodness.

CHAPTER X

THE GOD OF PHILOSOPHY

WE shall not expect to get final conclusions from the philosophy of past ages. A venerable philosophy is not thereby proved to be true and sound. Finality at any early stage of human thought would be a tragedy rather than a blessing to the race. Nor shall we expect philosophers—at any rate dead philosophers—to give us infallible answers to our central questions of life. The world is young and the trail that leads to truth is a very long trail. To have the returns all in at this stage would cut the nerve of interest and take the spring and zest out of man's noblest pursuit and adventure. But we do want to be assured that the pursuit is *significant* and that the trail gives signs of leading somewhere. If we can discover that these past centuries of thinking have yielded enough result so that we can trust the processes of the mind to carry us forward we shall take courage. If the mental toil of the successive laborers in this field has been cumulative, like a rolling snowball, then we will wait in patience and confidence while the pursuit goes on. The one thing our human spirits could not bear would be the dull conviction that the quest itself is futile and that from the nature of the case ultimate

reality is forever and ever, world without end, *unknowable*—to use Hegel's famous phrase—"a dark night in which all cows are black." It may at least be some comfort to know that we do not yet know enough to know that what we most want to know is unknowable!

The philosophers of history, at all events the folio-sized philosophers, "the magnanimous" ones, have not canceled one another out. They have not played to a stalemate. There has been an unfolding progress in their work—something of the rolling snowball type. They have gradually perfected *a technique of logic* which seems to most thoughtful persons basic and trustworthy. They have shown great ability to think patiently, honestly and profoundly. They have given solid ground for the conviction that the universe is *intelligible*. They have often, though not always, been able to learn from the failures and the incompletenesses of their predecessors, and thus they have succeeded, by conserving the best out of the past and by transcending it, in passing on a solid nucleus of permanent gain. The progress has, of course, not been quite continuous. Some generations have found themselves at what mountaineers call an *arrête*, over which no progress could be made. It may be that we are at an *arrête* now. At such epochs thinking becomes sterile. The philosophers are "minute" instead of "magnanimous." The methods in vogue appear to be played out and exhausted, and a new start becomes necessary. But on the whole the advance through the centuries has been real, even if slow,

and the snowball of truth has actually progressed and accumulated as it has gone.

Nearly all the races have passed through a stage of thought which may be loosely called *animism*. It is by no means the most primitive stage of life, for it presupposes a long process of trial and error, of cumulative effort and corporate, communal interpretation of facts. Through various experiences of dream, trance, telepathy, possession and uprush—experiences both normal and abnormal—man has almost everywhere hit upon the supposition that there is a subtler, nimbler inside self within the visible man. This "inside man" is believed to use the body as we use our clothes. It can slip out and go off on its own hook, as it seems to do in sleep or trance, and at death it "migrates" to another realm or takes on a new body. As it was mysterious like the wind or breath and as it appeared to be nourished by breathing, many races used a word derived from wind or breath to name this "inside self." Thus we have among the Aryan races the word *animos* or *animus*, or a kindred word, for what seemed to be the "soul," or "spirit" in man.

When once the idea had been formed that the *animus* in man is what makes him do things, is what moves his body, is, in fact, the agency that explains Cause, it was easy to leap by a large generalization to the conclusion that everything that acts has an *animus* within it. The cloud that thunders or rains, the river that now assists and now destroys, the tree and plant that grows and

withers, has its *animus*, or inside agent, and so the whole world becomes thought of as "ensouled," and gradually creative imagination builds the immense structure of mythology, which is the pictorial language of an early communal philosophy. This was man's first attempt to explain and rationalize the world.

These invisible animistic "agencies" behind the moving phenomena of the world were man's earliest and most universal types of divine beings. Sometimes they were thought of as kind and beneficent; sometimes they were conceived to be hostile and cruel; sometimes they were pictured in fair and beautiful forms; sometimes they were conceived as ugly and diabolical. Among most races there were "sacred" ways of satisfying or appeasing the invisible powers, and vast sacrificial systems grew up and flourished. Many of the mythologies of the world had much to say about an invisible world beyond, and about the future destiny of the soul. In many lands, especially where there was a rigid, hereditary priesthood these pictorial explanations became sacred, were piously guarded and protected, and often presented an impassable barrier to the progress of free and independent thought.

In Greece, however, especially in the frontier colonies of Asia Minor and Magna Græcia, where the priestly system sat lightly on the life of the people and where creative imagination was a stronger factor than was conformity to the past, a new step could be taken and was taken. A group of men in Miletus in the sixth cen-

ture—throughout the world one of the most creative centuries of human history—hit upon the idea that the universe was the product, not of capricious animistic agencies, but of one underlying, interpenetrating substance or principle, working by natural law and process. They conceived of this substance as living, self-moved, self-acting, endowed with all those traits which we associate with life, movement, growth and process. For this reason this early type of philosophy is often called *hylozoism*, which means the theory of "living substance." The different members of the group at Miletus had different ways of describing their living *physis*, or ultimate nature of things, but they all agreed that at bottom all existing visible things have come forth by process from *one* fundamental inexhaustible substance, that lives and moves and changes from stage to stage, ever shifting like Homer's Proteus. There was a good deal of child-minded thinking in the work of the Milesian group, but when all is said their step was a momentous one, charged with great future promise—one of the birth-moments in human thought.

