

THE
LIFE
OF
REASON

GEORGE
SANTAYANA

Arendt
B
945
.823
L7
1953

SCRIBNERS

THE LIFE OF REASON

OR

The Phases of Human Progress

BY GEORGE SANTAYANA

ONE-VOLUME EDITION

Revised by THE AUTHOR in Collaboration

with DANIEL CORY

ἡ γὰρ τοῦ ἐνέργεια ζωή

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

New York

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	v
I REASON IN COMMON SENSE	
CHAPTER 1 <i>The Birth of Reason</i>	3
CHAPTER 2 <i>First Steps and First Fluctuations</i>	9
CHAPTER 3 <i>The Discovery of Natural Objects</i>	17
CHAPTER 4 <i>Nature Unified and Mind Discerned</i>	26
CHAPTER 5 <i>Discovery of Fellow-Minds</i>	34
CHAPTER 6 <i>Concretions in Discourse and in Existence</i>	45
CHAPTER 7 <i>On the Relative Value of Things and Ideas</i>	56
CHAPTER 8 <i>The Measure of Values in Reflection</i>	62
CHAPTER 9 <i>Some Abstract Conditions of the Ideal</i>	70
CHAPTER 10 <i>Flux and Constancy in Human Nature</i>	74
II REASON IN SOCIETY	
CHAPTER 1 <i>Love</i>	89
CHAPTER 2 <i>The Family</i>	104
CHAPTER 3 <i>Industry, Government, and War</i>	115
CHAPTER 4 <i>The Aristocratic Ideal</i>	130
CHAPTER 5 <i>Democracy</i>	140
CHAPTER 6 <i>Free Society</i>	149
CHAPTER 7 <i>Patriotism</i>	161
CHAPTER 8 <i>Ideal Society</i>	170
III REASON IN RELIGION	
CHAPTER 1 <i>How Religion May Be an Embodiment of Reason</i>	179
CHAPTER 2 <i>Rational Elements in Superstition</i>	186
CHAPTER 3 <i>Magic, Sacrifice, and Prayer</i>	192
CHAPTER 4 <i>Mythology</i>	202
CHAPTER 5 <i>The Hebraic Tradition</i>	210
CHAPTER 6 <i>The Christian Epic</i>	218

CHAPTER 7	<i>Pagan Custom and Barbarian Genius Infused into Christianity</i>	228
CHAPTER 8	<i>Conflict of Mythology with Moral Truth</i>	241
CHAPTER 9	<i>The Christian Compromise</i>	249
CHAPTER 10	<i>Piety</i>	258
CHAPTER 11	<i>Spirituality and Its Corruptions</i>	264
CHAPTER 12	<i>Charity</i>	270
CHAPTER 13	<i>The Belief in a Future Life</i>	277
CHAPTER 14	<i>Ideal Immortality</i>	285
IV REASON IN ART		
CHAPTER 1	<i>The Basis of Art</i>	301
CHAPTER 2	<i>Rationality of Industrial Art</i>	305
CHAPTER 3	<i>Emergence of Fine Arts</i>	310
CHAPTER 4	<i>Music</i>	315
CHAPTER 5	<i>Speech and Signification</i>	325
CHAPTER 6	<i>Poetry and Prose</i>	334
CHAPTER 7	<i>Plastic Construction</i>	345
CHAPTER 8	<i>Plastic Representation</i>	354
CHAPTER 9	<i>Justification of Art</i>	363
CHAPTER 10	<i>The Criterion of Taste</i>	367
CHAPTER 11	<i>Art and Happiness</i>	375
V REASON IN SCIENCE		
CHAPTER 1	<i>Types and Aims of Science</i>	383
CHAPTER 2	<i>History</i>	394
CHAPTER 3	<i>Mechanism</i>	408
CHAPTER 4	<i>Psychology</i>	414
CHAPTER 5	<i>The Nature of Intent</i>	427
CHAPTER 6	<i>Dialectic</i>	435
CHAPTER 7	<i>Pre-Rational Morality</i>	442
CHAPTER 8	<i>Rational Ethics</i>	454
CHAPTER 9	<i>Post-Rational Morality</i>	465
CHAPTER 10	<i>The Validity of Science</i>	481
INDEX		491

CHAPTER 1

THE BIRTH OF REASON

HUMAN LIFE, when it begins to possess intrinsic value, is an incipient order in the midst of what seems a vast though, to some extent, a vanishing chaos. This retreating chaos can be deciphered and appreciated by man only in proportion as the order in himself is confirmed and extended. For man's consciousness is evidently realistic; it clings to his fate, registers, so to speak, the higher and lower temperature of his fortunes, and, so far as it can, represents the agencies on which those fortunes depend. When this dramatic vocation of consciousness has not been fulfilled at all, consciousness is wholly confused; the world it envisages seems consequently a chaos. Later, if experience has fallen into shape, and there are settled categories and constant objects in human discourse, the assumption is made that the original disposition of things was also orderly and indeed mechanically conducive to just those feats of instinct and intelligence which have been since accomplished. A theory of origins, of substance, and of natural laws may thus be framed and accepted, and may receive confirmation in the further march of events. It will be observed, however, that what is credibly asserted about the past is not a report which the past was itself able to make when it existed nor one it is now able, in some oracular fashion, to formulate and to impose upon us. The report is a rational construction based and seated in present experience; it has no cogency for the inattentive and no existence for the ignorant. Although the universe, then, may not have come from chaos, human experience certainly has begun in a private and dreamful chaos of its own, out of which it still only partially and momentarily emerges. The history of this awakening is of course not the same as that of the enviroing world ultimately discovered; it is the history, however, of that discovery itself, of the knowledge through which alone the world can be revealed. We may accordingly dispense ourselves from preliminary courtesies to the real universal order, nature, the absolute,

to life. Every accompanying sensation which shared that privilege, or in time was engrossed in that function, would ultimately become a part of that conceived reality, a quality of that thing.

The same primacy of impulses, irrational in themselves but expressive of bodily functions, is observable in the behaviour of animals, and in those dreams, obsessions, and primary passions which in the midst of sophisticated life sometimes lay bare the obscure groundwork of human nature. Reason's work is there undone. We can observe sporadic growths, disjointed fragments of rationality, springing up in a moral wilderness. In the passion of love, for instance, a cause unknown to the sufferer, but which is doubtless the springflood of hereditary instincts accidentally let loose, suddenly checks the young man's gayety, dispels his random curiosity, arrests perhaps his very breath; and when he looks for a cause to explain his suspended faculties, he can find it only in the presence or image of another being, of whose character possibly, he knows nothing and whose beauty may not be remarkable; yet that image pursues him everywhere, and he is dominated by an unaccustomed tragic earnestness and a new capacity for suffering and joy. If the passion be strong there is no previous interest or duty that will be remembered before it; if it be lasting the whole life may be reorganised by it; it may impose new habits, other manners, and another religion. Yet what is the root of all this idealism? An irrational instinct, normally intermittent, such as all dumb creatures share, which has here managed to dominate a human soul and to enlist all the mental powers in its more or less permanent service, upsetting their usual equilibrium. This madness, however, inspires method; and for the first time, perhaps, in his life, the man has something to live for. The blind affinity that like a magnet draws all the faculties around it, in so uniting them, suffuses them with an unwonted spiritual light.

Here, on a small scale and on a precarious foundation, we may see clearly illustrated and foreshadowed that Life of Reason which is simply the unity given to all existence by a mind *in love with the good*. In the higher reaches of human nature, as much as in the lower, rationality depends on distinguishing the excellent; and that distinction can be made, in the last analysis, only by an irrational impulse. As life is a better form given to force, by which the universal flux is subdued to create and serve a somewhat permanent interest, so reason is a better form given to interest itself, by which

and physiology; for they must perforce approach the subject from the side of matter, since all science and all evidence are external; nor could they ever reach consciousness at all if they did not observe its occasions and then interpret those occasions dramatically. At the same time, the inferred mind they subject to examination will yield nothing but ideas, and it is a marvel how such a dream can regard those natural objects from which the psychologist has inferred it. Perception is in fact no primary phase of consciousness; it is an ulterior practical function acquired by a dream which has become symbolic of its conditions, and therefore relevant to its own destiny. Such relevance and symbolism are indirect and slowly acquired; their status cannot be understood unless we regard them as forms of imagination happily grown significant. In imagination, not in perception, lies the substance of experience, while knowledge and reason are but its chastened and ultimate form.

Every actual animal is somewhat dull and somewhat mad. He will at times miss his signals and stare vacantly when he might well act, while at other times he will run off into convulsions and raise a dust in his own brain to no purpose. These imperfections are so human that we should hardly recognise ourselves if we could shake them off altogether. Not to retain any dulness would mean to possess untiring attention and universal interests, thus realising the boast about deeming nothing human alien to us; while to be absolutely without folly would involve perfect self-knowledge and self-control. The intelligent man known to history flourishes within a dullard and holds a lunatic in leash. He is encased in a protective shell of ignorance and insensibility which keeps him from being exhausted and confused by this too complicated world; but that integument blinds him at the same time to many of his nearest and highest interests. He is amused by the antics of the brute dreaming within his breast; he gloats on his passionate reveries, an amusement which sometimes costs him very dear. Thus the best human intelligence is still decidedly barbarous; it fights in heavy armour and keeps a fool at court.

If consciousness could ever have the function of guiding conduct better than instinct can, in the beginning it would be most incompetent for that office. Only the routine and equilibrium which healthy instinct involves keep thought and will at all within the limits of sanity. The predetermined interests we have as animals fortunately focus our attention on practical things, pulling it back, like a ball

with an elastic cord, within the radius of pertinent matters. Instinct alone compels us to neglect and seldom to recall the irrelevant infinity of ideas. Philosophers have sometimes said that all ideas come from experience; they never could have been poets and must have forgotten that they were ever children. The great difficulty in education is to get experience out of ideas. Shame, conscience, and reason continually disallow and ignore what consciousness presents; and what are they but habit and latent instinct asserting themselves and forcing us to disregard our midsummer madness? Idiocy and lunacy are merely reversions to a condition in which present consciousness is in the ascendant and has escaped the control of unconscious forces. We speak of people being "out of their senses," when they have in fact fallen back into them; or of those who have "lost their mind," when they have lost merely that habitual control over consciousness which prevented it from flaring into all sorts of obsessions and agonies. Their bodies having become deranged, their minds, far from correcting that derangement, instantly share and betray it. A dream is always simmering below the conventional surface of speech and reflection. Even in the highest reaches and serenest meditations of science it sometimes breaks through. Even there we are seldom constant enough to conceive a truly natural world; somewhere passionate, fanciful, or magic elements will slip into the scheme and baffle rational ambition.

An imaginative life may therefore exist parasitically in a man, hardly touching his action or environment. There is no possibility of exorcising these apparitions by their own power. A nightmare does not dispel itself; it endures until the organic strain which caused it is relaxed either by natural exhaustion or by some external influence. Therefore human ideas are still for the most part sensuous and trivial, shifting with the chance currents of the brain, and representing nothing, so to speak, but personal temperature. Personal temperature, moreover, is sometimes tropical. There are brains like a South American jungle, as there are others like an Arabian desert, strewn with nothing but bones. While a passionate sultriness prevails in the mind there is no end to its luxuriance. Languages intricately articulate, flaming mythologies, metaphysical perspectives lost in infinity, arise in remarkable profusion. In time, however, there comes a change of climate and the whole forest disappears.

It is easy, from the stand-point of acquired practical competence,

to deride a merely imaginative life. Derision, however, is not interpretation, and the better method of overcoming erratic ideas is to trace them out dialectically and see if they will not recognise their own fatuity. The most irresponsible vision has certain principles of order and valuation by which it estimates itself; and in these principles the Life of Reason is already broached, however halting may be its development. We should lead ourselves out of our dream, as the Israelites were led out of Egypt, by the promise and eloquence of that dream itself. Otherwise we might kill the goose that lays the golden egg, and by proscribing imagination abolish science.

Visionary experience has a first value in its possible pleasantness. Why any form of feeling should be delightful is not to be explained transcendently: a physiological law may, after the fact, render every instance predictable; but no logical affinity between the formal quality of an experience and the impulse to welcome it will thereby be disclosed. We find, however, that pleasure suffuses certain states of mind and pain others; which is another way of saying that, for no reason, we love the first and detest the second. The polemic which certain moralists have waged against pleasure and in favour of pain is intelligible when we remember that their chief interest is edification, and that ability to resist pleasure and pain alike is a valuable virtue in a world where action and renunciation are the twin keys to happiness. But to deny that pleasure is a good and pain an evil is a grotesque affectation: it amounts to giving "good" and "evil" artificial definitions and thereby reducing ethics to arbitrary verbiage. Not only is good that adherence of the will to experience of which pleasure is the basal example, and evil the corresponding rejection which is the very essence of pain, but when we pass from good and evil in sense to their highest embodiments, pleasure remains eligible and pain something which it is a duty to prevent. A man who without necessity deprived any person of a pleasure or imposed on him a pain, would be a contemptible knave, and the person so injured would be the first to declare it, nor could the highest celestial tribunal, if it was just, reverse that sentence. For it suffices that one being, however weak, loves or abhors anything, no matter how slightly, for that thing to acquire a proportionate value which no chorus of contradiction ringing through all the spheres can ever wholly abolish. An experience good or bad in itself remains so for ever, and its inclusion in a more general order of

CHAPTER 3

THE DISCOVERY OF NATURAL OBJECTS

AT FIRST sight it might seem an idle observation that the first task of intelligence is to represent the environing reality, a reality actually represented in the notion, universally prevalent among men, of a cosmos in space and time, an animated material engine called nature. In trying to conceive nature the mind lisps its first lesson; natural phenomena are the mother tongue of imagination no less than of science and practical life. Men and gods are not conceivable otherwise than as inhabitants of nature. Early experience knows no mystery which is not somehow rooted in transformations of the natural world, and fancy can build no hope which would not be expressible there. But we are grown so accustomed to this ancient apparition that we may be no longer aware how difficult was the task of conjuring it up. We may even have forgotten the possibility that such a vision should never have arisen at all. A brief excursion into that much abused subject, the psychology of perception, may here serve to remind us of the great work which the budding intellect must long ago have accomplished unawares. 2

Consider how the shocks out of which the notion of material things is to be built first strike home into the soul. Eye and hand, if we may neglect the other senses, transmit their successive impressions, all varying with the position of outer objects and with the other material conditions. A chaos of multitudinous impressions rains in from all sides at all hours. Nor have the external or cognitive senses an original primacy. The taste, the smell, the alarming sounds of things are continually distracting attention. There are infinite reverberations in memory of all former impressions, together with fresh fancies created in the brain, things at first in no wise subordinated to external objects. All these incongruous elements are mingled like a witches' brew. And more: there are indications that inner sensations, such as those of digestion, have an overpowering influence on the primitive mind, which has not learned to articulate or distinguish permanent needs. So that to the whirl of outer sensations we must add, to reach some notion of what

The chief perplexity, however, which besets this subject and makes discussions of it so often end in a cloud, is quite artificial. Thought is not a mechanical calculus, where the elements and the method exhaust the fact. Thought is a form of life, and should be conceived on the analogy of nutrition, generation, and art. Reason, as Hume said with profound truth, is an unintelligible instinct. It could not be otherwise if reason is to remain something transitive and existential; for transition is unintelligible, and yet is the deepest characteristic of existence. Philosophers, however, having perceived that the function of thought is to fix static terms and reveal eternal relations, have inadvertently transferred to the living act what is true only of its ideal object; and they have expected to find in the process, treated psychologically, that luminous deductive clearness which belongs to the ideal world it tends to reveal. The intelligible, however, lies at the periphery of experience, the surd at its core; and intelligence is but one centrifugal ray darting from the slime to the stars. Thought must execute a metamorphosis; and while this is of course mysterious, it is one of those familiar mysteries, like motion and will, which are more natural than dialectical lucidity itself; for dialectic grows cogent by fulfilling intent, but intent or meaning is itself vital and inexplicable.

The process of counting is perhaps as simple an instance as can be found of a mental operation on sensible data. The clock, let us say, strikes two: if the sensorium were perfectly elastic and after receiving the first blow reverted exactly to its previous state, retaining absolutely no trace of that momentary oscillation and no altered habit, then it is certain that a sense for number or a faculty of counting could never arise. The second stroke would be responded to with the same reaction which had met the first. There would be no summation of effects, no complication. However numerous the successive impressions might come to be, each would remain fresh and pure, the last being identical in character with the first. One, one, one, would be the monotonous response for ever. Just so generations of ephemeral insects that succeeded one another without transmitting experience might repeat the same round of impressions—an everlasting progression without a shadow of progress. Such, too, is the idiot's life: his liquid brain transmits every impulse without resistance and retains the record of no impression.

Intelligence is accordingly conditioned by a modification of both structure and consciousness by dint of past events. To be aware that

a second stroke is not itself the first, I must retain something of the old sensation. The first must reverberate still in my ears when the second arrives, so that this second, coming into a consciousness still filled by the first, is a different experience from the first, which fell into a mind perfectly empty and unprepared. Now the newcomer finds in the subsisting One a sponsor to christen it by the name of Two. The first stroke was a simple 1. The second is not simply another 1, a mere iteration of the first. It is 1^1 , where the coefficient represents the reverberating first stroke, still persisting in the mind, and forming a background and perspective against which the new stroke may be distinguished. The meaning of "two," then, is "this after that" or "this again," where we have a simultaneous sense of two things which have been separately perceived but are identified as similar in their nature. Repetition must cease to be pure repetition and become cumulative before it can give rise to the consciousness of repetition.

The first condition of counting, then, is that the sensorium should retain something of the first impression while it receives the second, or (to state the corresponding mental fact) that the second sensation should be felt together with a survival of the first from which it is distinguished in point of existence and with which it is identified in point of character.