Pythagoras and his followers brought into play the important idea that the universe everywhere reveals, and conforms to, a mathematical order, that all change or process is calculable in terms of number, proportion and harmony. Heraclitus introduced the great word *Logos*, or Reason, for the ultimate reality and law of things. Anaxagoras called the principle of order *Nous* or mind, while Parmenides in his profound interpreta-

tion insisted that the deepest ultimate reality is an eternal, immutable *One*, above and beyond all change and differentiation.

All these thinkers passed away from the conception of capricious agencies behind phenomena, and in varying form and phrase declared for a single intelligent foundation underneath or within the world of change and process. It was, however, much easier to insist on *the One* which exists for thought than it was to explain *the Many*, the multitudinous things, which vividly exist for the senses.

Just this relation between *the One* and *the Many*, between the permanently *real* and the things that are in *process of becoming*, is the central problem of Plato's philosophy. How far Plato built upon the foundation that his great teacher Socrates laid may be left for the moment. We are all agreed that Plato drew heavily upon Socrates, but it will never be possible to settle beyond debate how much of the point of view set forth in the *Dialogues* had its birth in the mind of Socrates and how far it was original with Plato. There has perhaps nowhere else been quite such a remarkable fusion of two persons into one as in this case.

Plato, with all his logic, dialectic and mathematics, was nevertheless characteristically literary, poetic and mystical. He has given us nowhere a systematic, philosophical treatise. He purposely declined to do so. He has given us, instead, conversations on high themes, insights of genius, flashes of humor, truths deeply inter-

woven with myths, guesses, hopes, aspirations, dreams, ideals, prophetic visions, together with the gathered wisdom of two centuries of Greek life and thought. We never can be quite sure of our footing when we are interpreting this supreme genius. There will never be complete agreement on Plato's philosophy. Of one thing there seems to be no question, namely that Plato found, both by his logic and by his mystical insights, a deeper universe of Mind, underlying, or overtopping the visible world of the senses. Whenever we *know* any truth or apprehend any reality it is because our minds pass beyond, or rise above, the concrete sense-facts that are before us, and view them in the light of a permanent universal *idea*, by which we explain, interpret and transmit to others our sense-experience. If these ideas dropped away or ceased to have reality for us our world of sense would crumble or dissolve into a welter and chaos of successive items with no meaning or significance. These more or less permanent and unvarying ideas—many of them mathematical in form—give coherence, stability and order to the world of our experience without which there could *be* no "world." The world we see and touch and describe must, therefore, have as the deeper ground of its being a world of thought, a world of ideas, forms, patterns or laws, a world of stable *mind*, and this shifting, changing world of process is that world of eternal reality as it appears when it is splashed out into space and time. That empirical world of space and time cannot have "pro-

duced" mind, because mind is the essential pre-condition of there being any world at all.

Some interpreters think that Plato considered this world of eternal reality to be separated from our lower temporal, or sense, world, and to be beyond time and space in a moveless heaven. Sometimes he certainly talks as though he meant that, and his two worlds, the here and the yonder, seem to fall apart into an irreconcilable dualism. But I am convinced that Plato does not hold—certainly not consistently—to a double-world view. He is always endeavoring to reconcile the one and the many, the eternal and the temporal, the yonder and the here, through a permanent spiritual reality that is revealed *through* the temporal and which yet at the same time always transcends any given temporal revelation. The permanent spiritual reality of Plato is *a real Presence* in the midst of time and process. It is both in the world and beyond it. It is in the mind of man and yet beyond it. It impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

And yet Plato does always imply that there is a stubborn foreign factor in our time-space world, a factor that does not come from the primary source of reality—"the other," as he calls it—though there is nothing in the universe that does not in some way and in some degree reveal purpose and express the idea of the Good. God, then, for Plato is the spiritual Ground of Law, Order,

Form, Truth, Beauty, Goodness, Purpose—the World of Mind that everywhere penetrates and breaks through the world which is revealed to our senses.