Now, to secure this, it is not enough that the sensorium should be materially continuous, or that a "spiritual substance" or a "transcendental ego" should persist in time to receive the second sensation after having received and registered the first. A perfectly elastic sensorium, a wholly unchanging soul, or a quite absolute ego might remain perfectly identical with itself through various experiences without collating them. It would then remain, in fact, more truly and literally identical than if it were modified somewhat by those successive shocks. Yet a sensorium or a spirit thus unchanged would be incapable of memory, unfit to connect a past perception with one present or to become aware of their relation. It is not identity in the substance impressed, but growing complication in the phenomenon presented, that makes possible a sense of diversity and relation between things. The identity of substance or spirit, if it were absolute, would indeed prevent comparison, because it would exclude modifications, and it is the survival of past modifications within the present that makes comparisons possible. We may impress any number of forms successively on the same water, and the identity of the sub-

of his body, so the feelings of pleasure, safety, and hope which he brings into the soul are projected into his spirit; and to this spirit, more than to anything else, energy, independence, and substantiality are originally attributed. The emotions felt in his presence being the ultimate issue and term of his effect in us, the counterpart or shadow of those emotions is regarded as the first and deepest factor in his causality. It is his divine life, more than aught else, that underlies his apparitions and explains the influences which he propagates. The substance or independent existence attributed to objects is therefore by no means only or primarily a physical notion. What is conceived to support the physical qualities is a pseudo-psychic or vital force. It is a moral and living object that we construct, building it up out of all the materials, emotional, intellectual, and sensuous, which lie at hand in our consciousness to be synthesised into the hybrid reality which we are to fancy confronting us. To discriminate and redistribute those miscellaneous physical and psychical elements, and to divorce the god from the material sun, is a much later problem, arising at a different and more reflective stage in the Life of Reason.

When reflection, turning to the comprehension of a chaotic experience, busies itself about recurrences, when it seeks to normalise in some way things coming and going, and to straighten out the causes of events, that reflection is inevitably turned toward something dynamic and independent, and can have no successful issue except in mechanical science. When on the other hand reflection stops to challenge and question the fleeting object, not so much to prepare for its possible return as to conceive its present nature, this reflection is turned no less unmistakably in the direction of ideas, and will terminate in logic or the morphology of being. We attribute independence to things in order to normalise their recurrence. We attribute essences to them in order to normalise their manifestations or constitution. Independence will ultimately turn out to be an assumed constancy in material processes, essence an assumed constancy in ideal meanings or points of reference in discourse. The one marks the systematic distribution of objects, the other their settled character.

We talk of recurrent perceptions, but materially considered no perception recurs. Each recurrence is one of a finite series and holds for ever its place and number in that series. Yet human attention, while it can survey several simultaneous impressions and find them similar, cannot keep them distinct if they grow too numerous. The

case, after all the evidence we demand has been gathered, to complain that the supersensible substance, reality, or independent object, does not itself descend into the arena of immediate sensuous presentation. Knowledge is not eating, and we cannot expect to devour and possess *what we mean*. Knowledge is recognition of something absent; it is a salutation, not an embrace. It is an advance on sensation precisely because it is representative. The terms or goals of thought have for their function to subtend long tracts of sensuous experience, to be ideal links between fact and fact, invisible wires behind the scenes, threads along which inference may run in making phenomena intelligible and controllable. An import that should become an image would cease to be indicative. Now external objects are thought to be principles and sources of experience; they are accordingly conceived realities on a deeper plane. We may look for all the evidence we choose before we declare our belief to be warranted; but we must not ask for something more than evidence, nor expect to know realities without conceiving them anew. They are revealed only to understanding. We cannot cease to think and still continue to know.

Now the practical burden of such understanding, if you take the trouble to analyse it, will turn out to be what the sceptic says it is: assurance of eventual sensations. But as these sensations, in memory and expectation, are numerous and indefinitely variable, you are not able to hold them clearly before the mind; indeed, the realisation of all the potentialities which you vaguely feel to lie in the future is a task absolutely beyond imagination. Yet your present impressions are far from representing adequately all that might be discovered or that is actually known about the object before you. This object, then, to your apprehension, is not identical with any of the sensations that reveal it, nor is it exhausted by all these sensations when they are added together; yet it contains nothing assignable but what they might conceivably reveal. As it lies in your fancy, then, this object, the reality, is a complex and elusive entity, the sum at once and the residuum of all particular impressions. With this hybrid object, sensuous in its materials and ideal in its locus, each particular glimpse is compared, and is recognized to be but a glimpse, an aspect which the object presents to a particular observer.

Such are the primary relations of reality and appearance. A reality is a term of discourse based on a psychic complex of mem-

CHAPTER 4

NATURE UNIFIED AND MIND DISCERNED

THE THEORY that all real objects and places lie together in one even and homogeneous space, conceived as similar in its constitution to the parts of extension of which we have immediate intuition, is a theory of the greatest practical importance and validity. By its light we carry on all our affairs, and the success of our action while we rely upon it is the best proof of its truth. The imaginative parsimony and discipline which such a theory involves are balanced by the immense extension and certitude it gives to knowledge. It is at once an act of allegiance to nature and a Magna Charta which mind imposes on the tyrannous world, which in turn pledges itself before the assembled faculties of man not to exceed its constitutional privilege and to harbour no magic monsters in unattainable lairs from which they might issue to disturb human labours. Yet that spontaneous intelligence which first enabled men to make this genial discovery and take so fundamental a step toward taming experience should not be laid by after this first victory; it is a weapon needed in many subsequent conflicts. To conceive that all nature makes one system is only a beginning: the articulation of natural life has still to be discovered in detail and, what is more, a similar articulation has to be given to the psychic world which now, by the very act that constitutes Nature and makes her consistent, appears at her side or rather in her bosom.

That the unification of nature is eventual and theoretical is a point useful to remember: else the relation of the natural world to poetry, metaphysics, and religion will never become intelligible. Lalande, or whoever it was, who searched the heavens with his telescope and could find no God, would not have found the human mind if he had searched the brain with a microscope. Yet God existed in man's apprehension long before mathematics or even, perhaps, before the vault of heaven; for the objectification of the whole mind, with its passions and motives, naturally precedes that abstraction by which the idea of a material world is drawn from the chaos of experience, an abstraction which culminates in such atomic

and astronomical theories as science is now familiar with. The sense for life in things, be they small or great, is not derived from the abstract idea of their bodies but is an ancient concomitant to that idea, inseparable from it until both became abstract.

What enables men to perceive the unity of nature is the unification of their own wills. A man half-asleep, without fixed purposes, without intellectual keenness or joy in recognition, might graze about like an animal, forgetting each satisfaction in the next and banishing from his frivolous mind the memory of every sorrow; what had just failed to kill him would leave him as thoughtless and unconcerned as if it had never crossed his path. Such irrational elasticity and innocent improvidence would never put two and two together. Every morning there would be a new world with the same fool to live in it. But let some sobering passion, some serious interest, lend perspective to the mind, and a point of reference will immediately be given for protracted observation; then the laws of nature will begin to dawn upon thought. Every experiment will become a lesson, every event will be remembered as favourable or unfavourable to the master-passion. At first, indeed, this keen observation will probably be animistic and the laws discovered will be chiefly habits, human or divine, special favours or envious punishments and warnings. But the same constancy of aim which discovers the dramatic conflicts composing society, and tries to read nature in terms of passion, will, if it be long sustained, discover behind this glorious chaos a deeper consecutive order. Men's thoughts, like the weather, are not so arbitrary as they seem and the true master in observation, the man guided by a steadfast and superior purpose, will see them revolving about their centres in obedience to quite calculable instincts, and the principle of all their flutterings will not be hidden from his eyes. Belief in indeterminism is a sign of indeterminism. No commanding or steady intellect flirts with so miserable a possibility, which in so far as it actually prevailed would make virtue impotent and experience, in its pregnant sense, impossible.

We have said that those objects which cannot be incorporated into the one space which the understanding envisages are relegated to another sphere called imagination. We reach here a most important corollary. As material objects, making a single system which fills space and evolves in time, are conceived by projection from the flux of sensuous experience, so, *pari passu*, the rest of experience,

with all its other outgrowths and concretions, withdraws into the sphere of mind, the sphere of memory, fancy, and the passions.

Mind, in this proper sense of the word, is the residue of existence, the leavings, so to speak, and parings of experience when the material world has been cut out of the whole cloth. Reflection underlines in the chaotic continuum of sense and longing those aspects that have practical significance; it selects the efficacious ingredients in the world. The trustworthy object which is thus retained in thought, the complex of connected events, is nature, and though so intelligible an object is not soon nor vulgarly recognised, because human reflection is perturbed and halting, yet every forward step in scientific and practical knowledge is a step toward its clearer definition. At first much parasitic drapery clings to that dynamic skeleton. Nature is drawn like a sponge heavy and dripping from the waters of sentience. It is soaked with inefficacious passions and overlaid with idle accretions. Nature, in a word, is at first conceived mythically, dramatically, and retains much of the unintelligible, sporadic habit of animal experience itself. But as attention awakes and discrimination, practically inspired, grows firm and stable, irrelevant qualities are stripped off, and the mechanical process, the efficacious infallible order, is clearly disclosed beneath. Meantime the incidental effects, the "secondary qualities," are relegated to a personal inconsequential region; they people the realm of appearance, the realm of mind.

Mind is therefore sometimes identified with the unreal. We oppose, in an antithesis natural to thought and language, the imaginary to the true, fancy to fact, idea to thing. But this thing, fact, or external reality is, as we discern it, a completion and hypostasis of certain suggestions of experience. The idea of external reality is therefore continuous with the rest of our own minds. Their common substance is the immediate flux. This living worm has propagated by fission, and the two halves into which it has divided its life are mind and nature. Mind has kept and clarified the crude appearance, the dream, the purpose that seethed in the mass; nature has appropriated the order, the constant conditions, the causal substructure, disclosed in reflection, by which the immediate flux is explained and controlled. The chemistry of thought has precipitated these contrasted terms, each maintaining a recognisable identity and having the function of a point of reference for memory and will. Some of these terms or objects of thought we call things and marshal in

all their ideal stability—for there is constancy in their motions and transformations—to make the intelligible external world of practice and science. Whatever stuff has not been absorbed in this construction, whatever facts of sensation, ideation, or will, do not coalesce with the newest conception of reality, we then relegate to the mind.

Raw experience, then, lies at the basis of the idea of nature and approves its reality; while an equal reality belongs to the residue of experience, not taken up, as yet, into that idea. But this residual sensuous reality often seems comparatively unreal because what it presents is entirely without practical force apart from its material organs. This inconsequential character of what remains over follows of itself from the concretion of whatever is constant and efficacious into the external world. If this fact is ever called in question, it is only because the external world is vaguely conceived, and loose wills and ideas are thought to govern it by magic. Yet in many ways falling short of absolute precision people recognise that thought is not dynamic or, as they call it, not real. The idea of the physical world is the first flower or thick cream of practical thinking. Being skimmed off first and proving so nutritious, it leaves the liquid below somewhat thin and unsavoury. Especially does this result appear when science is still unpruned and mythical, so that what passes into the idea of material nature is much more than the truly causal network of forces, and includes many spiritual and moral functions.

The material world, as conceived in the first instance, had not that clear abstractness, nor the spiritual world that wealth and interest, which they have acquired for modern minds. The complex reactions of man's soul had been objectified together with those visual and tactile sensations which, reduced to a mathematical baldness, now furnish terms to natural science. Mind then dwelt in the world, not only in the warmth and beauty with which it literally clothed material objects, as it still does in poetic perception, but in a literal animistic way; for human passion and reflection were attributed to every object and made a fairy-land of the world. Poetry and religion discerned life in those very places in which sense and understanding perceived body; and when so much of the burden of experience took wing into space, and the soul herself floated almost visibly among the forms of nature, it is no marvel that the poor remnant, a mass of merely personal troubles, an uninteresting distortion of things in individual minds, should have

CHAPTER 5

DISCOVERY OF FELLOW-MINDS

WHEN A ghostly sphere, containing memory and all ideas, has been distinguished from the material world, it tends to grow at the expense of the latter, until nature is finally reduced to a mathematical skeleton. This skeleton itself, but for the need of a bridge to connect calculably episode with episode in experience, might be transferred to mind and identified with the scientific thought in which it is represented. But a scientific theory inhabiting a few scattered moments of life cannot connect those episodes among which it is itself the last and the least substantial; nor would such a notion have occurred even to the most reckless sceptic, had the world not possessed another sort of reputed reality—the minds of others—which could serve, even after the supposed extinction of the physical world, to constitute an independent order and to absorb the potentialities of being when immediate consciousness nodded. But other men's minds, being themselves precarious and ineffectual, would never have seemed a possible substitute for nature, to be in her stead the background and intelligible object of experience. Something constant, omnipresent, infinitely fertile is needed to support and connect the given chaos. Just these properties, however, are actually attributed to one of the minds supposed to confront the thinker, namely, the mind of God. The divine mind has therefore always constituted in philosophy either the alternative to nature or her other name: it is *par excellence* the seat of all potentiality and, as Spinoza said, the refuge of all ignorance.

In all social life we envisage fellow-creatures conceived to share the same thoughts and passions and to be similarly affected by events. What is the basis of this conviction? What are the forms it takes, and in what sense is it a part or an expression of reason? This question is difficult, and in broaching it we cannot expect much aid from what philosophers have hitherto said on the subject. For the most part, indeed, they have said nothing, as by Nature's kindly disposition most questions which it is beyond a man's power to answer do not occur to him at all. The suggestions which have

Now the fact that crude experience is innocent of modern philosophy has this important consequence: that for crude experience all data whatever lie originally side by side in the same field; bodies are passionate, desire moves them, thought broods in space and is constituted by a visible metamorphosis of its subject matter. Animism or mythology is therefore no artifice. Passions naturally reside in the object they agitate—our own body, if that be the felt seat of some pang, the stars, if the pang can find no nearer resting-place. Only a long and still unfinished education has taught men to separate emotions from things and ideas from their objects. This education was needed because crude experience is a chaos, and the qualities it jumbles together do not march together in time. Reflection must accordingly separate them, if knowledge (that is, ideas with eventual application and correct transcendence) is to exist at all. In other words, action must be adjusted to certain objects and not to others, and those chiefly regarded must have a certain interpretation put upon them by trained apperception. The rest must be treated as moonshine and taken no account of except perhaps in idle and poetic reverie. In this way crude experience grows reasonable and appearance becomes knowledge of reality.

The fundamental reason, then, why we attribute consciousness to animal bodies is that those bodies, before they are conceived to be merely material, are conceived to possess all the qualities which our own consciousness possesses when we behold them. Such a supposition is far from being a paradox, since only this principle justifies us to this day in believing in whatever we may decide to believe in. The qualities attributed to reality must be qualities found in experience, and if we deny their presence in ourselves (*e.g.*, in the case of omniscience), that is only because the idea of self, like that of matter, has already become special and the region of ideals (in which omniscience lies) has been formed into a third sphere. But before the idea of self is well constituted and before the category of ideals has been conceived at all, every ingredient ultimately assigned to those two regions is attracted into the perceptual vortex for which such qualities as pressure and motion supply a nucleus. The moving image is therefore impregnated not only with secondary qualities—colour, heat, etc.—but with qualities which we may call tertiary, such as pain, fear, joy, malice, feebleness, expectancy. Sometimes these tertiary qualities are attributed to the object in their fulness and just as they are felt. Thus the sun is not only

false imputations and absurd myths. The limits of mutual understanding coincide with the limits of similar structure and common occupation, so that the distortion of insight begins very near home. It is hard to understand the minds of children unless we retain unusual plasticity and capacity to play; men and women do not really understand each other, what rules between them being not so much sympathy as habitual trust, idealisation, or satire; foreigners' minds are pure enigmas, and those attributed to animals are a grotesque compound of Æsop and physiology. When we come to religion the ineptitude of all the feelings attributed to nature or the gods is so egregious that a sober critic can look to such fables only for a pathetic expression of human sentiment and need; while, even apart from the gods, each religion itself is quite unintelligible to infidels who have never followed its worship sympathetically or learned by contagion the human meaning of its sanctions and formulas. Hence the stupidity and want of insight commonly shown in what calls itself the history of religions. We hear, for instance, that Greek religion was frivolous, because its mystic awe and momentous practical and poetic truths escape the Christian historian accustomed to a catechism and a religious morality; and similarly Catholic piety seems to the Protestant an aesthetic indulgence, a religion appealing to sense, because such is the only emotion its externals can awaken in him, unused as he is to a supernatural economy reaching down into the incidents and affections of daily life.

Language is an artificial means of establishing unanimity and transferring thought from one mind to another. Every symbol or phrase, like every gesture, throws the observer into an attitude to which a certain idea corresponded in the speaker; to fall exactly into the speaker's attitude is exactly to understand. Every impediment to contagion and imitation in expression is an impediment to comprehension. For this reason language, like all art, becomes pale with years; words and figures of speech lose their contagious and suggestive power; the feeling they once expressed can no longer be restored by their repetition. Even the most inspired verse, which boasts not without a relative justification to be immortal, becomes in the course of ages a scarcely legible hieroglyphic; the language it was written in dies, a learned education and an imaginative effort are requisite to catch even a vestige of its original force. Nothing is so irrevocable as mind.

but they must be purified by the moralist and disintegrated by the philosopher. Each religion necessarily contradicts every other religion, and probably contradicts itself. What religion a man shall have is a historical accident, quite as much as what language he shall speak. In the rare circumstances where a choice is possible, he may, with some difficulty, make an exchange; but even then he is only adopting a new convention which may be more agreeable to his personal temper but which is essentially as arbitrary as the old.

The attempt to speak without speaking any particular language is not more hopeless than the attempt to have a religion that shall be no religion in particular. A courier's or a dragoman's speech may indeed be often unusual and drawn from disparate sources, not without some mixture of personal originality; but that private jargon will have a meaning only because of its analogy to one or more conventional languages and its obvious derivation from them. So travellers from one religion to another, people who have lost their spiritual nationality, may often retain a neutral and confused residuum of belief, which they may egregiously regard as the essence of all religion, so little may they remember the graciousness and naturalness of that ancestral accent which a perfect religion should have. Yet a moment's probing of the conceptions surviving in such minds will show them to be nothing but vestiges of old beliefs, creases which thought, even if emptied of all dogmatic tenets, has not been able to smooth away at its first unfolding. Later generations, if they have any religion at all, will be found either to revert to ancient authority, or to attach themselves spontaneously to something wholly novel and immensely positive, to some faith promulgated by a fresh genius and passionately embraced by a converted people. Thus every living and healthy religion has a marked idiosyncrasy. Its power consists in its special and surprising message and in the bias which that revelation gives to life. The vistas it opens and the mysteries it propounds are another world to live in; and another world to live in—whether we expect ever to pass wholly into it or no—is what we mean by having a religion.

What relation, then, does this great business of the soul, which we call religion, bear to the Life of Reason? For reason, the Life of Reason is an ideal to which everything in the world should be subordinated; it establishes lines of moral cleavage everywhere

intent, is a more conscious and direct pursuit of the Life of Reason than is society, science, or art. For these approach and fill out the ideal life tentatively and piecemeal, hardly regarding the goal or caring for the ultimate justification of their instinctive aims. Religion also has an instinctive and blind side, and bubbles up in all manner of chance practices and intuitions; soon, however, it feels its way toward the heart of things, and, from whatever quarter it may come, veers in the direction of the ultimate.

Nevertheless, we must confess that this religious pursuit of the Life of Reason has been singularly abortive. Those within the pale of each religion may prevail upon themselves to express satisfaction with its results, thanks to a fond partiality in reading the past and generous draughts of hope for the future; but any one regarding the various religions at once and comparing their achievements with what reason requires, must feel how terrible is the disappointment which they have one and all prepared for mankind. Their chief anxiety has been to offer imaginary remedies for mortal ills, some of which are incurable essentially, while others might have been really cured by well-directed effort. The Greek oracles, for instance, pretended to heal our natural ignorance, which has its appropriate though difficult cure, while the Christian vision of heaven pretended to be an antidote to our natural death, the inevitable correlate of birth and of a changing and conditioned existence. By methods of this sort little can be done for the real betterment of life. To confuse intelligence and dislocate sentiment by gratuitous fictions is a short-sighted way of pursuing happiness. Nature is soon avenged. An unhealthy exaltation and a one-sided morality have to be followed by regrettable reactions. When these come, the real rewards of life may seem vain to a relaxed vitality, and the very name of virtue may irritate young spirits untrained in any natural excellence. Thus religion too often debauches the morality it comes to sanction, and impedes the science it ought to fulfil.

What is the secret of this ineptitude? Why does religion, so near to rationality in its purpose, fall so far short of it in its texture and in its results? The answer is easy: Religion pursues rationality through the imagination. When it explains events or assigns causes, it is an imaginative substitute for science. When it gives precepts, insinuates ideals, or remoulds aspiration, it is an imaginative substitute for wisdom—I mean for the deliberate and im-

partial pursuit of all good. The conditions and the aims of life are both represented in religion poetically, but this poetry tends to arrogate to itself literal truth and moral authority, neither of which it possesses. Hence the depth and importance of religion become intelligible no less than its contradictions and practical disasters. Its object is the same as that of reason, but its method is to proceed by intuition and by unchecked poetical conceits. These are repeated and vulgarised in proportion to their original fineness and significance, till they pass for reports of objective truth and come to constitute a world of faith, superposed upon the world of experience and regarded as materially enveloping it, if not in space at least in time and in profundity. The only truth of religion comes from its interpretation of life, from its symbolic rendering of that aspiration which it springs out of and which it seeks to elucidate. Its falsehood comes from the insidious misunderstanding which clings to it, to the effect that these poetic conceptions are not merely poetical, but are literal information about experience or reality elsewhere—an experience and reality which, strangely enough, supply just the defects betrayed by reality and experience here.

Thus religion has the same original relation to life that poetry has; only poetry, which never pretends to literal validity, adds a pure value to existence, the value of a liberal imaginative exercise. The poetic value of religion would initially be greater than that of poetry itself, because religion deals with higher and more vital themes, with sides of life which are in greater need of some imaginative touch and ideal interpretation than are those pleasant or pompous things which ordinary poetry dwells upon. But this initial advantage is neutralised in part by the abuse to which religion is subject, whenever its symbolic rightness is taken for scientific truth. Like poetry, it improves the world only by imagining it improved, but not content with making this addition to the mind's furniture—an addition which might be useful and ennobling—it thinks to confer a more radical benefit by persuading mankind that, in spite of appearances, the world is really such as that rather arbitrary idealisation has painted it. This spurious satisfaction is naturally the prelude to many a disappointment, and the soul has infinite trouble to emerge again from the artificial problems and sentiments into which it is thus plunged. The value of religion becomes equivocal. Religion remains an imaginative

achievement, a symbolic representation of moral reality which may have a most important function in vitalising the mind and in transmitting, by way of parables, the lessons of experience. But it becomes at the same time a continuous incidental deception; and this deception, in proportion as it is strenuously denied to be such, can work indefinite harm in the world and in the conscience.

On the whole, however, religion should not be conceived as having taken the place of anything better, but rather as having come to relieve situations which, but for its presence, would have been infinitely worse. In the thick of active life, or in the monotony of practical slavery, there is more need to stimulate fancy than to control it. Natural instinct is not much disturbed in the human brain by what may happen in that thin superstratum of ideas which commonly overlays it. We must not blame religion for preventing the development of a moral and natural science which at any rate would seldom have appeared; we must rather thank it for the sensibility, the reverence, the speculative insight which it has introduced into the world.

If we hope to gain any understanding of these matters we must begin by taking them out of that heated and fanatical atmosphere in which the Hebrew tradition has enveloped them. The Jews had no philosophy, and when their national traditions came to be theoretically explicated and justified, they were made to issue in a puerile scholasticism and a rabid intolerance. The question of monotheism, for instance, was a terrible question to the Jews. Idolatry did not consist in worshipping a god who, not being ideal, might be unworthy of worship, but rather in recognising other gods than the one worshipped in Jerusalem. To the Greeks, on the contrary, whose philosophy was enlightened and ingenuous, monotheism and polytheism seemed perfectly innocent and compatible. To say God or the gods was only to use different expressions for the same influence, now viewed in its abstract unity and correlation with all existence, now viewed in its various manifestations in moral life, in nature, or in history. So that what in Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics meets us at every step—the combination of monotheism with polytheism—is no contradiction, but merely an intelligent variation of phrase to indicate various aspects or functions in physical and moral things. When religion appears to us in this light its contradictions and contro-

CHAPTER 2

RATIONAL ELEMENTS IN SUPERSTITION

WE NEED not impose upon ourselves the endless and repulsive task of describing all the superstitions that have existed in the world. In his impotence and laziness the natural man unites any notion with any other in a loose causal relation. A single instance of juxtaposition, nay, the mere notion and dream of such a combination, will suffice to arouse fear or to prompt experimental action.

When philosophers have objected to Hume's account of causation that he gave no sufficient basis for the *necessary* influence of cause on effect, they have indulged in a highly artificial supposition. They have assumed that people actually regard causes as necessary. But a cause, in real life, means a justifying circumstance. We are absolutely without insight into the machinery of causation, notably in the commonest cases, like that of generation, nutrition, or the operation of mind on matter. But we are familiar with the more notable superficial conditions in each case, and the appearance in part of any usual phenomenon makes us look for the rest of it. We do not ordinarily expect virgins to bear children nor prophets to be fed by ravens nor prayers to move mountains; but we may believe any of these things at the merest suggestion of fancy or report, without any warrant from experience, so loose is the bond and so external the relation between the terms morally associated.* When we come to adopt scientific hypotheses, at least in certain provinces of our thought, we lose our primitive openness and simplicity of mind. With an unjustified haste, we assert that miracles are impossible, i.e., that nothing interesting and fundamentally natural can happen unless all the usual, though adventitious, *mise-en-scène* has been prepared behind the curtain.

The philosopher may eventually discover that such machinery is really needed and that even the actors themselves have a mecha-

* They form a dramatic event, single and acceptable to the spirit. Author's note, 1952.

philosophy, not due to lack of intelligence or of faith in law, but rather to a premature vivacity in catching at laws, a vivacity misled by inadequate information. The hunger for facile wisdom is the root of all false philosophy. The mind's reactions anticipate in such cases its sufficient nourishment; it has not yet matured under the rays of experience, so that both materials and guidance are lacking for its precocious organising force. Superstitious minds are penetrating and narrow, deep and ignorant. They apply the higher categories before the lower—an inversion which in all spheres produces the worst and most pathetic disorganisation, because the lower functions are then deranged and the higher contaminated. Poetry anticipates science, on which it ought to follow, and imagination rushes in to intercept memory, on which it ought to feed. Hence superstition and the magical function of religion; hence the deceptions men fall into by cogitating on things they are ignorant of and arrogating to themselves powers which they have never learned to exercise.

to grandiloquent but inaccurate thoughts. Mythical forms were adopted because none other were available, nor could the primitive mind discriminate at all between the mythical and the scientific. Whether it is the myth or the wisdom it expresses that we call religion is a matter of words. Certain it is that the wisdom is alone what gives the myth its dignity, and what originally suggested it. A god's majesty lies in his power, not in his definition or his image.

The creation of a fabulous environment is not, however, the first or most pressing task employing the religious mind. Its first business is rather the work of propitiation; before we stop to contemplate the deity we hasten to appease it, to welcome it, or to get out of its way. Cult precedes fable and helps to frame it, because the feeling of need or fear is a practical feeling, and the ideas it may awaken are only incidental to the reactions its prompts. Worship is therefore earlier and nearer to the roots of religion than dogma is.

Religion arises under high pressure: in the last extremity, every one appeals to God. This appeal is necessarily made in the dark: it is the appeal of a conscious impotence, of an avowed perplexity. What a man in such a case may come to do to propitiate the deity, or to produce by magic a result he cannot produce by art, will obviously be some random action. He will be driven back to the place where instinct and reason begin. His movement will be absolutely experimental, altogether spontaneous. He will have no reason for what he does, save that he must do something.

It is pathetic, however, to observe how lowly the motives are that religion, even the highest, attributes to the deity, and from what a hard-pressed and bitter existence they have been drawn. To be given the best morsel, to be remembered, to be praised, to be obeyed blindly and punctiliously—these have been thought points of honour with the gods, for which they would dispense favours and punishments on the most exorbitant scale. Indeed, the widespread practice of sacrifice, like all mutilations and penances, suggests an even meaner jealousy and malice in the gods; for the disciplinary functions which these things may have were not aimed at in the beginning, and would not have associated them particularly with religion. In setting aside the fat for the gods' pleasure, in sacrificing the first-born, in a thousand other cruel ceremonies, the idea apparently was that an envious

onlooker, lurking unseen, might poison the feast, or revenge himself for not having enjoyed it, unless a part—possibly sufficient for his hunger—were surrendered to him voluntarily. This onlooker was a veritable demon, treated as a man treats a robber to whom he yields his purse that his life may be spared.

To call the gods envious has a certain symbolic truth, in that earthly fortunes are actually precarious; and such an observation might inspire detachment from material things and a kind of philosophy. But what at first inspires sacrifice is a literal envy imputed to the gods, a spirit of vengeance and petty ill-will; so that they grudge a man even the good things which they cannot enjoy themselves. If the god is a tyrant, the votary will be a tax-payer surrendering his tithes to secure immunity from further levies or from attack by other potentates. God and man will be natural enemies, living in a sort of politic peace.

Sacrifices are far from having merely this sinister meaning. Once inaugurated they suggest further ideas, and from the beginning they had happier associations. The sacrifice was incidental to a feast, and the plenty it was to render safe existed already. What was a bribe, offered in the spirit of barter, to see if the envious power could not be mollified by something less than the total ruin of his victims, could easily become a genial distribution of what custom assigned to each: so much to the chief, so much to the god, so much to the husbandman. There is a certain openness, and as it were form of justice, in giving each what is conventionally his due, however little he may really deserve it. In religious observances this sentiment plays an important part, and men find satisfaction in fulfilling in a seemly manner what is prescribed; and since they know little about the ground or meaning of what they do, they feel content and safe if at least they have done it properly. Sacrifices are often performed in this spirit; and when a beautiful order and righteous calm have come to dignify the performance, the mind, having meantime very little to occupy it, may embroider on the given theme. It is then that fable, and new religious sentiments suggested by fable, appear prominently on the scene.

In agricultural rites, for instance, sacrifice will naturally be offered to the deity presiding over germination; that is the deity that might, perhaps, withdraw his favour with disastrous results. He commonly proves, however, a kindly and responsive being,

and in offering to him a few sheaves of corn, some barley-cakes, or a libation from the vintage, the public is grateful rather than calculating; the sacrifice has become an act of thanksgiving. So in Christian devotion (which often follows primitive impulses and repeats the dialectic of paganism in a more speculative region) the redemption did not remain merely expiatory. It was not merely a debt to be paid off and a certain quantum of suffering to be endured which had induced the Son of God to become man and to take up his cross. It was, so the subtler theologians declared, an act of affection as much as of pity; and the spell of the doctrine over the human heart lay in feeling that God wished to assimilate himself to man, rather than simply from above to declare him forgiven; so that the incarnation was in effect a rehabilitation of man, a redemption in itself, and a forgiveness. Men like to think that God has sat at their table and walked among them in disguise. The idea is flattering; it suggests that the courtesy may some day be returned, and for those who can look so deep it expresses pointedly the philosophic truth of the matter. For are not the gods, too, in eternal travail after their ideal, and is not man a part of the world, and his art a portion of the divine wisdom? If the incarnation was a virtual redemption, the first incarnation was the laborious creation itself.

If sacrifice, in its more amiable aspect can become thanksgiving and an expression of profitable dependence, it can suffer an even nobler transformation while retaining all its austerity. Renunciation is the cornerstone of wisdom, the condition of all genuine achievement. The gods, in asking for a sacrifice, may invite us to give up not a part of our food or of our liberty but the foolish and inordinate part of our wills. The sacrifice may be dictated to us not by a jealous enemy needing to be pacified but by a far-seeing friend, wishing we may not be deceived. If what we are commanded to surrender is only what is doing us harm, the god demanding the sacrifice is our own ideal. He has no interests in the case other than our own; he is no part of the environment; he is the goal that determines for us how we should proceed in order to realise as far as possible our inmost aspirations. When religion reaches this phase it has become thoroughly moral. It has ceased to represent or misrepresent material conditions, and has learned to express spiritual goods.

Sacrifice is a rite, and rites can seldom be made to embody

ideas exclusively moral. Something dramatic or mystical will cling to the performance, and, even when the effect of it is to purify, it will bring about an emotional catharsis rather than a moral improvement. The mass is a ritual sacrifice, and the communion is a part of it, having the closest resemblance to what sacrifices have always been. Among the devout these ceremonies, and the lyric emotions they awaken, have a quite visible influence; but the spell is mystic, the god soon recedes, and it would be purely fanciful to maintain that any permanent moral effect comes from such an exercise. The Church has felt as much and introduced the confession, where a man may really be asked to consider what sacrifices he should make for his part, and in what practical direction he should imagine himself to be drawn by the vague Dionysiac influences to which the ritual subjects him.

As sacrifice expresses fear, prayer expresses need. Common-sense thinks of language as something meant to be understood by another and to produce changes in his disposition and behaviour, but language has pre-rational uses of which poetry and prayer are perhaps the chief. A man overcome by passion assumes dramatic attitudes surely not intended to be watched and interpreted; like tears, gestures may touch an observer's heart, but they do not come for that purpose. So the fund of words and phrases latent in the mind flow out under stress of emotion; they flow because they belong to the situation, because they fill out and complete a perception absorbing the mind; they do not flow primarily to be listened to. The instinct to pray is one of the chief avenues to the deity, and the form prayer takes helps immensely to define the power it is addressed to; indeed, it is in the act of praying that men formulate to themselves what God must be, and tell him at great length what they believe and what they expect of him. The initial forms of prayer are not so absurd as the somewhat rationalised forms of it. Unlike sacrifice, prayer seems to be justified by its essence and to be degraded by the transformations it suffers in reflection, when men try to find a place for it in their cosmic economy; for its essence is poetical, expressive, contemplative, and it grows more and more non-sensical the more people insist on making it a prosaic, commercial exchange of views between two interlocutors.

Prayer is a soliloquy; but being a soliloquy expressing need, and being furthermore, like sacrifice, a desperate expedient which

men fly to in their impotence, it looks for an effect: to cry aloud, to make vows, to contrast eloquently the given with the ideal situation, is certainly as likely a way of bringing about a change for the better as it would be to chastise one's self severely, or to destroy what one loves best, or to perform acts altogether trivial and arbitrary. Prayer also is magic, and as such it is expected to do work. The answer looked for, or one which may be accepted instead, very often ensues; and it is then that mythology begins to enter in and seeks to explain by what machinery of divine passions and purposes that answering effect was produced.

Magic is in a certain sense the mother of art, art being the magic that succeeds and can establish itself. For this very reason mere magic is never appealed to when art has been found, and no unsophisticated man prays to have that done for him which he knows how to do for himself. When his art fails, if his necessity still presses, he appeals to magic, and he prays when he no longer can control the event, provided this event is momentous to him. Prayer is not a substitute for work; it is a desperate effort to work further and to be efficient beyond the range of one's powers. It is not the lazy who are most inclined to prayer; those pray most who care most, and, who, having worked hard, find it intolerable to be defeated.

What rational religion really should pass into is contemplation, ideality, poetry, in the sense in which poetry includes all imaginative moral life. That this is what religion looks to is very clear in prayer and in the efficacy which prayer consistently can have. In rational prayer the soul may be said to accomplish three things important to its welfare: it withdraws within itself and defines its good, it accommodates itself to destiny, and it grows like the ideal which it conceives.