The conception of God worked out by Aristotle has probably influenced human thought more extensively, if not more profoundly, than that of any other philosopher that has ever lived. Aristotle's position was much more systematic than Plato's. Aristotle always had an air of finality and certainty, while Plato was always humble and modest. It was quite natural that Aristotle should give the impression that he was "the master of those that *know*." Aristotle conceived of God as utterly transcendent, beyond everything in the universe. No other great thinker has ever worked out a system so completely at variance with pantheism or even with what we now call "divine immanence." There is nothing finite, nothing temporal, nothing human, nothing incomplete or imperfect, nothing potential or unrealized, in the nature of God. He is absolutely perfect and self-contained. He is pure intelligence, the eternal Thinker, with no passion, no emotion, no longing or striving, or desire. He is the solitary Thinker of Thought; in fact, He is a glorified Aristotle. He is beyond and above not only everything that is composed of "matter," but also beyond the ethereal stars and the circles of the heavens. God, for Aristotle, is the one source and explanation of motion in the universe. He acts as *an unmoved Mover*. He acts, in other words, as an attractive goal. He draws all objects by the perfection of His

being and by the dynamic quality of the perfect thought-forms in His Mind. He is a mover in the same fashion that a beautiful maiden is a mover in reference to her lover. She *does* nothing. She does not push or pull. She simply *is* her own beautiful self. And her lover goes to her, moved solely by her attractive power. She is for him an "unmoved mover." So the universe is always and everywhere moving toward ends or goals and the goals are thoughts in the Mind of God. In the upper sphere the stars move in perfect circular orbits, smitten with a love—"an urge"—for the eternal reality and beauty of God's thought. In these lower realms where we dwell each thing moves as best it can to realize its potential nature under the attraction of the thought-forms in the Mind of God. But for Aristotle God is not the "creator" of matter. Matter had no beginning; it always *was*. It was there to begin with. It takes on *form*, it reveals purpose and meaning, in response to the perfect thoughts of God who is its attractive mover. He, however, is not here where events happen; He is yonder beyond the stars, and He moves the universe, not as a crude architect or builder, working with hands, but rather as the perfect goal of all finite striving, in the language of philosophy, God is a "final cause."

There was one other Greek thinker of folio-size and of major importance who exerted a far-reaching influence on later conceptions of God. This was Plotinus, the Neo-Platonist of the third century of our era (205-269 A.D.). He was a thinker of great originality, but at

the same time he was a devoted "disciple" of Plato and, it should be said, a large part of the Platonism of Europe came into the Western world through Plotinus. He also drew heavily upon Aristotle and Stoic philosophy. In fact, Plotinus wove all the strands of Greek philosophy together into a single web of thought, one of the most remarkable blends in the history of human thought, but after a unique pattern which was all his own. The intellectual movement of eight Greek centuries culminated in him.

Plotinus, though not a Christian, was the first great formulator of a trinitarian conception of God—a conception of immense influence on St. Athanasius in the East and St. Augustine in the West and on most other theologians of the Church. Plotinus thought of the universe as an emanation from God rather than as a creation by God. Everything that appears in finite form has come out of Something that eternally was and is. God in His deepest meaning is the *Source of all that is*. He is the Godhead and as Source He cannot be described or explained, for if we described Him in terms of our experience or in the words we have coined He would become merely one of the many things, and no longer the Godhead. The Source of all must be an indescribable Reality—a unique One with no other like Him. He must be a Reality so complete, so perfect, so inclusive that He contains in Himself all that is, or ever can be, real and true and beautiful and good. But until something emerges, or is differentiated and becomes con-

crete and specific we cannot know it or talk about it. God as Source and Origin—God as Alpha—is ineffable, beyond all interpretation in human speech, for no speech is adequate for His Allness. He is, however, in reality so complete and so all-inclusive that there is a surplus, an overflow or emanation that emerges from this all-containing One.

The first overflow Plotinus calls the *Nous*, the Universal Mind, or Reason, which reveals the hidden God in myriad thought-forms throughout the universe. This *Nous* is like Plato's Eternal World, and is the Word or Utterance of God, revealed as mathematical Order, Law, Form, Wisdom, Truth, Stability operating wherever anything comes into being. Without the presence of Mind no world would be possible. It operates and is revealed wherever the least object or event of the universe appears. In the intellect of man *Nous* is revealed at its highest and best but as men we have intellect only because we partake of and are one with the Over-Mind that has emanated from the hidden life of God.

The second emanation from the Source Plotinus called the Soul, or Over-Soul. It is the sum total of the active, creative forces of the universe. It is like the Soul of the universe in Plato's *Timæus*, but perhaps more like the *Logos Spermatikos*, the germinative Word, of the Stoics.

Here, then, we have in the great founder of Neo-Platonism, an indivisible God, who, in His hidden nature as Source, is a unity of all Reality, and who, by

an overflow of His superabundant richness is manifested through the thought-forms, or the mind-aspects, of the universe, and, secondly, through the energies of life and love and will, that are summed up in the Over-Soul. The system of Plotinus came into the main stream of Christian thought through St. Augustine (354-430) and through the writings of an anonymous Eastern mystic of the late fifth century who wrote under the famous name of "Dionysius the Areopagite" and who made his readers believe that he was St. Paul's convert on Mars Hill in Athens. It was one of the main sources of Christian Mysticism through the centuries of the Roman Church, and it tended to promote in the minds of careless thinkers a pantheistic way of conceiving the divine Reality. It is safe to say, I believe, that this Platonic strand of thought, recurring in fresh aspects through the centuries, is the noblest and richest single intellectual contribution that has so far been made by human thought.