If prayer springs from need it will naturally dwell on what would satisfy that necessity; sometimes, indeed, it does nothing else but articulate and eulogise what is most wanted and prized. This object will often be particular, and so it should be, since Socrates' prayer "for the best" would be perfunctory and vapid indeed in a man whose life had not been spent, like Socrates', in defining what the best was. Yet any particular good lies in a field of relations; it has associates and implications, so that the mind dwelling on it and invoking its presence will naturally be enticed also into its background, and will wander there, perhaps

to come upon greater goods, or upon evils which the coveted good would make inevitable. An earnest consideration, therefore, of anything desired is apt to enlarge and generalise aspiration till it embraces an ideal life; for from almost any starting-point the limits and contours of mortal happiness are soon descried. Prayer, inspired by a pressing need, already relieves its impotency by merging it in the general need of the spirit and of mankind. It therefore calms the passions in expressing them, like all idealisation, and tends to make the will conformable with reason and justice.

A comprehensive ideal, however, is harder to realise than a particular one: the rain wished for may fall, the death feared may be averted, but the kingdom of heaven does not come. It is in the very essence of prayer to regard a denial as possible. There would be no sense in defining and begging for the better thing if that better thing had at any rate to be. The possibility of defeat is one of the circumstances with which meditation must square the ideal; seeing that my prayer may not be granted, what in that case should I pray for next? Now the order of nature is in many respects well known, and it is clear that all realisable ideals must not transgress certain bounds. The practical ideal, that which under the circumstances it is best to aim at and pray for, will not rebel against destiny. Conformity is an element in all religion and submission in all prayer; not because what must be is best, but because the best that may be pursued rationally lies within the possible, and can be hatched only in the general womb of being. The prayer, "Thy will be done," if it is to remain a prayer, must not be degraded from its original meaning, which was that an unfulfilled ideal should be fulfilled; it expressed aspiration after the best, not willingness to be satisfied with anything. Yet the inevitable must be accepted, and it is easier to change the human will than the laws of nature. To wean the mind from extravagant desires and teach it to find excellence in what life affords, when life is made as worthy as possible, is a part of wisdom and religion. Prayer, by confronting the ideal with experience and fate, tends to render that ideal humble, practical, and efficacious.

A sense for human limitations, however, has its foil in the ideal of deity, which is nothing but the ideal of man freed from those limitations which a humble and wise man accepts for him-

self, but which a spiritual man never ceases to feel as limitations. Man, for instance, is mortal, and his whole animal and social economy is built on that fact, so that his practical ideal must start on that basis, and make the best of it; but immortality is essentially better, and the eternal is in many ways constantly present to a noble mind; the gods therefore are immortal, and to speak their language in prayer is to learn to see all things as they do and as reason must, under the form of eternity. The gods are furthermore no respecters of persons; they are just, for it is man's ideal to be so. Prayer, since it addresses deity, will in the end blush to be selfish and partial; the majesty of the divine mind envisaged and consulted will tend to pass into the human mind.

This use of prayer has not been conspicuous in Christian times, because, instead of assimilating the temporal to the eternal, men have assimilated the eternal to the temporal, being perturbed fanatics in religion rather than poets and idealists. Pagan devotion, on the other hand, was full of this calmer spirit. The gods, being frankly natural, could be truly ideal. They embodied what was fairest in life and loved men who resembled them, so that it was delightful and ennobling to see their images everywhere, and to keep their names and story perpetually in mind. They did not by their influence alienate man from his appropriate happiness, but they perfected it by their presence. Peopling all places, changing their forms as all living things must according to place and circumstance, they showed how all kinds of being, if perfect in their kind, might be perfectly good. They asked for a reverence consistent with reason, and exercised prerogatives that left man free. Their worship was a perpetual lesson in humanity, moderation, and beauty. Something pre-rational and monstrous often peeped out behind their serenity, as it does beneath the human soul, and there was certainly no lack of wildness and mystic horror in their apparitions. The ideal must needs admit those elemental forces on which, after all, it rests; but reason exists to exorcise their madness and win them over to a steady expression of themselves and of the good.

Prayer, in fine, though it accomplishes nothing material, constitutes something spiritual. It will not bring rain, but until rain comes it may cultivate hope and resignation and may prepare the heart for any issue, opening up a vista in which human prosperity

will appear in its conditioned existence and conditional value. A candle wasting itself before an image will prevent no misfortune, but it may bear witness to some silent hope or relieve some sorrow by expressing it; it may soften a little the bitter sense of impotence which would consume a mind aware of physical dependence but not of spiritual dominion. Worship, supplication, reliance on the gods, express both these things in an appropriate parable. Physical impotence is expressed by man's appeal for help; moral dominion by belief in God's omnipotence. This belief may afterwards seem to be contradicted by events. It would be so in truth if God's omnipotence stood for a material magical control of events by the values they were to generate. But the believer knows in his heart, in spite of the confused explanations he may give of his feelings, that a material efficacy is not the test of his faith. His faith will survive any outward disappointment. In fact, it will grow by that discipline and not become truly religious until it ceases to be a foolish expectation of improbable things and rises on stepping-stones of its material disappointments into a spiritual peace. What would sacrifice be but a risky investment if it did not redeem us from the love of those things which it asks us to surrender? What would be the miserable fruit of an appeal to God which, after bringing us face to face with him, left us still immersed in what we could have enjoyed without him? The real use and excuse for magic is this, that by enticing us, in the service of natural lusts, into a region above natural instrumentalities, it accustoms us to that rarer atmosphere, so that we may learn to breathe it for its own sake. By the time we discover the mechanical futility of religion we may have begun to blush at the thought of using religion mechanically; for what should be the end of life if friendship with the gods is a means only? When thaumaturgy is discredited, the childish desire to work miracles may itself have passed away. Before we weary of the attempt to hide and piece out our mortality, our concomitant immortality may have dawned upon us. While we are waiting for the command to take up our bed and walk we may hear a voice saying: Thy sins are forgiven thee.

CHAPTER 4

MYTHOLOGY

THE ILLUSION involved in fabulous thinking is not so complete and opaque as convention would represent it. In taking fable for fact, good sense and practice seldom keep pace with dogma. There is always a race of pedants whose function it is to materialise everything ideal,* but the great world, half shrewdly, half doggedly, manages to escape their contagion. Language may be entirely permeated with myth, since the affinities of language have much to do with men gliding into such thoughts; yet the difference between language itself and what it expresses is not so easily obliterated. In spite of verbal traditions, people seldom take a myth in the same sense in which they would take an empirical truth. All the doctrines that have flourished in the world about immortality have hardly affected men's natural sentiment in the face of death, a sentiment which those doctrines, if taken seriously, ought wholly to reverse. Men almost universally have acknowledged a Providence, but that fact has had no force to destroy natural aversions and fears in the presence of events; and yet, if Providence had ever been really trusted, those preferences would all have lapsed, being seen to be blind, rebellious, and blasphemous. Prayer, among sane people, has never superseded practical efforts to secure the desired end; a proof that the sphere of expression was never really confused with that of reality. Indeed, such a confusion, if it had passed from theory to practice, would have changed mythology into madness. With rare exceptions this declension has not occurred and myths have been taken with a grain of salt which not only made them digestible, but heightened their savour.

It is always by its applicability to things known, not by its revelation of things unknown and irrelevant, that a myth at its birth appeals to mankind. When it has lost its symbolic value and sunk to the level of merely false information, only an inert and stupid

* Or idealise everything material. Author's note, 1952.

they saw that public events depend on men's character and conduct, not on omens, sacrifices, or intercessions. There was accordingly a sense for both moral and political philosophy in these inspired orators. By assigning a magic value to morality they gave a moral value to religion. The immediate aim of this morality—to propitiate Jehovah—was indeed imaginary, and its ultimate aim—to restore the kingdom of Israel—was worldly; yet that imaginary aim covered, in the form of a myth, a sincere consecration to the ideal, while the worldly purpose led to an almost scientific conception of the principles and movement of earthly things.

To this transformation in the spirit of the law, another almost as important corresponded in the letter. Scripture was codified, proclaimed, and given out formally to be inspired by Jehovah and written by Moses. That all traditions, legends, and rites were inspired and sacred was a matter of course in antiquity. Nature was full of gods, and the mind, with its unaccountable dreams and powers, could not be without them. Its inventions could not be less oracular than the thunder or the flight of birds. Israel, like every other nation, thought its traditions divine. These traditions, however, had always been living and elastic; the prophets themselves gave proof that inspiration was still a vital and human thing. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that while the prophets were preparing their campaign, under pressure of the same threatened annihilation, the same puritanical party should have edited a new code of laws and attributed it retroactively to Moses. While the prophet's lips were being touched by the coal of fire, the priests and king in their conclave were establishing the Bible and the Church. It is easy to suspect, from the accounts we have, that a pious fraud was perpetrated on this occasion; but perhaps the finding of a forgotten book of the Law and its proclamation by Josiah, after consulting a certain prophetess, were not so remote in essence from prophetic sincerity. In an age when every prophet, seeing what was needful politically, could cry, "So saith the Lord," it could hardly be illegitimate for the priests, seeing what was expedient legally, to declare, "So said Moses." Conscience, in a primitive and impetuous people, may express itself in an apocryphal manner which in a critical age conscience would altogether exclude. It would have been hardly conceivable that what was obviously right and necessary should not be the will of Jehovah, manifested of old to the fathers in the desert and now again whispered in their chil-

dren's hearts. To contrive a stricter observance was an act at once of experimental prudence—a means of making destiny, perhaps, less unfavourable—and an act of more fervent worship—a renewal of faith in Jehovah, to whose hands the nation was intrusted more solemnly and irrevocably than ever.

This pious experiment failed most signally. Jerusalem was taken, the Temple destroyed, and the flower of the people carried into exile. The effect of failure, however, was not to discredit the Law and the Covenant, now once for all adopted by the unshakable Jews. On the contrary, when they returned from exile they re-established the theocracy with greater rigour than ever, adding all the minute observances, ritualistic and social, enshrined in Leviticus. Israel became an ecclesiastical community. The Temple, half fortress, half sanctuary, resounded with perpetual psalms. Piety was fed on a sense at once of consecration and of guidance. All was prescribed, and to fulfil the Law, precisely because it involved so complete and, as the world might say, so arbitrary a regimen, became a precious sacrifice, a continual act of religion.

Dogmas are at their best when nobody denies them, for then their falsehood sleeps, like that of an unconscious metaphor, and their moral function is discharged instinctively. They count and are not defined, and the side of them that is not deceptive is the one that comes forward. What was condemnable in the Jews was not that they asserted the divinity of their law, for that they did with substantial sincerity and truth. Their crime is to have denied the equal prerogative of other nations' laws and deities, for this they did, not from critical insight or intellectual scruples, but out of pure bigotry, conceit, and stupidity. They did not want other nations also to have a god. The moral government of the world, which the Jews are praised for having first asserted, did not mean for them that nature shows a generic benevolence toward life and reason wherever these arise. Such a moral government might have been conceived by a pagan philosopher and was not taught in Israel until, selfishness having been outgrown, the birds and the heathen were also placed under divine protection. What the moral government of things meant when it was first asserted was that Jehovah expressly directed the destinies of heathen nations and the course of nature itself for the final glorification of the Jews.

No civilised people had ever had such pretensions before. They all recognised one another's religions, if not as literally true (for

CHAPTER 6

THE CHRISTIAN EPIC

REVOLUTIONS ARE ambiguous things. Their success is generally proportionate to their power of adaptation and to the reabsorption within them of what they rebelled against. A thousand reforms have left the world as corrupt as ever, for each successful reform has founded a new institution, and this institution has bred its new and congenial abuses. What is capable of truly purifying the world is not the mere agitation of its elements, but their organisation into a natural body that shall exude what redounds and absorb or generate what is lacking to the perfect expression of its soul.

Whence fetch this seminal force and creative ideal? It must evidently lie already in the matter it is to organise; otherwise it would have no affinity to that matter, no power over it, and no ideality or value in respect to the existences whose standard and goal it was to be. There can be no goods antecedent to the natures they benefit, no ideals prior to the wills they define. A revolution must find its strength and legitimacy not in the reformer's conscience and dream but in the temper of that society which he would transform; for no transformation is either permanent or desirable which does not forward the spontaneous life of the world, advancing those issues toward which it is already inwardly directed. How should a gospel bring glad tidings, save by announcing what was from the beginning native to the heart?

No judgment could well be shallower, therefore, than that which condemns a great religion for not being faithful to that local and partial impulse which may first have launched it into the world. A great religion has something better to consider: the conscience and imagination of those it ministers to. The prophet who announced it first was a prophet only because he had a keener sense and clearer premonition than other men of their common necessities; and he loses his function and is a prophet no longer when the public need begins to outrun his intuitions. Could Hebraism spread over the Roman Empire and take the name of Christianity

without adding anything to its native inspiration? Is it to be lamented that we are not all Jews? Yet what makes the difference is not the teaching of Jesus—which is pure Hebraism reduced to its spiritual essence—but the worship of Christ—something perfectly Greek. Christianity would have remained a Jewish sect had it not been made at once speculative, universal, and ideal by the infusion of Greek thought, and at the same time plastic and devotional by the adoption of pagan habits. The incarnation of God in man, and the divinisation of man in God are pagan conceptions, expressions of pagan religious sentiment and philosophy. Yet what would Christianity be without them? It would have lost not only its theology, which might be spared, but its spiritual aspiration, its artistic affinities, and the secret of its metaphysical charity and joy. It would have remained unconscious, as the Gospel is, that the hand or the mind of man can ever construct anything. Among the Jews there were no liberal interests for the ideal to express. They had only elementary human experience—the perpetual Oriental round of piety and servitude in the bosom of a scorched, exhausted country. A disillusioned eye, surveying such a world, could find nothing there to detain it; religion, when wholly spiritual, could do nothing but succour the afflicted, understand and forgive the sinful, and pass through the sad pageant of life unspotted and resigned. Its pity for human ills would go hand in hand with a mystic plebeian insensibility to natural excellence. It would breathe what Tacitus, thinking of the liberal life, could call *odium generis humani*; it would be inimical to human genius.

There were, we may say, two things in Apostolic teaching which rendered it capable of converting the world. One was the later Jewish morality and mysticism, beautifully expressed in Christ's parables and maxims, and illustrated by his miracles, those cures and absolutions which he was ready to dispense, whatever their sins, to such as called upon his name. This democratic and untrammelled charity could powerfully appeal to an age disenchanted with the world, and especially to those lower classes which pagan polity had covered with scorn and condemned to hopeless misery. The other point of contact which early Christianity had with the public need was the theme it offered to contemplation, the philosophy of history which it introduced into the western world, and the delicious unfathomable mysteries into which it launched the fancy. Here, too, the figure of Christ was the centre for all eyes.

sible, seeing that the chance occurs daily in digestion; what the assertion in this case contradicts is merely the evidence of sense.

Thus at many a turn in Christian tradition a metaphysical mystery takes the place of a poetic figure; the former now expressing by a little miraculous drama the emotion which the latter expressed by a tentative phrase. And the emotion is thereby immensely clarified and strengthened; it is, in fact, for the first time really expressed. For the idea that Christ stands upon the altar and mingles still with our human flesh is an explicit assertion that his influence and love are perpetual; whereas the original parable revealed at most the wish and aspiration, contrary to fact, that they might have been so. By substituting embodiment for allegory, the Greek mind thus achieved something very congenial to its habits: it imagined the full and adequate expression, not in words but in existences, of the emotion to be conveyed. The Eucharist is to the Last Supper what a centaur is to a horseman or a tragedy to a song. Similarly a Dantesque conception of hell and paradise embodies in living detail the innocent apologue in the gospel about a separation of the sheep from the goats. The result is a chimerical metaphysics, containing much which, in reference to existing facts, is absurd; but that metaphysics, when taken for what it truly is, a new mythology, utters the subtler secrets of the new religion not less ingeniously and poetically than pagan mythology reflected the daily shifts in nature and in human life.

Metaphysics became not only a substitute for allegory but at the same time a background for history. Neo-Platonism had enlarged, in a way suited to the speculative demands of the time, the cosmos conceived by Greek science. In an intelligible region, unknown to cosmography and peopled at first by the Platonic ideas and afterward by Aristotle's solitary God, there was now the Absolute One, too exalted for any predicates, but manifesting its essence in the first place in a supreme Intelligence, the second hypostasis of a Trinity; and in the second place in the Soul of the World, the third hypostasis, already relative to natural existence. Now the Platonists conceived these entities to be permanent and immutable; the physical world itself had a meaning and an expressive value, like a statue, but no significant history. When the Jewish notion of creation and divine government of the world presented itself to the Greeks, they hastened to assimilate it to their

created by his own action. He is afraid of a universe that leaves him alone. Freedom appals him; he can apprehend in it nothing but tedium and desolation, so immature is he and so barren does he think himself to be. He has to imagine what the angels would say, so that his own good impulses (which create those angels) may gain in authority, and none of the dangers that surround his poor life make the least impression upon him until he hears that there are hobgoblins hiding in the wood. His moral life, to take shape at all, must appear to him in fantastic symbols. The history of these symbols is therefore the history of his soul.

There was in the beginning, so runs the Christian story, a great celestial King, wise and good, surrounded by a court of winged musicians and messengers. He had existed from all eternity, but had always intended, when the right moment should come, to create temporal beings, imperfect copies of himself in various degrees. These, of which man was the chief, began their career in the year 4004 B.C., and they would live on an indefinite time, possibly, that chronological symmetry might not be violated, until A.D. 4004. The opening and close of this drama were marked by two magnificent tableaux. In the first, in obedience to the word of God, sun, moon, and stars, and earth with all her plants and animals, assumed their appropriate places, and nature sprang into being with all her laws. The first man was made out of clay, by a special act of God, and the first woman was fashioned from one of his ribs, extracted while he lay in a deep sleep. They were placed in an orchard where they often could see God, its owner, walking in the cool of the evening. He suffered them to range at will and eat of all the fruits he had planted save that of one tree only. But they, incited by a devil, transgressed this single prohibition, and were banished from that paradise with a curse upon their head, the man to live by the sweat of his brow and the woman to bear children in labour. These children possessed from the moment of conception the inordinate natures which their parents had acquired. They were born to sin and to find disorder and death everywhere within and without them.