Until the birth of modern philosophy no fundamentally new way of thinking of God was arrived at. The thinkers of the Middle Ages often showed great ingenuity in their interpretations of God, and they should not be proudly dismissed as unimportant or be treated as though they were without significance. But they did not discover a new way of approach to the ancient problem. The emphasis in their systems shifts back and forth from the Platonic to the Aristotelian conceptions. They are characteristically backward-

lookers. The blends and fusions altered, but no schoolman *originated* a fresh way of conceiving of God, or if there is ever anything new, the old is always in its arms. In cathedral building there was consummate inventiveness, but in the realm of the mind it seemed glory enough to follow the ancient masters who knew and who for them presented finality.

Descartes (1596-1650), the originator of a new method both in science and philosophy, is the father of our modern scientific world-outlook. He raised a new set of problems. He asked a host of new questions. He saw more clearly than anybody else had done that the entire universe conformed to mathematics and therefore could be mathematically interpreted as science everywhere assumes. Descartes' way of approach to God is through the fundamental nature of the human mind. For the most part he thought of God in terms of Cause, but usually as the Cause of ideas in our minds. We could never think of such ideas for instance as infinitely perfect if an infinitely perfect Being did not put those ideas into our mind. God must be accepted as real in order to explain the origin of our necessary and universal ideas, those ideas which seem to us to be inevitable. In the last analysis the one function which Descartes' philosophy assigns to God is that of creative *Causar*. God has to be admitted as the necessary Cause and Explanation of all that cannot be explained without Him.

For the next hundred and fifty years this new begin-

ning which Descartes made dominated the thought of the world. The function of God took many forms and varieties, but at bottom it remained one and the same thing. The philosophies of the English realist Locke and of the idealist Berkeley and of the German monadologist Leibnitz were very different in many aspects, but they were all three agreed in one thing, namely that nothing could be ultimately explained without the inevitable first Cause or sufficient Reason which is God. The Deists, who were hostile to the acceptance of miracles or divine revelation or any supernatural occurrences in the order of nature and history, were as urgent as the greater philosophers were that God must be thought of as the Cause and Starter of the complex system of things—the mighty Watchmaker of the intricate cosmic Watch. But the God of all these systems had become refined away to a thin, attenuated, bloodless, abstract, remote, first Principle, of not much more value for religious purposes than luminiferous ether would be. Then came David Hume, a clear-minded man, a profound thinker, but a spiritually penurious Scotchman, and ruthlessly knocked the bottom out of this age-long, artless dependence on the argument from Cause. As a matter of fact, the God that Hume denied was not a God that could have warmed anybody's heart or inspired any great love or aspiration. He was a God who satisfied nothing but logic. Empiricism of the British type as a philosophy had long been spiritually bankrupt, and Hume un-

consciously rendered a positive service in vividly revealing the complete nakedness of its asserts. If there was to be any advance in the quest for God, a new philosophical approach to the problem was needed. The rationalism of Descartes and Leibnitz and the empiricism of Locke, Berkeley and Hume had alike failed to bring the seeker to any solid ground of assurance.

To Kant belongs the credit of having laid a solid foundation for the rebuilding of man's faith in the spiritual values of life and for having discovered a new approach to the central issues of the soul. His main interest was not religious. He was not a parson's philosopher. He was, in the first instance, concerned to find out how to establish scientific knowledge on a basis of absolute certainty—how to restore and re-establish what Hume had destroyed. In the process of this discovery he searched the depths of man's mind more thoroughly than anybody had ever done before. Like Copernicus he shifted the base of explanation. He found the center of intelligibility to be within rather than without. The universal and necessary aspects of knowledge are furnished by the mind that does the knowing. The mind from within itself is creative and gives form and laws to the universe.

Kant, however, in his critical diagnosis of knowledge found no path by which logic could pass over from the finite to the infinite, from the temporal to the eternal, from the world of our experience to a God of Absolute Reality. But he was above everything

else a man of profound *moral* insight. The call of duty appeared to him to be the most august and magisterial feature of life. Two things, he used to say, filled him with unutterable awe, the stars above him and the moral law within him. He seemed to hear an unescapable voice saying: "Thou must do and thou must accept as real what befits the overarching moral nature of thy inmost being."

It was through the implications of the moral will rather than through the path of speculative knowledge that Kant found the road to God, Freedom and Immortality. He worked out his insight in a way that seems to many to-day to be somewhat forced and lumbering. But his central insight is, I believe, as true and sound as it is deep and awe-inspiring. If Kant is right in insisting that moral goodness is the loftiest aspect of man's rational nature, overtopping even his creative range of knowledge, then he is further right in concluding that man belongs to and is allied with a deeper universe of reality than that of space and matter—a universe that backs and guarantees the moral deed and makes it significant.

In many respects Kant is close to the position of Plato, though it was an unconscious approach. They both found the world of eternal reality involved in those ideal values which dignify human life. Kant completed his philosophical system with a critical examination of Beauty, Sublimity and Purpose, all of them being aspects that do not belong to a mechanistic world of

describable phenomena. They seem to be gratuitously added. It may well be, therefore, Kant thought, that there is a deeper spiritual universe which is revealed in us at its truest and best when we appreciate and pursue Goodness and Beauty and the ideals that glorify life. This deeper spiritual or noumenal universe implied in the visible one is God.