At the same time God, lest the work of his hands should wholly perish, promised to redeem in his good season some of Adam's children and restore them to a natural life. This redemption was to come ultimately through a descendant of Eve, whose

damned, howling, writhing, and half transformed into loathsome beasts, should be engulfed in a fiery furnace. The two cities, always opposite in essence, should thus be finally divided in existence, each bearing its natural fruits and manifesting its true nature.

Let the reader fill out this outline for himself with its thousand details; let him remember the endless mysteries, arguments, martyrdoms, consecrations that carried out the sense and made vital the beauty of the whole. Let him pause before the phenomenon; he can ill afford, if he wishes to understand history or the human mind, to let the apparition float by unchallenged without delivering up its secret. What shall we say of this Christian dream?

Those who are still troubled by the fact that this dream is by many taken for a reality, and who are consequently obliged to defend themselves against it, as against some dangerous error in science or in philosophy, may be allowed to marshal arguments in its disproof. Such, however, is not my intention. Do we marshal arguments against the miraculous birth of Buddha, or the story of Cronos devouring his children? We seek rather to honour the piety and to understand the poetry embodied in those fables. If it be said that those fables are believed by no one, I reply that those fables are or have been believed just as unhesitatingly as the Christian theology, and by men no less reasonable or learned than the persistent apologists of our own ancestral creeds. Matters of religion should never be matters of controversy. We neither argue with a lover about his taste, nor condemn him, if we are just, for knowing so human a passion. That he harbours it is no indication of a want of sanity on his part in other matters. But while we acquiesce in his satisfaction, and are glad he has it, we need no arguments to dissuade us from sharing it. Each man may have his own loves, but the object in each case is different. And so it is, or should be, in religion. Before the rise of those strange and fraudulent Hebraic pretensions there was no question among men about the national, personal, and poetic character of religious allegiance. It could never have been a duty to adopt a religion not one's own any more than a language, a coinage, or a costume not current in one's own country. The idea that religion contains a literal, not a symbolic, representation of truth and life is simply an impossible idea. Whoever entertains it has not come within the region of profitable philosophising on that subject. His science is not wide enough

CHAPTER 7

PAGAN CUSTOM AND BARBARIAN GENIUS INFUSED INTO CHRISTIANITY

THE WESTERN intellect, in order to accept the gospel, had to sublimate it into a neo-Platonic system of metaphysics. In like manner the western heart had to render Christianity congenial and adequate by a rich infusion of pagan custom and sentiment. This adaptation was more gentle and facile than might be supposed. We are too much inclined to impute an abstract and ideal Christianity to the polyglot souls of early Christians, and to ignore that mysterious and miraculous side of antique religions from which Christian cultus and ritual are chiefly derived. In the third century Christianity and devout paganism were, in a religious sense, closely akin; each differed much less from the other than from that religion which at other epochs had borne or should bear its own name. Had Julian the Apostate succeeded in his enterprise he would not have rescued anything which the admirers of classic paganism could at all rejoice in; a disciple of Iamblichus could not but plunge headlong into the same sea of superstition and dialectic which had submerged Christianity. In both parties ethics were irrational and morals corrupt. The political and humane religion of Hellenism had disappeared, and the question between Christians and pagans amounted simply to a choice of fanaticisms. Reason had suffered a general eclipse, but civilisation, although decayed, still subsisted, and a certain scholastic discipline, a certain speculative habit, and many an ancient religious usage remained in the world. The people could change their gods, but not the spirit in which they worshipped them. Christianity had insinuated itself almost unobserved into a society full of rooted traditions. The first disciples had been disinherited Jews, with religious habits which men of other races and interests could never have adopted intelligently; the Church was accordingly wise enough to perpetuate in its practice at least an indispensable minimum of popular paganism. How considerable

this minimum was a glance at Catholic piety will suffice to convince us.

The Græco-Jewish system of theology constructed by the Fathers had its liturgical counterpart in the sacraments and in a devout eloquence which may be represented to us fairly enough by the Roman missal and breviary. This liturgy, transfused as it is with pagan philosophy and removed thereby from the Oriental directness and formlessness of the Bible, keeps for the most part its theological and patristic tone. Psalms abound, Virgin and saints are barely mentioned, a certain universalism and concentration of thought upon the Redemption and its speculative meaning pervades the Latin ritual sung behind the altar-rails. But any one who enters a Catholic church with an intelligent interpreter will at once perceive the immense distance which separates that official and impersonal ritual from the daily prayers and practices of Catholic people. The latter refer to the real exigencies of daily life and serve to express or reorganise personal passions. While mass is being celebrated the old woman will tell her beads, lost in a vague rumination over her own troubles; while the priests chant something unintelligible about Abraham or Nebuchadnezzar, the housewife will light her wax-candles, duly blessed for the occasion, before Saint Barbara, to be protected thereby from the lightning; and while the preacher is repeating, by rote, dialectical subtleties about the union of the two natures in Christ's person, a listener's fancy may float sadly over the mystery of love and of life, and (being himself without resources in the premises) he may order a mass to be said for the repose of some departed soul.

In a Catholic country, every spot and every man has a particular patron. These patrons are sometimes local worthies, canonised by tradition or by the Roman see, but no less often they are simply local appellations of Christ or the Virgin, appellations which are known theoretically to refer all to the same *numen*, but which practically possess diverse religious values; for the miracles and intercessions attributed to the Virgin under one title are far from being miracles and intercessions attributable to her under another. He who has been all his life devout to Loreto will not place any special reliance on the Pillar at Saragossa. A bereaved mother will not fly to the Immaculate Conception for comfort, but of course to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows. Each religious order and all

a culture and a social organisation the influence of which they had not, in their simplicity, the means to withstand. During several ages they could only modify by their misunderstandings and inertia arts wholly new to their lives.

What sort of religion these barbarians may previously have had is beyond our accurate knowledge. They handed down a mythology not radically different from the Græco-Roman, though more vaguely and grotesquely conceived; and they recognised tribal duties and glories from which religious sanctions could hardly have been absent. But a barbarian mind, like a child's, is easy to convert and to people with what stories you will. The Northmen drank in with pleased astonishment what the monks told them about hell and heaven, God the Father and God the Son, the Virgin and the beautiful angels; they accepted the sacraments with vague docility; they showed a qualified respect, often broken upon, it is true, by instinctive rebellions, for a clergy which after all represented whatever vestiges of learning, benevolence, or art still lingered in the world. But this easy and boasted conversion was fanciful only and skin-deep. A non-Christian ethics of valour and honour, a non-Christian fund of superstition, legend, and sentiment, subsisted always among mediæval peoples. Their soul, so largely inarticulate, might be overlaid with churchly habits and imprisoned for the moment in the panoply of patristic dogma; but pagan Christianity always remained a religion foreign to them, accepted only while their minds continued in a state of helpless tutelage. It was thus that the Roman Church hatched the duck's egg of Protestantism.

In its native seats the Catholic system prompts among those who inwardly reject it satire and indifference rather than heresy, because on the whole it expresses well enough the religious instincts of the people. Only those strenuously oppose it who hate religion itself. But among converted barbarians the case was naturally different, and opposition to the Church came most vehemently from certain religious natures whose instincts it outraged or left unsatisfied. Even before heresy burst forth this religious restlessness found vent in many directions. It endowed Christianity with several beautiful but insidious gifts, several incongruous though well-meant forms of expression. Among these we may count Gothic art, chivalrous sentiment, and even scholastic philosophy. These things came, as we know, ostensibly to serve Christianity, which has

learned to regard them as its own emanations. But in truth they barbarised Christianity just as Greek philosophy and worship and Roman habits of administration had paganised it in the beginning. And barbarised Christianity, even before it became heretical, was something new, something very different in temper and beauty from the pagan Christianity of the South and East.

In the Catholicism of the Middle Ages, as it flourished in the North, the barbarian soul, apprenticed to monkish masters, appeared in all its childlike trust, originality, and humour. The tragic meaning of the Christian faith, its immense renunciation of all things earthly and the merely metaphysical glory of its transfigured life, commonly escaped apprehension, as it still continues to do. People listened open-mouthed to the missionary and accepted his asseverations with unsuspecting emotion. A seed planted in such a virgin and uncultivated soil must needs bring forth fruit of a new savour.

In northern Christianity a fresh quality of brooding tenderness prevailed over the tragic passion elsewhere characteristic of Catholic devotion. Intricacy was substituted for dignity and poetry for rhetoric; the basilica became an abbey and the hermitage a school. The feudal ages were a wonderful seed-time in a world all gaunt with ruins. Horrors were there mingled with delicacies and confusion with idyllic peace. It was here a poet's childhood passed amid the crash of war, there an alchemist's old age flickering away amid cobwebs and gibberish. Something jocund and mischievous peeped out even in the cloister; gargoyles leered from the belfry, while ivy and holly grew about the cross. The Middle Ages were the true renaissance. Their Christianity was the theme, the occasion, the excuse for their art and jollity, their curiosity and tenderness; it was far from being the source of those delightful inventions. The Crusades were not inspired by the Prince of Peace, to whose honour they were fancifully and passionately dedicated; so chivalry, Gothic architecture, and scholastic philosophy were profane expressions of a self-discovering genius in a people incidentally Christian. The barbarians had indeed been indoctrinated, they had been introduced into an alien spiritual and historic medium, but they had not been made over or inwardly tamed. It had perhaps been rendered easier for them, by contact with an existing or remembered civilisation, to mature their own genius, even in the act of confusing its expression through foreign accretions. They had been thereby stimulated to

civilise themselves and encouraged also to believe themselves civilised somewhat prematurely.

The process of finding their own art and polity was bound on the whole to diverge more and more from its Latin model. It consisted now of imitation, now of revulsion and fanciful originality; never was a race so much under the sway of fashions. Fashion is something barbarous, for it produces innovation without reason and imitation without benefit. It marks very clearly that margin of irresponsible variation in manners and thoughts which among a people artificially civilised may so easily be larger than the solid core. It is characteristic of occidental society in mediæval and modern times, because this society is led by people who, being educated in a foreign culture, remain barbarians at heart. Some educated persons, accordingly, are merely students and imbibers; they sit at the feet of a past which, not being really theirs, can produce no fruit in them but sentimentality. Others are merely *protestants*; they are active in the moral sphere only by virtue of an inward rebellion against something greater and overshadowing, yet repulsive and alien. They are conscious truants from a foreign school of life.

In the Protestant religion it is necessary to distinguish inner inspiration from historical entanglements. Unfortunately, as the whole doctrinal form of this religion is irrelevant to its spirit and imposed from without, being due to the step-motherly nurture it received from the Church, we can reach a conception of its inner spirit only by studying its tendency and laws of change or its incidental expression in literature and custom. Yet these indirect symptoms are so striking that even an outsider, if at all observant, need not fear to misinterpret them. Taken externally, Protestantism is, of course, a form of Christianity; it retains the Bible and a more or less copious selection of patristic doctrines. But in its spirit and inward inspiration it is something quite as independent of Judea as of Rome. It is simply the natural religion of the Teutons raising its head above the flood of Roman and Judean influences. Its character may be indicated by saying that it is a religion of pure spontaneity, of emotional freedom, deeply respecting itself but scarcely deciphering its purposes. It is the self-consciousness of a spirit in process of incubation, jealous of its potentialities, averse to definitions and finalities of any kind because it can itself discern nothing fixed or final. It is adventurous and puzzled by the world;

full of rudimentary virtues and clear fire, energetic, faithful, and rebellious to tradition. It accordingly mistakes vitality, both in itself and in the universe, for spiritual life.

This underlying Teutonic religion, which we must call Protestantism for lack of a better name, is anterior to Christianity and can survive it. To identify it with the Gospel may have seemed possible so long as, in opposition to pagan Christianity, the Teutonic spirit could appeal to the Gospel for support. The Gospel has indeed nothing pagan about it, but it has also nothing Teutonic; and the momentary alliance of two such disparate forces must naturally cease with the removal of the common enemy which alone united them. The Gospel is unworldly, disenchanted, ascetic; it treats ecclesiastical establishments with tolerant contempt, conforming to them with indifference; it regards prosperity as a danger, earthly ties as a burden, Sabbaths as a superstition; it revels in miracles; it is democratic and antinomian; it loves contemplation, poverty and solitude; it meets sinners with sympathy and heartfelt forgiveness, but Pharisees and Puritans with biting scorn. In a word, it is a product of the Orient, where all things are old and equal and a profound indifference to the business of earth breeds a silent dignity and high sadness in the spirit. Protestantism is the exact opposite of all this. It is convinced of the importance of success and prosperity; it abominates what is disreputable; contemplation seems to it idleness, solitude selfishness, and poverty a sort of dishonourable punishment. It is constrained and punctilious in righteousness; it regards a married and industrious life as typically godly, and there is a sacredness to it, as of a vacant Sabbath, in the unoccupied higher spaces which such an existence leaves for the soul. It is sentimental, its ritual is meagre and unctuous, it expects no miracles, it thinks optimism akin to piety, and regards profitable enterprise and practical ambition as a sort of moral vocation. Its benevolence is optimistic and aims at raising men to a conventional well-being; it thus misses the inner appeal of Christian charity which, being merely remedial in physical matters, begins by renunciation and looks to spiritual freedom and peace.

Protestantism was therefore attached from the first to the Old Testament, in which Hebrew fervour appears in its worldly and pre-rational form. It is not democratic in the same sense as post-rational religions, which see in the soul an exile from some other

sphere wearing for the moment, perhaps, a beggar's disguise: it is democratic only in the sense of having a popular origin and bending easily to popular forces. Swayed as it is by public opinion, it is necessarily conventional in its conception of duty and earnestly materialistic; for the meaning of the word vanity never crosses the vulgar heart. In fine, it is the religion of a race young, wistful, and adventurous, feeling its latent potentialities, vaguely assured of an earthly vocation, and possessing, like the barbarian and the healthy child, pure but unchastened energies. Thus in the Protestant religion the faith natural to barbarism appears clothed, by force of historical accident, in the language of an adapted Christianity.

As the Middle Ages advanced the new-born human genius which constituted their culture grew daily more playful, curious, and ornate. It was naturally in the countries formerly pagan that this new paganism principally flourished. Religion began in certain quarters to be taken philosophically; its relation to life began to be understood, that it was a poetic expression of need, hope, and ignorance. Here prodigious vested interests and vested illusions of every sort made dangerous the path of sincerity. Genuine moral and religious impulses could not be easily dissociated from a system of thought and discipline with which for a thousand years they had been intimately interwoven. Scepticism, instead of seeming, what it naturally is, a moral force, a tendency to sincerity, economy, and fine adjustment of life and mind to reality—scepticism seemed a temptation and a danger. This situation, which still prevails in a certain measure, strikingly shows into how artificial a posture Christianity has thrown the mind. If scepticism, under such circumstances, by chance penetrated among the clergy, it was not favourable to consistency of life, and it was the more certain to penetrate among them in that their ranks, in a fat and unscrupulous age, would naturally be largely recruited from men without ideal ambitions. It became accordingly necessary to reform something; either the gay world to suit the Church's primitive austerity and asceticism, or the Church to suit the world's profane and general interests. The latter task was more or less consciously undertaken by the humanists who would have abated the clergy's wealth and irrational authority, advanced polite learning, and, while of course retaining Christianity—for why should an ancestral religion be changed?—would have retained it as a form of paganism, as an ornament and poetic expression of human life. This movement, had it not been

overwhelmed by the fanatical Reformation and the fanatical reaction against it, would doubtless have met with many a check from the Church's sincere zealots; but it could have overcome them and, had it been allowed to fight reason's battle with reason's weapons, would ultimately have led to general enlightenment without dividing Christendom, kindling venomous religious and national passions, or vitiating philosophy.

It was not humanism, however, that was destined to restrain and soften the Church, completing by critical reflection that paganisation of Christianity which had taken place at the beginning instinctively and of necessity. There was now another force in the field, the virgin conscience and wilfulness of the Teutonic races, sincerely attached to what they had assimilated in Christianity and now awakening to the fact that they inwardly abhorred and rejected the rest. This situation, in so uncritical an age, could be interpreted as a return to primitive Christianity.

In thus meeting the world the soul without experience shows a fine courage proportionate to its own vigour. We may well imagine that lions and porpoises have a more masculine assurance that God is on their side than ever visits the breast of antelope or jellyfish. This assurance, when put to the test in adventurous living, becomes in a strong and high-bred creature a refusal to be defeated, a gallant determination to hold the last ditch and hope for the best in spite of appearances. It is a part of Protestantism to be austere, energetic, unwearied in some laborious task. The end and profit are not so much regarded as the mere habit of self-control and practical devotion and steadiness. The only evils recognised seem so many challenges to action, so many conditions for some glorious unthought-of victory. Such a religion is indeed profoundly ignorant, it is the religion of inexperience, yet it has, at its core, the very spirit of life. Its error is only to consider the will omnipotent and sacred and not to distinguish the field of inevitable failure from that of possible success. Success, however, would never be possible without that fund of energy and that latent resolve and determination which bring also faith in success. Animal optimism is a great renovator and disinfectant in the world.

In the end, with the complete crumbling away of Christian dogma and tradition, Absolute Egotism appeared openly on the surface in the shape of German speculative philosophy. This form, which Protestantism assumed at a moment of high tension and

reckless self-sufficiency, it will doubtless shed in turn and take on new expressions; but that declaration of independence on the part of the Teutonic spirit marks emphatically its exit from Christianity and the end of that series of transformations in which it took the Bible and patristic dogma for its materials. It now bids fair to apply itself instead to social life and natural science and to attempt to feed its Protean hunger directly from these more homely sources.

CHAPTER 8

CONFLICT OF MYTHOLOGY WITH MORAL TRUTH

MYTHICAL THINKING has its roots in reality, but, like a plant, touches the ground only at one end. It stands unmoved and flowers wantonly into the air, transmuting into unexpected and richer forms the substances it sucks from the soil. It is therefore a fruit of experience, an ornament, a proof of organic vitality; but it is no *vehicle* for knowledge; it cannot serve the purposes of transitive thought or action. Science, on the other hand, is constituted by those fancies which, arising like myths out of perception, retain a sensuous language and point to further perceptions of the same kind; so that the suggestions drawn from one object perceived are only ideas of other objects similarly perceptible. A scientific hypothesis is one which represents something continuous with the observed facts and conceivably existent in the same medium. Science is a bridge touching experience at both ends, over which practical thought may travel from act to act, from perception to perception.