Most of the constructive philosophy of the last hundred years has developed along lines suggested by Kant's thinking, or lines that were implicit in his system of thought. Fichte seized upon Kant's suggestion of a deeper universe and built his entire philosophy on that foundation. The surge of the moral will within the depths of man's being seemed to Fichte to indicate that we in our moral strivings are an indivisible part of an infinite spiritual Will, that wells up within us, and that works through these finite selves of ours, so that in very truth we are the branches and God is the vine. Every heroic moral deed done here in the world of time is a revelation of the will of God whose conscious organ we are meant to be. Carlyle made this note his virile gospel and preached it with vigor as the prophet of his time.

Much that was capricious and wayward and romantic emerged from the subjective idealism and yeasty voluntarism that followed Kant. It was easy to gush and thrill over weaving the garment that revealed God, and each person proposed to weave it according to his peculiar genius, or according to the bent of his dispo-

sition and impulse. The universe was assumed to be a kind of soft fluid stuff that would take the shape of any one of our multitudinous human vessels.

Hegel, a massive German thinker, too little understood and appreciated to-day, set about the task of rediscovering the permanent objective factor that would give solidity, stability and order to the process of events that were in danger of being lost in the prevailing subjective welter. For Hegel the universe, including man, history, science, philosophy, art and religion, is a slowly developing rational system, each stage necessary for the new stage that is to be. Everything real is rational and everything rational is real. God is to be found not in the rare miracles of past ages, not in the gaps and missing-links of creation, but in the intelligible continuity of the process; not in the mysteries that baffle the mind, but in the steady unfolding flow of things, according to a law and order that the mind can grasp and interpret. The higher emerges out of the lower and was from the first implicit in it. The process of advance is everywhere made through stress, strain, collision and the clash of opposites. Every force is revealed through conflict with some other force that is pitted against it, and out of the conflict emerges a higher unified, rational truth through which opposing forces reveal their latent possibilities. Every finite "truth" for which we contend turns out to be a partial, one-sided "truth." Somebody meets it with a complementary "truth" which seems in the beginning to be the denial or refutation of the first "truth."

Gradually, however, through struggle, debate and the give and take of life, the two half-truths are lifted up and fused together into a higher synthesis which recognizes all that was true in both half-truths and so a new and completer truth emerges. All truth is, therefore, an appeal to more truth. All experience must verify itself by going on into more experience. Virtue, character, moral quality of any sort must be achieved by conflict and battle and must be tested in its worth by the way in which it ministers to the formation of more and higher virtue, character and moral quality. The "truth" of any stage of life, of any movement of history, of any insight of the soul, is to be found not by going back to its primitive antecedents, but rather by going forward to the significant results that come forth and are revealed by its unfolding process. The true nature of a cause, as Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison once said, only becomes apparent in the effect. The real nature of a thing is what it can grow into, not what it started from. This means at once that each partial and incomplete aspect of life and of the world is to be read and valued in its larger setting where its meaning and significance stand revealed.

† God, in the light of this insight, is not to be looked for as a first Cause, as a Starter or a Mover. God is not a remote and hidden Being, in solitary grandeur above and behind the processes and events of the world. God is never to be thought of as an abstract Being who secures His perfection by remaining apart from the con-

fusion and turmoil of the world. He is always concrete and rich with the gains and achievements of the struggle. He is the intelligent, pushing Life and conquering Spirit of the whole process of revelation. He is a God forever going on before us. He is present wherever truth comes to birth over error, wherever Light conquers Darkness, wherever evil yields to the persuasive power of triumphant goodness. He is immanent in the process. He is not to be discovered at any mere cross-section of the time-series. He is to be found as the eternal rational nature of things, piloting and steering the ongoing ship of the ages. He is the complete truth, life, light, beauty, goodness, love, meaning and significance of all our partial truths, lives, lights, beauties, goodnesses, loves, meanings and significant purposes. He is all that we are at our best and truest, and at the same time the More yet that is suggested by our partial attainments and that sweeps on beyond the now and here. God is the fulfiller of all our hopes and strivings. He is the goal of all our spiritual travails, the Omega of the Alpha of every language and of every race.

This is not the complete story of what God has meant to the philosophers of the past. There are philosophers of great distinction whom I have not even mentioned by name. I have only given a glimpse or a hint of what God has meant to any one of the philosophers whom I have endeavored to interpret. I have perhaps said enough, however, to show that an essential thing about

anybody's philosophy is his conception of what may be called intelligible reality. If he stops with things and events as they appear to senses he may be a good reporter but he is not a philosopher. If he describes and explains things and events in terms of their *causes* he may be a good scientist, but he is so far not yet a philosopher. The philosopher explains the part, the fragment, the appearance, in the light of some consistent and unifying intelligible whole. He traces the processes and the changes to Something that does not change. He pulls all the multitudinous scattered threads together into their place in a single web of thought. Philosophers may not agree, in fact have never altogether agreed as to what is ultimate and self-explanatory in this strange and complicated universe, but nobody is a philosopher in the proper meaning of the word who does not bring his followers to some kind of ultimate reality which to some degree explains itself and at the same time is the ground and explanation of everything else.