Were mythology merely a poetic substitute for natural science the advance of science would sufficiently dispose of it. What remained over would, like the myths in Plato, be at least better than total silence on a subject that interests us and makes us think, although we have no means of testing our thoughts in regard to it. But the chief source of perplexity and confusion in mythology is its kinship with moral truth. The myth which originally was but a symbol for facts becomes in the sequel an idol substituted for ideal values. This complication, from which half the troubles of philosophy arise, deserves our careful attention.

European history has now come twice upon the dissolution of mythologies, first among the Stoics and then among the Protestants. The circumstances in the two cases were very unlike; so were the mythical systems that were discarded; and yet the issue was in both instances similar. Greek and Christian mythology have alike ended in pantheism. So soon as the constructions of the poets and the Fathers were seen to be ingenious fictions, criticism was con-

fronted with an obvious duty: to break up the mythical compound furnished by tradition into its elements, putting on one side what natural observation or actual history had supplied, and on the other what dramatic imagination had added. For a cool and disinterested observer the task, where evidence and records were not wanting, would be simple enough. But the critic in this case would not usually be cool or disinterested. His religion was concerned; he had no other object to hang his faith and happiness upon than just this traditional hybrid which his own enlightenment was now dissolving. To which part should he turn for support? In which quarter should he continue to place the object of his worship?

From the age of the Sophists to the final disappearance of paganism nearly a thousand years elapsed. Religions do not disappear when they are discredited; it is requisite that they should be replaced. For a thousand years the augurs may have laughed, they were bound nevertheless to stand at their posts until the monks came to relieve them. During this prolonged decrepitude paganism lived on inertia, by accretions from the Orient, and by philosophic reinterpretations. Of these reinterpretations the first was that attempted by Plato and afterward carried out by the neo-Platonists and Christians into the notion of a supernatural spiritual hierarchy; above, a dialectical deity, the hypostasis of intellect and its ontological phases; below, a host of angels and demons, hypostases of faculties, moral influences, and evil promptings. In other words, in the diremption of myths which yielded here a natural phenomenon to be explained and there a moral value to be discerned, Platonism attached divinity exclusively to the moral element. The ideas, which were essentially moral functions, were many and eternal; their physical embodiments were adventitious to them and constituted a lapse, a misfortune to be wiped out by an eventual reunion of the alienated nature with its own model. Religion in such a system necessarily meant redemption. In this movement paganism turned toward the future, toward supernatural and revealed religion, and away from its own naturalistic principle. Revelation, as Plato himself had said, was needed to guide a mind which distrusted phenomena and recoiled from earthly pursuits.

This divorce of neo-Platonic ideas from the functions they originally represented in human life and discourse was found in the end to defeat the very interest that had prompted it—enthusiasm for the ideal. Enthusiasm for the ideal had led Plato to treat all

beauties as stepping-stones toward a perfect beauty in which all their charms might be present together, eternally and without alloy. Enthusiasm for the ideal had persuaded him that mortal life was only an impeded effort to fall back into eternity. These inspired but strictly unthinkable suggestions fell from his lips in his zeal to express how much the burden and import of experience exceeded its sensuous vehicle in permanence and value. A thousand triangles revealed one pregnant proportion of lines and areas; a thousand beds and bridles served one perpetual purpose in human life, and found in fulfilling it their essence and standard of excellence; a thousand fascinations taught the same lesson and coalesced into one reverent devotion to beauty and nobility wherever they might bloom. It was accordingly a poignant sense for the excellence of real things that made Plato wish to transcend them; his metaphysics was nothing but a visionary intuition of values, an idealism in the proper sense of the word. But when the momentum of such enthusiasm remained without its motive power, and its transcendence without its inspiration in real experience, idealism ceased to be an idealisation, an interpretation of reality reaching prophetically to its goals. It became a supernumerary second physics, a world to which an existence was attributed which could be hardly conceived and was certainly supported by no evidence; and, worst of all, it robbed the ideal of its ideality by tearing it up from its roots in natural will and in experienced earthly benefits. For an ideal is not ideal if it is the ideal of nothing.

Meantime, a second reinterpretation of mythology was attempted by the Stoics. Instead of moving forward, like Plato, toward the supernaturalism that was for so many ages to dominate the world, the Stoics, with greater loyalty to pagan principles, reverted to the natural forces that had been the chief basis for the traditional deities. The progress of philosophy had given the Stoics a notion of the cosmos such as the early Aryan could not have possessed when he recorded and took to heart his scattered observations in the form of divine influences. To the Stoics the world was evidently one dynamic system. The power that animated it was therefore one God. Accordingly, after explaining away the popular myths by turning them somewhat ruthlessly into moral apologues, they proceeded to identify Zeus with the order of nature. This identification was supported by many traditional tendencies and philosophic hints. The resulting concept, though still mythical, was

perhaps as rationalistic as the state of science at the time could allow. Zeus had been from the beginning a natural force, at once serene and formidable, the thunderer no less than the spirit of the blue. He was the ruler of gods and men; he was, under limitations, a sort of general providence. Anaxagoras, too, in proclaiming the cosmic function of reason, had prepared the way for the Stoics in another direction. This "reason," which in Socrates and Plato was already a deity, meant an order, an order making for the good. It was the name for a principle much like that which Aristotle called Nature, an indwelling prophetic instinct by which things strive after their perfection and happiness. Now Aristotle observed this instinct, as behoved a disciple of Socrates, in its specific cases, in which the good secured could be discriminated and visibly attained. There were many souls, each with its provident function and immutable guiding ideal, one for each man and animal, one for each heavenly sphere, and one, the prime mover, for the highest sphere of all. But the Stoics, not trained in the same humane and critical school, had felt the unity of things more dramatically and vaguely in the realm of physics. Like Xenophanes of old, they gazed at the broad sky and exclaimed, "The All is One." Uniting these various influences, they found it easy to frame a conception of Zeus, or the world, or the universal justice and law, so as to combine in it a dynamic unity with a provident reason. A world conceived to be material and fatally determined was endowed with foresight of its own changes, perfect internal harmony, and absolute moral dignity. Thus mythology, with the Stoics, ended in pantheism.

On the other hand, mythology had not been a mere poetic physics; it had formulated the object of religion; it had embodied for mankind its highest ideals in worshipful forms. It was when this religious function was transferred to the god of pantheism that the paradox and impossibility of the reform became evident. Nature neither is nor can be man's ideal. The substitution of nature for the traditional and ideal object of religion involves giving nature moral authority over man; it involves that element of Stoicism which is the synonym of inhumanity. Life and death, good and ill fortune, happiness and misery, since they flow equally from the universal order, shall be declared, in spite of reason, to be equally good. True virtue shall be reduced to conformity. He who has no ideal but that nature should possess her actual constitution will be wise and

superior to all flattery and calamity; he will be equal in dignity to Zeus. He who has any less conformable and more determinate interests will be a fool.

The wise man will, meantime, perform all the offices of nature; he will lend his body and his mind to her predestined labours. For pantheistic morals, though post-rational, are not ascetic. In dislodging the natural ideal from the mind, they put in its place not its supernatural exaggeration but a curtailment of it inspired by despair. The passions are not renounced on the ground that they impede salvation or some visionary ecstasy; they are merely chilled by the sense that their defeat, when it occurs, is also desirable. As all the gods have been reduced to one substance or law, so all human treasures are reduced to one privilege—that of fortitude. You can always consent, and by a forced and perpetual conformity to nature lift yourself above all vicissitudes. Those tender and tentative ideals which nature really breeds, and which fill her with imperfect but genuine excellences, you will be too stolid to perceive or too proud to share.

The horror which pantheism has always inspired in the Church is like that which materialism inspires in sentimental idealists; they attack it continually, not so much because anybody else defends it as because they feel it to be implied unmistakably in half their own tenets. The non-Platonic half of Christian theology, the Mosaic half, is bound to become pantheism in the hands of a philosopher. The Jews were not pantheists themselves, because they never speculated on the relation which omnipotence stood in to natural forces and human acts. They conceived Jehovah's omnipotence dramatically, as they conceived everything. He might pounce upon anything and anybody; he might subvert or play with the laws of nature; he might laugh at men's devices, and turn them to his own ends; his craft and energy could not but succeed in every instance; but that was not to say that men and nature had no will of their own, and did not proceed naturally on their respective ways when Jehovah happened to be busy elsewhere. So soon, however, as this dramatic sort of omnipotence was made systematic by dialectic, so soon as the doctrines of creation, omniscience, and providential government were taken absolutely, pantheism was clearly involved. The consequences to moral philosophy were truly appalling, for then the sins God punished so signally were due to his own con-

trivance. The fervours of his saints, the fate of his chosen people and holy temples, became nothing but a puppet-show in his ironical possession.

The strangest part of this system in recent times is that it is only half-conscious of its physical temper, and in calling itself an idealism (because it makes perception and will the substance of their objects), thinks itself an expression of human aspirations. This illusion has deep historical roots. It is the last stage of a mythical philosophy which has been earnestly criticising its metaphors, on the assumption that they were not metaphorical; whereby it has stripped them of all significance and reduced them at last to the bare principle of inversion. Nothing is any longer idealised, yet all is still called an idealism. A myth is an inverted image of things, wherein their moral effects are turned into their dramatic antecedents—as when the wind's rudeness is turned into his anger. When the natural basis of moral life is not understood, myth is the only way of expressing it theoretically, as eyes too weak to see the sun face to face may, as Plato says, for a time study its image mirrored in pools, and, as we may add, inverted there. So the good, which in itself is spiritual only, is transposed into a natural power. At first this amounts to an amiable misrepresentation of natural things; the gods inhabit Mount Olympus and the Elysian Fields are not far west of Cadiz. With the advance of geography the mythical facts recede, and in a cosmography like Hegel's, for instance, they have disappeared altogether; but there remain the mythical values once ascribed to those ideal objects but now transferred and fettered to the sad realities that have appeared in their place. The titles of honour once bestowed on a fabled world are thus applied to the real world by right of inheritance.

Nothing could be clearer than the grounds on which pious men in the beginning recognise divine agencies. We see, they say, the hand of God in our lives. He has saved us from dangers, he has comforted us in sorrow. He has blessed us with the treasures of life, of intelligence, of affection. He has set around us a beautiful world, and one still more beautiful within us. Pondering all these blessings, we are convinced that he is mighty in the world and will know how to make all things good to those who trust in him. In other words, pious men discern God in the excellence of things. If all were well, as they hope it may some day be, God would henceforth be present in everything. While good is mixed with evil, he is

active in the good alone. The pleasantness of life, the preciousness of human possessions, the beauty and promise of the world, are proof of God's power; so is the stilling of tempests and the forgiveness of sins. But the sin itself and the tempest, which optimistic theology has to attribute just as much to God's purposes, are not attributed to him at all by pious feeling, but rather to his enemies. In spite of centuries wasted in preaching God's omnipotence, his omnipotence is contradicted by every Christian judgment and every Christian prayer. If the most pious of nations is engaged in war, and suffers a great accidental disaster, such as it might expect to be safe from. *Te deums* are sung for those that were saved and *Requiems* for those that perished. God's office, in both cases, is to save only.

The criterion of divine activity could not be placed more squarely and unequivocally in the good. Plato and Aristotle are not in this respect better moralists than is an unsophisticated piety. God is the ideal, and what manifests the ideal manifests God. The proof and measure of rationality in the world, and of God's power over it, is the extent of human satisfactions. The existence of any evil—and if evil is felt it exists, for experience is its locus—is a proof that some accident has intruded into God's works. If that loyalty to the good, which is the prerequisite of rationality, is to remain standing, we must admit into the world, while it contains anything practically evil, a principle, however minimised, which is not rational. This irrational principle may be inertia in matter, accidental perversity in the will, or ultimate conflict of interests. Somehow an element of resistance to the rational order must be introduced somewhere. And immediately, in order to distinguish the part furnished by reason from its irrational alloy, we must find some practical test; for if we are to show that there is a great and triumphant rationality in the world, in spite of irrational accidents and brute opposition, we must frame an idea of rationality different from that of being. It will no longer do to say, with the optimists, the rational is the real, the real is the rational. For we wish to make a distinction, in order to maintain our loyalty to the good, and not to eviscerate the idea of reason by emptying it of its essential meaning, which is action addressed to the good and thought envisaging the ideal. To pious feeling, the free-will of creatures, their power, active or passive, of independent origination, is the explanation of all defects; and everything which is not help-

or neo-Platonic party, which denied creation and taught a pure asceticism, that had the best of the argument. The West, however, would not yield to their logic. It might, in an hour of trouble and weakness, make concessions to quietism and accept the cross, but it would not suffer the naturalistic note to die out altogether. It preferred an inconsistency, which it hardly perceived, to a complete surrender of its instincts. It settled down to the conviction that God created the world *and* redeemed it; that the soul is naturally good *and* needs salvation.

This contradiction can be explained exoterically by saying that time and changed circumstances separate the two situations: having made the world perfect, God redeems it after it has become corrupt; and whereas all things are naturally good, they may by accident lose their excellence, and need to have it restored. There is, however, an esoteric side to the matter. A soul that may be redeemed, a will that may look forward to a situation in which its action will not be vain or sinful, is one that in truth has never sinned; it has merely been thwarted. Its ambition is rational, and what its heart desires is essentially good and ideal. So that the whole classic attitude, the faith in action, art, and intellect, is preserved under this protecting cuticle of dogma; nothing was needed but a little courage, and circumstances somewhat more favourable, for the natural man to assert himself again. A people believing in the resurrection of the flesh in heaven will not be averse to a re-awakening of the mind on earth.

Another pitfall, however, opens here. These contrasted doctrines may change rôles. So long as by redemption we understand, in the mystic way, exaltation above finitude and existence, because all particularity is sin, to be redeemed is to abandon the Life of Reason; but redemption might mean extrication from untoward accidents, so that a rational life might be led under right conditions. Instead of being like Buddha, the redeemer might be like Prometheus. In that case, however, the creator would become like Zeus—a tyrant will responsible for our conditions rather than expressive of our ideal. The doctrine of creation would become pantheism and that of redemption, formerly ascetic, would represent struggling humanity.

The seething of these potent and ambiguous elements can be studied nowhere better than in Saint Augustine. He is a more genial and complete representative of Christianity than any of the Greek

Fathers, in whom the Hebraic and Roman vitality was comparatively absent. Philosophy was only one phase of Augustine's genius; with him it was an instrument of zeal and a stepping-stone to salvation. Scarcely had it been born out of rhetoric when it was smothered in authority. Yet even in that precarious and episodic form it acquired a wonderful sweep, depth, and technical elaboration. He stands at the watershed of history, looking over either land; his invectives teach us almost as much of paganism and heresy as his exhortations do of Catholicism. To Greek subtlety he joins Hebrew fervour and monkish intolerance; he has a Latin amplitude and (it must be confessed) coarseness of feeling; but above all he is the illumined, enraptured, forgiven saint. In him theology, however speculative, remains a vehicle for living piety; and while he has, perhaps, done more than any other man to materialise Christianity, no one was ever more truly filled with its spirit.

Saint Augustine's way of conceiving God is an excellent illustration of the power, inherent in his religious genius and sincerity, of giving life and validity to ideas which he was obliged to borrow in part from a fabulous tradition and in part from a petrified metaphysics. God, to him, was simply the ideal eternal object of human thought and love. All ideation on an intellectual plane was a vague perception of the divine essence. "The rational soul understands God, for it understands what exists always unchanged." . . . "God is happiness; and in him and from him and through him all things are happy which are happy at all. God is the good and the beautiful." He was never tired of telling us that God is not true but the truth (*i.e.*, the ideal object of thought in any sphere), not good but the good (*i.e.*, the ideal object of will in all its rational manifestations). In other words, whenever a man, reflecting on his experience, conceived the better or the best, the perfect and the eternal, he conceived God, inadequately, of course, yet essentially, because God signified the comprehensive ideal of all the perfections which the human spirit could behold in itself or in its objects. Of this divine essence, accordingly, every interesting thing was a manifestation; all virtue and beauty were parcels of it, tokens of its superabundant grace. Hence the inexhaustible passion of Saint Augustine toward his God; hence the sweetness of that endless colloquy in prayer into which he was continually relapsing, a passion and a sweetness which no one will understand to whom God is primarily a natural power and only accidentally a moral ideal.

Herein lies the chief difference between those in whom religion is spontaneous and primary—a very few—and those in whom it is imitative and secondary. To the former, divine things are inward values, projected by chance into images furnished by poetic tradition or by external nature, while to the latter, divine things are in the first instance objective factors of nature or of social tradition. Theology, for those whose religion is secondary, is simply a false physics, a doctrine about eventual experience not founded on the experience of the past. Such a false physics, however, is soon discredited by events; it does not require much experience or much shrewdness to discover that supernatural beings and laws are without the empirical efficacy which was attributed to them. True physics and true history must always tend, in enlightened minds, to supplant those misinterpreted religious traditions. Therefore, those whose reflection or sentiment does not furnish them with a key to the moral symbolism and poetic validity underlying theological ideas, if they apply their intelligence to the subject at all, and care to be sincere, will very soon come to regard religion as a delusion. Where religion is primary, however, all that worldly dread of fraud and illusion becomes irrelevant, as it would be irrelevant to a mathematician's reasoning to suspect that Pythagoras was a myth and his supposed philosophy an abracadabra. To the religious man religion is inwardly justified. God has no need of natural or logical witnesses, but speaks himself within the heart, being indeed that ineffable attraction which dwells in whatever is good and beautiful, and that persuasive visitation of the soul by the eternal and incorruptible by which she feels herself purified, rescued from mortality, and given an inheritance in the truth. This is precisely what Saint Augustine knew and felt with remarkable clearness and persistence, and what he expressed unmistakably by saying that every intellectual perception is knowledge of God or has God's nature for its object.

The horror with which an idealistic youth at first views the truculence of nature and the turpitude of worldly life is capable of being softened by experience. Time subdues our initial preferences by showing us the complexity of moral relations in this world, and by extending our imaginative sympathy to forms of existence and passion at first repulsive, which from new and ultra-personal points of view may have their natural sweetness and value. In this way, Saint Augustine was ultimately brought to appreciate the

catholicity and scope of those Greek sages who had taught that all being was to itself good, that evil was but the impediment of natural function, and that therefore the conception of anything totally or essentially evil was only a petulance or exaggeration in moral judgment that turned an incidental conflict of interests into a metaphysical opposition of natures. All definite being is in itself congruous with the true and the good, since its constitution is intelligible and its operation is creative of values. Were it not for the limitations of matter and the accidental crowding and conflict of life, all existing natures might subsist and prosper in peace and concord, just as their various ideas live without contradiction in the realm of conceptual truth. We may say of all things, in the words of the Gospel, that their angels see the face of God. Their ideals are no less cases of the good, no less instances of perfection, than is the ideal locked in our private bosom. It is the part of justice and charity to recognise this situation, in view of which we may justly say that evil is always relative and subordinate to some constituted nature in itself a standard of worth, a point of departure for the moral valuation of eventual changes and of surrounding things. Evil is accordingly accidental and unnatural; it follows upon the maladaptation of actions to natures and of natures to one another. It can be no just ground for the condemnation of any of those natural essences which only give rise to it by their imperfect realisation.

The Semitic idea of creation could now receive that philosophical interpretation which it so sadly needed. Primordially, and in respect to what was positive in them, all things might be instances of the good; in their essence and ideal state they might be said to be created by God. What was evil must, therefore, be carried up into another concept, must be referred, if you will, to another mythical agent; and this mythical agent in Saint Augustine's theology was named sin.

Everything in the world which obscured the image of the creator or rebelled against his commandments (everything, that is, which prevented in things the expression of their natural ideals) was due to sin. Sin was responsible for disease of mind and body, for all suffering, for death, for ignorance, perversity, and dulness. Sin was responsible—so truly *original* was it—for what was painful and wrong even in the animal kingdom, and sin was responsible for sin itself. The insoluble problems of the origin of evil and of

freedom, in a world produced in its every fibre by omnipotent goodness, can never be understood until we remember their origin. They are artificial problems, unknown to philosophy before it betook itself to the literal justification of fables in which the objects of rational endeavour were represented as causes of natural existence. The former are internal products of life, the latter its external conditions. The cause of everything must have been the cause of sin, yet the principle of good could not be the principle of evil. Both propositions were obviously true, and they were contradictory only after the mythical identification of the God which meant the ideal of life with the God which meant the forces of nature.

The sad effects of this degradation of God into a physical power are not hard to trace in Augustine's own doctrine and feeling. He became a champion of arbitrary grace and arbitrary predestination to perdition. The eternal damnation of innocents gave him no qualms; and in this we must admire the strength of his logic, since if it is right that there should be wrong at all, there is no particular reason for stickling at the quantity or the enormity of it. And yet there are sentences which for their brutality and sycophancy cannot be read without pain—sentences inspired by this misguided desire to apologise for the crimes of the universe. "Why should God not create beings that he foreknew were to sin, when indeed in their persons and by their fates he could manifest both what punishment their guilt deserved and what free gifts he might bestow on them by his favour?" "Thinking it more lordly and better to do well even in the presence of evil than not to allow evil to exist at all." Here the pitiful maxim of doing evil that good may come is robbed of the excuse it finds in human limitations and is made the first principle of divine morality. Repellent and contorted as these ultimate metaphysical theories may seem, we must not suppose that they destroyed in Saint Augustine that practical and devotional idealism which they contradicted: the region of Christian charity is fortunately far wider and far nearer home than that of Christian apologetics. The work of practical redemption went on, while the dialectics about the perfection of the universe were forgotten; and Saint Augustine never ceased, by a happy inconsistency, to bewail the sins and to combat the heresies which his God was stealthily nursing, so that in their melodramatic punishment his glory might be more beautifully manifested.

It was Saint Augustine, as we know, who, in spite of his fervid Catholicism, was the favourite master of both Luther and Calvin. They emphasized, however, his more fanatical side, and this very predestinarian and absolutist doctrine which he had prevailed on himself to accept. Here was the pantheistic leaven doing its work; and concentration of attention on the Old Testament, given the reformers' controversial and metaphysical habit of thought, could only precipitate the inevitable. While popular piety bubbled up into all sorts of emotional and captious sects, each with its pathetic insistence on some text or on some whimsey, but all inwardly inspired by an earnest religious hunger, academic and cultivated Protestantism became every day more pale and rationalistic. Mediocre natures continued to rehearse the old platitudes and tread the slippery middle courses of one orthodoxy or another; but distinguished minds could no longer treat such survivals as more than allegories, historic or mythical illustrations of general spiritual truths. So Lessing, Goethe, and the idealists in Germany, and after them such lay prophets as Carlyle and Emerson, had for Christianity only an inessential respect. They drank their genuine inspiration directly from nature, from history, from the total personal apprehension they might have of life. In them speculative theology rediscovered its affinity to neo-Platonism; in other words, Christian philosophy was washed clean of its legendary alloy to become a pure cosmic speculation. It was Gnosticism come again in a very different age to men in an opposite phase of culture, but with its logic unchanged. The creation was the self-diremption of the infinite into finite expression, the fall was the self-discovery of this finitude, the incarnation was the awakening of the finite to its essential infinity; and here the matter generally hastened to a conclusion; for the redemption with its means of application, once the central point in Christianity, was less pliable to the new pantheistic interpretation.

The world of German absolutism, like the Stoic world, was not fallen. On the contrary, it was divinely inspired and altogether authoritative; he alone who did not find his place and function in it was unholy and perverse. This world-worship gives to impulse and fact, whatever they may be, liberty to flourish under a divine warrant. Were the people accepting such a system corrupt, it would sanction their corruption, and thereby, most probably, lead to its own abandonment, for it would bring on an ascetic and super-

naturalistic reaction by which its convenient sycophancy would be repudiated. But reflection and piety, even if their object be material and their worship idolatrous, exalt the mind and raise it above vulgar impulse. If you fetch from contemplation a theoretic license to be base, your contemplative habit itself will have purified you more than your doctrine will have power to degrade you afresh, for training affects instinct much more than opinion can. Antinomian theory can flourish blamelessly in a puritan soil, for there it instinctively remains theoretical. And the Teutonic pantheists are for the most part uncontaminated souls, puritan by training, and only interested in furthering the political and intellectual efficiency of the society in which they live. Their pantheism under these circumstances makes them the more energetic and turns them into practical positivists, docile to their social medium and apologists for all its conventions. So that, while they write books to disprove naturalism in natural philosophy where it belongs, in morals where naturalism is treason they are themselves naturalists of the most uncritical description, forgetting that only the interests of the finite soul introduce such a thing as good and evil into the world, and that nature and society are so far from being authoritative and divine that they have no value whatever save by the services they may render to each spirit in its specific and genuine ambitions.

Indeed, this pantheistic subordination of conscience to what happens to exist, betrays its immoral tendency very clearly so soon as it descends from theological seminaries into the lay world. Poets at first begin to justify, on its authority, their favourite passions and to sing the picturesqueness of a blood-stained world. "Practical" men follow, deprecating any reflection which may cast a doubt on the providential justification of their chosen activities, and on the invisible value of the same, however sordid, brutal, or inane they may visibly be. Finally, politicians learn to invoke destiny and the movement of the age to save themselves the trouble of discerning rational ends and to colour their secret indifference to the world's happiness. The follies thus sanctioned theoretically, because they are involved in a perfect world, would doubtless be perpetrated none the less by the same persons had they absorbed in youth a different religion; for conduct is rooted in deep instincts which affect opinion more than opinion can avail to affect them in turn. Yet there is an added indignity in not preserving a clear and honest mind, and in

quitting the world without having in some measure understood and appreciated it.

Pantheism is mythical and has all the subversive powers of ordinary superstition. It turns the natural world, man's stamping-ground and system of opportunities, into a self-justifying and sacred life. By this idealisation the affinity which natural conditions often have to man's interests may be brought out in a striking manner; but their total and real mechanism is no better represented than that of animals in Aesop's fables. To detect the divergence it suffices to open the eyes; and while nature may be rationally admired and cherished for so supporting the soul, it is her eventual ministry to man that makes her admirable, not her independent magnitude or antiquity. To worship nature as she really is, with all her innocent crimes made intentional by our mythology and her unfathomable constitution turned into a caricature of barbarian passions, is to subvert the order of values and to falsify natural philosophy. Yet this dislocation of reason, both in its conceptions and in its allegiance, is the natural outcome of thinking on mythical lines. A myth, by turning phenomena into expressions of thought and passion, teaches man to look for models and goals of action in that external world where reason can find nothing but instruments and materials.

CHAPTER 10

PIETY

HEBRAISM is a striking example of a religion tending to discard mythology and magic. It was a Hebraising apostle who said that true religion and undefiled was to visit the fatherless and the widow, and do other works of mercy. Although a complete religion can hardly remain without theoretic and ritual expression, we must remember that after all religion has other aspects less conspicuous, perhaps, than its mythology, but often more worthy of respect. If religion be, as we have assumed, an imaginative symbol for the Life of Reason, it should contain not only symbolic ideas and rites, but also symbolic sentiments and duties. It is therefore time to turn from religious ideas to religious emotions, from imaginative history and science to imaginative morals.

Piety, in its nobler and Roman sense, may be said to mean man's reverent attachment to the sources of his being and the steadying of his life by that attachment. If we wish to live associated with permanent racial interests we must plant ourselves on a broad historic and human foundation, we must absorb and interpret the past which has made us, so that we may hand down its heritage reinforced, if possible, and in no way undermined or denaturalised. This consciousness that the human spirit is derived and responsible, that all its functions are heritages and trusts, involves a sentiment of gratitude and duty which we may call piety.

The true objects of piety are, of course, those on which life and its interests really depend: parents first, then family, ancestors, and country; finally, humanity at large and the whole natural cosmos. But had a lay sentiment toward these forces been fostered by clear knowledge of their nature and relation to ourselves, the dutifulness or cosmic emotion thereby aroused would have remained purely moral and historical. As science would not in the end admit any myth which was not avowed poetry, so it would not admit any piety which was not plain reason and duty. But man, in his perplexities and pressing needs, has plunged, once for all, into imaginative courses through which it is our business to follow him, to see if he

may not eventually reach his goal even by those by-paths and dark circumlocutions.

What makes piety an integral part of traditional religions is the fact that moral realities are represented in the popular mind by poetic symbols. The awe inspired by principles so abstract and consequences so remote and general is arrested at their conventional name. We have all read in boyhood, perhaps with derision, about the pious Æneas. His piety may have seemed to us nothing but a feminine sensibility, a faculty of shedding tears on slight provocation. But in truth Æneas's piety, as Virgil or any Roman would have conceived it, lay less in his feelings than in his function and vocation. He was bearing the Palladium of his country to a new land, to found another Troy, so that the blood and traditions of his ancestors might not perish. His emotions were only the appropriate expression of his priestly office. The hero might have been stern and stolid enough on his own martial ground, but since he bore the old Anchises from the ruins of Ilium he had assumed a sacred mission. Henceforth a sacerdotal unction and lyric pathos belonged rightfully to his person. If those embers, so religiously guarded, should by chance have been extinguished, there could never have been a Vestal fire nor any Rome. So that all that Virgil and his readers, if they had any piety, revered in the world had been hazarded in those legendary adventures. It was not Æneas's own life or private ambition that was at stake to justify his emotion. His tenderness, like Virgil's own, was ennobled and made heroic by its magnificent and impersonal object. It was truly an epic destiny that inspired both poet and hero.

If we look closer, however, we shall see that mythical and magic elements were requisite to lend this loftiness to the argument. Had Æneas not been Venus's son, had no prophetic instinct animated him, had no Juno been planning the rise of Carthage, how could the future destinies of this expedition have been imported into it, to lift it above some piratical or desperate venture?

Now, what supernatural machinery and heroic figures do for an epic poet piety does for a race. It endows it, through mythical and magic symbols, with something like a vision of its past and future. Religion is normally the most traditional and national of things. It embodies and localises the racial heritage. Commandments of the law, feasts and fasts, temples and the tombs associated with them, are so many foci of communal life, so many points for the dissemination of custom. The Sabbath, which a critical age might justify on

hygienic grounds, is inconceivable without a religious sanction. The craving for rest and emotion expressed itself spontaneously in a practice which, as it established itself, had to be sanctioned by fables till the recurrent holiday, with all its humane and chastening influences, came to be established on supernatural authority. It was now piety to observe it and to commemorate in it the sacred duties and traditions of the race. In this function, of course, lay its true justification, but the mythical one had to be assigned, since the diffused prosaic advantages of such a practice would never avail to impose it on irrational wills. Indeed, had Æneas foreseen in detail the whole history of Rome, would not his faith in his divine mission have been considerably dashed? That celestial mission, those heavenly apparitions, those incalculable treasures carried through many a storm, abused Æneas's mind but served to nerve him for his real destiny. Yet his illusion was merely intellectual. The mission undertaken was truly worth carrying out. Piety thus came to bear the fruits of a good instinct.

Philosophers who harbour illusions about the status of intellect in nature may feel that this leadership of instinct in moral life is a sort of indignity, and that to dwell on it so insistently is to prolong satire without wit. But the leadership of instinct, the conscious expression of automatism, is not merely a necessity in the Life of Reason, it is a safeguard. Piety, in spite of its allegories, contains a much greater wisdom than a half-enlightened and pert intellect can attain. Natural beings have natural obligations, and the value of things for them is qualified by distance and by accidental material connections. Intellect would tend to gauge things impersonally by their intrinsic values, since intellect is itself a sort of disembodied and universal function; it would tend to disregard material conditions and that irrational substratum of reason without which reason would have no organs and no points of application. Piety, on the contrary, esteems things apart from their intrinsic worth, on account of their relation to the agent's person and fortune. Yet such esteem is perfectly rational, partiality in man's affections and allegiance being justified by the partial nature and local status of his life. Piety is the spirit's acknowledgment of its incarnation. So, in filial and parental affection, which is piety in an elementary form, there is a moulding of will and emotion, a check to irresponsible initiative, in harmony with the facts of animal reproduction. Every living crea-

ture has an intrinsic and ideal worth; he is the centre of actual and yet more of potential interests. But this moral value, which even the remotest observer must recognise in both parent and child, is not the ground of their specific affection for each other, which no other mortal is called to feel in their regard. This affection is based on the incidental and irrational fact that the one has this particular man for a father, and the other that particular man for a son. Yet, considering the animal basis of human life, an attachment resting on that circumstance is a necessary and rational attachment.

Piety is in a sense pathetic because it involves subordination to physical accident and acceptance of finitude. But it is also noble and eminently fruitful because, in subsuming a life under the general laws of relativity, it meets fate with simple sincerity and labours in accordance with the conditions imposed. It exercises the eminently sane function of calling thought home. It saves speculative and emotional life from hurtful extravagance by keeping it traditional and social.

Patriotism is another form of piety in which its natural basis and rational function may be clearly seen. It is normal to prefer our own country to all others, because we are children and citizens before we can be travellers or philosophers. Specific character is a necessary point of origin for universal relations: a pure nothing can have no radiation or scope. It is no accident for the soul to be embodied; her very essence is to express and bring to fruition the body's functions and resources. Its instincts make her ideals and its relations her world. A native country is a sort of second body, another enveloping organism to give the will definition. A specific inheritance strengthens the soul. Cosmopolitanism has doubtless its place, because a man may well cultivate in himself, and represent in his nation, affinities to other peoples, and such assimilation to them as is compatible with personal integrity and clearness of purpose. Plasticity to things foreign need not be inconsistent with happiness and utility at home. But happiness and utility are possible nowhere to a man who represents nothing and who looks out on the world without a plot of his own to stand on, either on earth or in heaven. He wanders from place to place, a voluntary exile, always querulous, always uneasy, always alone. His very criticisms express no ideal. His experience is without sweetness, without cumulative fruits, and his children, if he has them, are without morality. For reason and happiness are like other flowers—they wither when plucked.

The object most commonly associated with piety is the gods. Popular philosophy, inverting the natural order of ideas, thinks piety to the gods the source of morality. But piety, when genuine, is rather an incidental expression of morality. Its sources are perfectly natural. Mankind at large is also, to some minds, an object of piety. But this religion of humanity is rather a desideratum than a fact: humanity does not actually appear to anybody in a religious light. The *nihil homine homini utilius* remains a signal truth, but the collective influence of men and their average nature are far too mixed and ambiguous to fill the soul with veneration. Piety to mankind must be three-fourths pity. There are indeed specific human virtues, but they are those necessary to existence, like patience and courage. Supported on these indispensable habits, mankind always carries an indefinite load of misery and vice. Life spreads rankly in every wrong and impracticable direction as well as in profitable paths, and the slow and groping struggle with its own ignorance, inertia, and folly, leaves it covered in every age of history with filth and blood. It would hardly be possible to exaggerate man's wretchedness if it were not so easy to overestimate his sensibility. There is a *fond* of unhappiness in every bosom, but the depths are seldom probed; and there is no doubt that sometimes frivolity and sometimes sturdy habit helps to keep attention on the surface and to cover up the inner void. Certain moralists, without meaning to be satirical, often say that the sovereign cure for unhappiness is work. Unhappily, the work they recommend is better fitted to dull pain than to remove its cause. It occupies the faculties without rationalising the life. Before mankind could inspire even moderate satisfaction, not to speak of worship, its whole economy would have to be reformed, its reproduction regulated, its thoughts cleared up, its affections equalised and refined.

To worship mankind as it is would be to deprive it of what alone makes it akin to the divine—its aspiration. For this human dust lives; this misery and crime are dark in contrast to an imagined excellence; they are lighted up by a prospect of good. Man is not adorable, but he adores, and the object of his adoration may be discovered within him and elicited from his own soul. In this sense the religion of humanity is the only religion, all others being sparks and abstracts of the same. The indwelling ideal lends all the gods their divinity. No power, either physical or psychical, has the least moral prerogative nor any just place in religion at all

unless it supports and advances the ideal native to the worshipper's soul.