Out of those who have tried to do this in some extensive and profound way, I have selected five major thinkers for special emphasis—Plato, Plotinus, Aristotle, Kant and Hegel. They have done more, I believe, than any other persons who have yet lived to think through the seen and temporal to the eternal Reality that is the ground, the form, the order and the *significance* of what has been and what is to be.

CHAPTER XI

PRAYER AS A PATHWAY TO GOD

RELIGION is primarily and at heart the personal meeting of the soul with God and conscious communion with Him. To give up the cultivation of prayer would mean in the long run the loss of the central thing in religion; it would involve the surrender of the priceless jewel of the soul. We might try in its stead to perfect the other aspects of religion. We might make our form of divine service very artistic or very popular; we might speak with the tongues of men and sing with the tongues almost of angels, but if we lose the power to discover and appreciate the real presence of God and if we miss the supreme joy of feeling ourselves environed by the Spirit of the living and present God, we have made a bad exchange and have dropped from a higher to a lower type of religion.

Prayer, no doubt, is a great deal more than this inner act of discovery and appreciation of God, but the joy of communion and intercourse with God is the central feature of prayer and it is one of the most impressive facts of life.

The early Franciscans remained on their knees rapt

in ardent contemplation praying with their hearts rather than with their lips. It was a prayer of quiet rather than a specific request. Francis thought of prayer as a time of storing up grace and power through union with God. He called it in his happy phrase, sharing the life of the angels—a needed preparation for the life of action and service which were to follow it.

Fortunately we do not need to *understand* vital processes and energies of life before we utilize them and start living by them. The child would die in unconscious infancy if he refused to turn to his mother's breast for nourishment until he had acquired a good working theory of the value and efficacy of mother's milk. Long before our modern laboratories succeeded in explaining why the combination of bread and butter is well adapted to be a staff of life for the race, primitive man had hit upon it by some happy accident of the trial and error method, and had selected it out of a multitude of other possible combinations. We watch with a kind of awe the marvelous accuracy of the homing instinct of birds and the guiding urge which brings the migratory fish and eel from their winter feeding-grounds in the central deeps of ocean back to the identical spawning place where their lives began. There are vital springs and life-urges in us all that baffle our capacity for analysis or rationalization, and the history of human development has revealed and demonstrated which of these subtle deep-lying forces and energies minister to the increase and furtherance of life and

which ones must be checked and controlled as life marches forward from lower stages to higher levels.

One of these deep constructive energies of life is prayer. It is a way of life that is as old as the human race is, and it is as difficult to "explain" as is our joy over love and beauty. It came into power in man's early life and it has persisted through all the stages of it because it has proved to be essential to spiritual health and growth and life-advance. Like all other great springs of life, it has sometimes been turned to cheap ends and brought down to low levels, but on the whole it has been a pretty steady uplifting power in the long story of human progress. The only way we could completely understand it would be to understand the eternal nature of God and man. Then we should no doubt comprehend why He and we seek one another and why we are unsatisfied until we mutually find one another.

The two dangers that always beset prayer and threaten to deaden or stifle its vitalizing power are (1) the danger of making prayer a utilitarian scheme, and (2) the danger of being caught in one of those thin rationalizing tendencies which recur frequently in human history, and of having as a result religious faith itself drop to a level of low potency.

The first danger has beset prayer in all generations. The *ego* aspect of life is very strong in the primitive stages of development as it is also in the early period of the formation of the child's aims and ideals. It was in

every way natural that primitive man, as soon as he discovered that prayer was a real power, should have inclined to use it as an easy way to get the "things" he wanted, and especially that he should have used it as a magic method of protection from the things he feared. This utilitarian aspect ramifies the early religion of almost all races and when once it has become embedded in the fundamental religious habits of a people it is extremely difficult to dislodge it. The result is that this note of self-seeking has formed a subtle overtone in much of the world's praying, even when it has not been the major chord of it.

It is of all things important that prayer should be raised far above this short-cut scheme of self-seeking and of utilitarian aspirations. We have reached an ethical stage when we are slowly learning to dispense with the appeal of rewards and punishments as a religious motive. We feel, at least many of us feel, that it is a drop to lower religious levels to endeavor to push a person toward religion by scaring him with the fear of hell or by emotionally moving him with vivid pictures of heavenly bliss. We want him to love God because of God's own grace and loveliness, not because he can *use* Him for selfish ends, and we want him to turn to religion not because it is a path of safety from threatening danger, or a way to crowns and diadems, but because it is man's noblest adventure and the way to the completest fulfillment of life's meaning and significance, and because it enables a man to become girded and

equipped for the richest human service. So, too, prayer, if it is to be kept, as man moves up to higher ethical levels of life, must be sublimated from its lower and more egoistic traits and must be purified with a passion of love and coöperation.

The second danger is only too well known in this period through which we are passing. We are in the grip of a tremendous scientific current. The scientific method has been so successful in banishing mystery from the world and in organizing and controlling the forces of nature that we have easily assumed that there are no limits to its domain or to its sway. The authority of the laboratory has superseded all other types of authority. The method of explaining by antecedent "causes" is so direct and effective that it has made all other ways of interpretation seem weak and antiquated. Those who have become fascinated with the achievements and the triumphs of science have grown somewhat disillusioned over the less exact and less compelling methods of religion. Their rationalized and causally explained world seems to need no God and to leave no place for Him.

It is, however, becoming pretty obvious that the successes of science are somewhat misleading. The practical effects are plain enough and they are real achievements. But when one asks how far science has been successful in making the universe rationally intelligible or in conserving those intrinsic values by which men live the answer halts. A modern writer, in *The Glass*

of *Fashion*, has very soberly diagnosed human life as it is to-day in these words: "The present depression of humanity has its ground, I believe, solely in man's degraded sense of his origin. The human race feels itself like a rat in a trap. We began in mud and we shall end in mud. Life is reaching the end of its tether. Humanity rots for a new definition of life." I should prefer to say a new interpretation of life rather than a new "definition" of it, but that need not matter. The point of importance is that the scientific method has severe limits which are now plainly in evidence. It can only do what it is equipped to do and we ought not to expect the impossible of it. The attempt to find antecedent causes for everything is bound to explain higher stages in terms of lower and simpler ones. We are bound to go back and back for our causes until we lose sight of our supreme values of life and find ourselves enmeshed in a mechanistic scheme of movements which has been substituted for the more vivid realities that we actually experience. And we find ourselves "explaining" by methods that do not in the end actually *explain* but really leave us with an endless causal regress—one "cause" in behind another "cause" all the way back. We are once more caught in one of those thin rationalization tendencies which work well up to a point but which leave us high and dry when we become concerned with the question of the deeper issues of life.

There is no solution for our present poverty of life or for our feebleness of vision except to wake up to the

fact that methods of exact description and of causal explanation can apply only to certain parts and levels of our universe and that the values of life and the realities attaching to them call for quite a different way of approach. Already the tide has turned, the deeper currents of life are circulating, and there are signs of a return to richer and more adequate ways of interpreting the values and spiritual issues of life. With these fresher discoveries will come new faith in God and that will carry with it an increase in the reality and power of prayer.

Everybody who reads or studies psychology is ready to admit that the prayer of faith has at least a *subjective*-effect, often to a profound degree. The soul's aspiration for purity of heart helps immensely to make the heart pure. The vivid suggestion of ideal aims, whether audibly uttered or only breathed as a wish *works* in almost marvelous fashion. There are high moments of faith when the whole being, including even the body and its functions, is extraordinarily responsive to interior suggestion. Any wish or hope or faith that rises to expression and which meets no contra-suggestion or inhibition is sure to be more or less creative and constructive in its effects. The period just before sleep begins or the time at waking is a moment when suggestion is peculiarly effective and dynamic, and so are moments of hush and silence in periods of corporate worship.

Noting the recognized fact of the extensive range of

suggestion, its curative power and its moral effects, some modern students of the phenomena of prayer have been inclined to reduce it to a purely subjective aspect. They admit that prayer is a type of power, but that it works solely as a well-known form of auto-suggestion. I am quite ready to recognize the importance of this subjective aspect of prayer and I am thankful for it. We may well be grateful for all those features of life that can be brought under well-known laws and can be explained by principles with which we have grown familiar. But there is much more involved in the experience and power of prayer than can be attributed to its subjective effects.

In the first place the subjective power of prayer would quickly wane and die away the moment prayer were actually reduced to that aspect of it. We can pray with dynamic effect on ourselves only when we pray with living faith in Something more than ourselves. When I become convinced that prayer is a *one-way* affair, a single-sided communication, I can no longer bring myself into the state of mind that makes it work creatively. The power has oozed away and left me weak and ineffective. I can no longer close the circuit and set the current of power free. In order to make prayer work even in the sphere of my own life-area, I must rise to a faith in a Beyond. But that is by no means the only ground for a belief in the objective reality of prayer. Men have prayed in all generations and they have done so primarily because they have felt

themselves to be in living relations with higher realities than themselves. They have prayed because they needed to pray as much as they needed to breathe or to eat. They have flung out their souls with the same kind of confidence that they had when they risked their bodies to the buoyant character of the water as they launched out to swim, and they found something happening in the process that refreshed and buoyed their souls. Praying is a life-creative method that has its own essential evidence in the act itself.

Clement of Alexandria, an uncanonized saint of the third century, who comes very close to being my ideal of a Christian man, thought of prayer as a "kind of divine mutual and reciprocal *correspondence*." It is a double-sided operation, due to an attractive drawing power at work above us and at the same time to a homing tendency in us. We are so made that we cannot live as egocentric beings. We are not contented with our success in conjugating the verb to *eat*. We natively reach out beyond our fragmentary self for completion, and we aspire to find springs and sources of life of a wholly different order from our daily food and drink for the body.

That is, I think, where prayer *begins*. It is born of our need for spiritual fellowship. That kind of prayer would abide and last on, even if we ceased to have what might be called formal or conventional prayer and if we gave up asking God for desirable "things" of life. In our best moments of hush and quiet, especially in

those high-tide occasions when many human hearts together are fused in silent communion, there often is a palpitating sense of divine presence, an overbrimming consciousness of healing, vivifying currents of life circulating underneath our little lives, and we are thereupon filled with joy and wonder. That is the very substance and essence of prayer as "mutual correspondence."

But prayer is both less and more than that. We all know only too well how easy it is to have prayer drop to a lower level than that of vital corerspondence with God. We are, alas, very familiar with prayers which consist of words, words, words. The eyes are closed, the face is turned upward, God is addressed, but in every other particular the exercise belongs to this earthly world-order of events. Habits, prejudices, natural interests, the old, well-known stock of ideas, the familiar "*patois* of Canaan," get expression, but the heart is not on fire with a passion for something that is felt to be essential to life itself. The words are spoken because a prayer is expected at that time, or on that occasion. The newspaper report on a famous occasion of "the most eloquent prayer ever *addressed to a Boston audience*" is familiar to us, and it unconsciously reveals the essential weakness of much formal and conventional praying. It is intended for an audience rather than for God, and it lacks too often the quiver and urgency of the soul's sincere desire and overmastering need. It just wanders on.

It is a pity to see such a transcendent thrill of life

drop to a dull ordinary stream of talk, but it sometimes happens. "I hope you will not offer a very long prayer," a nervous university president said to me once as I was about to conduct a chapel service in his university, "the students will be sure to become restless and I cannot guarantee what they will do." My sympathy was all with the poor, long-suffering students, for I could easily visualize what they had endured before they reached the stage of protest and revolt. No persons are more quick to feel the note of reality than are college and university students.

So, too, prayer is, or may be, *more* than wordless and aimless communion and correspondence. It may and often does rise to a clear apprehension in thought and word of some experience or event or attainment that seems to be absolutely essential to life itself. The soul in its need throws itself unperplexed on God in a yearning of love and faith and confidence, and asks for what seems to be absolutely indispensable to its complete being. These goals toward which the soul strains forward in prayer, these yearning needs, are, however, by no means always selfish aims, on the contrary, they usually are unselfish and stretch out to ends that mainly concern others. It is usually obvious enough that we can be of little service in the world to others unless we are raised in quality and power ourselves. But all great prayer is born out of intense earnestness and out of a consciousness that only God through us as a feeble organ of His will, can accomplish what we seek and what we need.

From him who desireth greatly
No wisdom shall be concealed.
To him the future is present,—
All secrets shall be revealed.

Prayer at its highest reach climbs up to a vicarious exercise of the soul. I mean by that somewhat abused word "vicarious," that we can, and do, lend our souls out as organs of love and suffering in fellowship-prayer for others who are in need of help and comfort. There are mysteries no doubt attaching to intercessory prayer which we cannot solve with our intellect or by our efforts at rationalization. So, too, there are unsolved mysteries connected with the radio-mechanism which brings the voice of a friend from a distant city into our room where we sit tuning in to catch invisible vibrations. We do not wait until we can explain these energies before we use them, and so, too, there is no good reason why we should forego "lifting hands of prayer" for those who call us friends, until we completely understand how our human longing and our voice of prayer can affect the eternal divine Heart. If God is our Great Companion, as we believe He is, then we and He are "bound together in one bundle of life," as a woman believed centuries ago when the world was younger. It may well be as philosophers and poets have said, that the whole round earth is bound in vital union with the life of God. In any case, we certainly must know much more than we know now before we have any proof that true prayer for others is vain and fruitless.

We may well feel hesitation, I think, in extending the range of prayer so as to include effects upon inanimate things. There are grave dangers in sight whenever prayer drops to a level that identifies it with a method of *magic*. The startling, the spectacular, the marvelous, the miraculous, has always fascinated the primitive and the infantile mind, and probably always will do so, and it was of all things natural and to be expected that child-minded men would stretch after quick and easy ways of controlling nature, and of getting desired results by the use of sacred words and mighty phrases that were believed to have magical power over the nature divinities. Spiritual religion feels the degrading and superstitious character of all such tendencies and it moves away from them with a keen desire to employ only moral and spiritual methods in relation with the God who is Spirit and with a worship which must be in spirit and in truth to be real. Each person must of course in all these matters decide what for him is actually "in spirit and in truth."

Meantime those of us who pray have the best of all evidence that prayer is a vital breath of life, for we come back from it quickened and vitalized, refreshed and restored, and we are happy to believe and trust that our intercourse with the Companion of our lives has helped to fill with love the cup which some friend of ours with agonizing hands was holding up in some hour of need.

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