There is, finally, a philosophic piety which has the universe for its object. This feeling, common to ancient and modern Stoics, has an obvious justification in man's dependence upon the natural world and in its service to many sides of the mind. Such justification of cosmic piety is rather obscured than supported by the euphemisms and ambiguities in which these philosophers usually indulge in their attempt to preserve the customary religious unction. For the more they personify the universe and give it the name of God the more they turn it into a devil. The universe, so far as we can observe it, is a wonderful and immense engine; its extent, its order, its beauty, its cruelty, makes it alike impressive. If we dramatise its life and conceive its spirit, we are filled with wonder, terror, and amusement, so magnificent is that spirit, so prolific, inexorable, grammatical, and dull. Like all animals and plants, the cosmos has its own way of doing things, not wholly rational nor ideally best, but patient, fatal, and fruitful. Great is this organism of mud and fire, terrible this vast, painful, glorious experiment. Why should we not look on the universe with piety? Is it not our substance? Are we made of other clay? All our possibilities lie from eternity hidden in its bosom. It is the dispenser of all our joys. We may address it without superstitious terrors; it is not wicked. It follows its own habits abstractedly; it can be trusted to be true to its word. Society is not impossible between it and us, and since it is the source of all our energies, the home of all our happiness, shall we not cling to it and praise it, seeing that it vegetates so grandly and so sadly, and that it is not for us to blame it for what, doubtless, it never knew that it did? Where there is such infinite and laborious potency there is room for every hope. If we should abstain from judging a father's errors or a mother's foibles, why should we pronounce sentence on the ignorant crimes of the universe, which have passed into our own blood? The universe is the true Adam, the creation the true fall; and as we have never blamed our mythical first parent very much, in spite of the disproportionate consequences of his sin, because we felt that he was but human and that we, in his place, might have sinned too, so we may easily forgive our real ancestor, whose connatural sin we are from moment to moment committing, since it is only the necessary rashness of venturing to be without foreknowing the price of the fruits of existence.

CHAPTER 11

SPIRITUALITY AND ITS CORRUPTIONS

IN HONOURING the sources of life, piety is retrospective. It collects, as it were, food for morality, and fortifies it with natural and historic nutriment. But a digestive and formative principle must exist to assimilate this nutriment; a direction and an ideal have to be imposed on these gathered forces. So that religion has a second and a higher side, which looks to the end toward which we move as piety looks to the conditions and to the sources of life. This aspiring side of religion may be called Spirituality. Spirituality is nobler than piety, because what would fulfil our being and make it worth having is what alone lends value to that being's source. Nothing can be lower or more wholly instrumental than the substance and cause of all things. The gift of existence would be worthless unless existence was good and supported at least a possible perfection. A man is spiritual when he lives in the presence of the ideal, and whether he eat or drink does so for the sake of a true and ultimate good.

There is no need that this ideal should be pompously or mystically described. A simple life is its own reward, and continually realises its function. Though a spiritual man may perfectly well go through intricate processes of thought and attend to very complex affairs, his single eye, fixed on a rational purpose, will simplify morally the natural chaos it looks upon and will remain free. This spiritual mastery is, of course, no slashing and forced synthesis of things into a system of philosophy which, even if it were thinkable, would leave the conceived logical machine without ideality and without responsiveness to actual interests; it is rather an inward aim and fixity in affection that knows what to take and what to leave in a world over which it diffuses something of its own peace. It threads its way through the landscape with so little temptation to distraction that it can salute every irrelevant thing, as Saint Francis did the sun and moon, with courtesy and a certain affectionate independence.

Spirituality likes to say, Behold the lilies of the field! For its secret has the same simplicity as their vegetative art; only spiritu-

ality has succeeded in adding consciousness without confusing instinct. This success, unfortunately so rare in man's life as to seem paradoxical, is its whole achievement. Spirituality ought to have been a matter of course, since conscious existence has inherent value and there is no intrinsic ground why it should smother that value in alien ambitions and servitudes. But spirituality, though so natural and obvious a thing, is subject, like the lilies' beauty, to corruption.

None the less, spirituality, or life in the ideal, must be regarded as the fundamental and native type of all life; what deviates from it is disease and incipient dissolution, and is itself what might plausibly demand explanation and evoke surprise. The spiritual man should be quite at home in a world made to be used; the firmament is spread over him like a tent for habitation, and sublunary furniture is even more obviously to be taken as a convenience. He cannot, indeed, remove mountains, but neither does he wish to do so. He comes to endow the mountains with a function, and takes them at that, as a painter might take his brushes and canvas. Their beauty, their metals, their pasturage, their defence—this is what he observes in them and celebrates in his addresses to them. The spiritual man, though not ashamed to be a beggar, is cognisant of what wealth can do and of what it cannot. His unworldliness is true knowledge of the world, not so much a gaping and busy acquaintance as a quiet comprehension and estimation which, while it cannot come without intercourse, can very well lay intercourse aside.

The spirit's foe in man has not been simplicity, but sophistication. His instincts, in becoming many, became confused, and in growing permanent, grew feeble and subject to arrest and deviation. Every peeping impulse would drop its dark hint and hide its head in confusion, while some pedantic and unjust law would be passed in its absence and without its vote. Means would be pursued as if they were ends, and ends, under the illusion that they were forces, would be expected to further some activity, itself without justification. So pedantry might be substituted for wisdom, tyranny for government, superstition for piety, rhetoric for reason.

This sophistication is what renders the pursuit of reason so perplexing and prolonged a problem. Half-formed adjustments in the brain and in the body politic are represented in consciousness by what are called passions, prejudices, motives, animosities. None of these felt ebullitions in the least understands its own causes, effects, or relations, but is hatched, so to speak, on the wing and flutters

along in the direction of its momentary preference until it lapses, it knows not why, or is crossed and overwhelmed by some contrary power. Thus the vital elements, which in their comparative isolation in the lower animals might have yielded simple little dramas, each with its obvious ideal, its achievement, and its quietus, when mixed in the barbarous human will make a boisterous medley. For they are linked enough together to feel a strain, but not knit enough to form a harmony. In this way the unity of apperception seems to light up at first nothing but disunion. The first dawn of that rational principle which brings victory breaks upon a discovery of death. The consequence is that ideality seems to man something supernatural and almost impossible. He finds himself at his awakening so confused that he puts chaos at the origin of the world. But only order can beget a world or evoke a sensation. Chaos is something secondary, composed of conflicting organisations interfering with one another. It is compounded like a common noise out of jumbled vibrations, each of which has its period and would in itself be musical. The problem is to arrange these sounds, naturally so tuneful, into concerted music. So long as total discord endures human life remains spasmodic and irresolute; it can find no ideal and admit no total representation of nature. Only when the disordered impulses and perceptions settle down into a trained instinct, a steady, vital response and adequate preparation for the world, do clear ideas and successful purposes arise in the mind. The Life of Reason, with all the arts, then begins its career.

Must unworldliness be either fanatical or mystical? That is a question of supreme importance to the moral philosopher. On the answer to it hangs the rationality of a spiritual life; nay, the existence of spirituality itself among the types of human activity. For the fanatic and mystic are only spiritual in appearance because they separate themselves from the prevalent interests of the world, the one by a special persistent aggression, the other by a general passivity and unearthly calm. The fanatic is, notwithstanding, nothing but a worldling too narrow and violent to understand the world, while the mystic is a sensualist too rapt and voluptuous to rationalise his sensations. Both represent arrested forms of common-sense, partial developments of a perfectly usual sensibility. There is no divine inspiration in having only one passion left, nor in dreamfully accepting or renouncing all the passions together. Spirituality, if identified with such types, might justly be called primitive. There is an inno-

cent and incredulous childishness, with its useless eyes wide open, just as there is a malevolent and peevish childishness, eaten up with some mischievous whim. The man of experience and affairs can very quickly form an opinion on such phenomena. He has no reason to expect superior wisdom in those quarters. On the contrary, his own customary political and humane stand-point gives him the only authoritative measure of their merits and possible uses. "These sectaries and dreamers," he will say to himself, "cannot understand one another nor the rôle they themselves play in society. It is for us to make the best of them we can, taking such prudent measures as are possible to enlist the forces they represent in works of common utility."

The philosopher's task, in these premises, is to discover an escape from wordliness which shall offer a rational advance over it, such as fanaticism and mysticism cannot afford. Does the Life of Reason differ from that of convention? Is there a spirituality really wiser than common-sense? That there is appears in many directions. Worldliness is arrest and absorption in the instrumentalities of life; but instrumentalities cannot exist without ultimate purposes, and it suffices to lift the eyes to those purposes and to question the will sincerely about its essential preferences, to institute a catalogue of rational goods, by pursuing any of which we escape worldliness. Sense itself is one of these goods. The sensualist at least is not worldly, and though his nature be atrophied in all its higher part, there is not lacking a certain internal and abstract spirituality in his experience. He is a sort of sprightly and incidental mystic, treating his varied succession of little worlds as the mystic does his monotonous universe. Sense, moreover, is capable of many refinements, by which physical existence becomes its own reward. In the disciplined play of fancy which the fine arts afford, the mind's free action justifies itself and becomes intrinsically delightful. Science not only exercises in itself the intellectual powers, but assimilates nature to the mind, so that all things may nourish it. In love and friendship the liberal life extends also to the heart. All these interests, which justify themselves by their intrinsic fruits, make so many rational episodes and patches in conventional life; but it must be confessed in all candour that these are but oases in the desert, and that as the springs of life are irrational, so its most vehement and prevalent interests remain irrational to the end. When the pleasures of sense and art, of knowledge and sympathy, are stretched to the utmost,

what part will they cover and justify of our passions, our industry, our governments, our religion?

It was a signal error in those rationalists who attributed their ideal retrospectively to nature that they grotesquely imagined that people were hungry so that they might enjoy eating, or curious in order to delight in discovering the truth, or in love the better to live in conscious harmony. Such a view forgets that all the forces of life work originally and fundamentally *a tergo*, that experience and reason are not the ground of preference but its result. In order to live men will work disproportionately and eat all manner of filth without pleasure; curiosity as often as not leads to illusion, and argument serves to foster hatred of the truth; finally, love is notoriously a great fountain of bitterness and frequently a prelude to crime and death. When we have skimmed from life its incidental successes, when we have harvested the moments in which existence justifies itself, its profound depths remain below in their obscure commotion, depths that breed indeed a rational efflorescence, but which are far from exhausted in producing it, and continually threaten, on the contrary, to engulf it.

The spiritual man needs, therefore, something more than a cultivated sympathy with the brighter scintillation of things. He needs to refer that scintillation to some essential light, so that in reviewing the motley aspects of experience he may not be reduced to culling superciliously the flowers that please him, but may view in them all only images and varied symbols of some eternal good. That happy constitution which human life has at its best moments—that, says Aristotle, the divine life has continually. The philosopher thus expressed with absolute clearness the principle which the poets had been clumsily trying to embody from the beginning. Burdened as traditional faiths might be with cosmological and fanciful matter, they still presented in a conspicuous and permanent image that which made all good things good, the ideal and standard of all excellence. By the help of such symbols the spiritual man could steer and steady his judgment; he could say, according to the form religion had taken in his country, that the truly good was what God commanded, or what made man akin to the divine, or what led the soul to heaven. Such expressions, though taken more or less literally by a metaphysical intellect, did not wholly forfeit their practical and moral meaning. God, for a long time, was understood to command what in fact was truly important, the divine was long the truly noble and

beautiful, heaven hardly ever ceased to respond to impersonal and ideal aspirations. Under those figures, therefore, the ideals of life could confront life with clearness and authority. The spiritual man, fixing his eyes on them, could live in the presence of ultimate purposes and ideal issues. Before each immediate task, each incidental pleasure, each casual success, he could retain his sweetness and constancy, accepting what good these moments brought and laying it on the altar of what they ought to bring.

CHAPTER 12

CHARITY

THOSE whom a genuine spirituality has freed from the foolish enchantment of words and conventions and brought back to a natural ideal, have still another illusion to vanquish, one into which the very concentration and deepening of their life might lead them. This illusion is that they and their chosen interests alone are important or have a legitimate place in the moral world. Having discovered what is really good for themselves, they assume that the like is good for everybody. Having made a tolerable synthesis and purification of their own natures, they require every other nature to be composed of the same elements similarly combined. What they have vanquished in themselves they disregard in others; and the consequence sometimes is that an impossibly simplified and inconsiderate regimen is proposed to mankind, altogether unrepresentative of their total interests. Spiritual men, in a word, may fall into the aristocrat's fallacy; they may forget the infinite animal and vulgar life which remains quite disjointed, impulsive, and short-winded, but which nevertheless palpitates with joys and sorrows, and makes after all the bulk of moral values in this democratic world.

After adopting an ideal it is necessary, therefore, without abandoning it, to recognise its relativity. The right path is in such a matter rather difficult to keep to. On the one hand lies fanatical insistence on an ideal once arrived at, no matter how many instincts and interests (the basis of all ideals) are thereby outraged in others and ultimately also in one's self. On the other hand lies mystical disintegration, which leads men to feel so keenly the rights of everything in particular and of the All in general, that they retain no hearty allegiance to any human interest. Between these two abysses winds the narrow path of charity and valour. The ultimate ideal is absolutely authoritative, because if any ground were found to relax allegiance to it in any degree or for any consideration, that ground would itself be the ideal, found to be more nearly absolute and ultimate than the

one, hastily so called, which it corrected. The ultimate ideal, in order to maintain its finality and preclude the possibility of an appeal which should dislodge it from its place of authority, must have taken all interests into consideration; it must be universally representative. Now, to take an interest into consideration and represent it means to intend, as far as possible, to secure the particular good which that particular interest looks to, and never, whatever measures may be adopted, to cease to look back on the elementary impulse as upon something which ought, if possible, to have been satisfied, and which we should still go back and satisfy now, if circumstances and the claims of rival interests permitted.

Justice and charity are identical. To deny the initial right of any impulse is not morality but fanaticism. However determined may be the prohibition which reason opposes to some wild instinct, that prohibition is never reckless; it is never inconsiderate of the very impulse which it suppresses. It suppresses that impulse unwillingly, pitifully, under stress of compulsion and *force majeure*; for reason, in representing this impulse in the context of life and in relation to every other impulse which, in its operation, it would effect mechanically, rejects and condemns it; but it condemns it not by antecedent hate but by supervising wisdom. The texture of the natural world, the conflict of interests in the soul and in society, all of which cannot be satisfied together, is accordingly the ground for moral restrictions and compromises. Whatever the upshot of the struggle may be, whatever the verdict pronounced by reason, the parties to the suit must in justice all be heard, and heard sympathetically.

Herein lies the great difference between first-hand and second-hand morality. The retailers of moral truth, the town-criers that go shouting in the streets some sentence passed long ago in reason's court against some inadmissible desire, know nothing of justice or mercy or reason—three principles essentially identical. They thunder conclusions without remembering the premises, and expose their precepts to the aversion and neglect of all who genuinely love what is good. The masters of life, on the contrary, the first framers and discoverers of moral ideals, are persons who disregard those worn conventions and their professional interpreters: they are persons who have a fresh sense for the universal need and cry of human souls, and reconstruct the world of duty to make it fit better with the world of desire and of possible happiness. Primary morality inspired

by love of something naturally good, is accordingly charitable and ready to forgive; while secondary morality, founded on prejudice, is fanatical and ruthless.

As virtue carries with it a pleasure which perfects it and without which virtue would evidently be spurious and merely compulsory, so justice carries with it a charity which is its highest expression, without which justice remains only an organised wrong. Of justice without charity we have a classic illustration in Plato's Republic and in general in the pagan world. An end is assumed, in this case an end which involves radical injustice toward every interest not included in it; and then an organism is developed or conceived that shall subserve that end, and political justice is defined as the harmonious adjustment of powers and functions within that organism. Reason and art suffice to discover the right methods for reaching the chosen end, and the polity thus established, with all its severities and sacrifices of personal will, is rationally grounded. The chosen end, however, is arbitrary, and, in fact, perverse; for to maintain a conventional city with stable institutions and perpetual military efficiency would not secure human happiness; nor (to pass to the individual virtue symbolised by such a state) would the corresponding discipline of personal habits, in the service of vested interests and bodily life, truly unfold the potentialities of the human spirit.

There is accordingly a justice deeper and milder than that of pagan states, a universal justice called charity, a kind of all-penetrating courtesy, by which the limits of personal or corporate interests are transgressed in imagination. Value is attributed to rival forms of life; something of the intensity and narrowness inherent in the private will is surrendered to admiration and solicitude for what is most alien and hostile to one's self. When this imaginative expansion ends in neutralising the will altogether, we have mysticism; but when it serves merely to co-ordinate felt interests with other actual interests conceived sympathetically, and to make them converge, we have justice and charity. Charity is nothing but a radical and imaginative justice. So the Buddhist stretches his sympathy to all real beings and to many imaginary monsters; so the Christian chooses for his love the diseased, the sinful, the unlovely. His own salvation does not seem to either complete unless every other creature also is redeemed and forgiven.

Such universal solicitude is rational, however, only when the beings to which it extends are in practical efficient relations with the

life that would co-operate with theirs. In other words, charity extends only to physical and discoverable creatures, whose destiny is interwoven dynamically with our own. Absolute and irresponsible fancy can be the basis of no duty. If not to take other real forces and interests into account made classic states unstable and unjust, to take into consideration purely imaginary forces yields a polity founded on superstition, one unjust to those who live under it. A compromise made with non-existent or irrelevant interests is a wrong to the real interests on which that sacrifice is imposed gratuitously. All sacrifices exacted by mere religion have accordingly been inhuman; at best they have unintentionally made some amends by favouring abstract discipline or artistic forms of expression. The sacrifice must be fruitful in the end and bring happiness to somebody: otherwise it cannot long remain tender or beautiful.

Charity is seldom found uncoloured by fables which illustrate it and lend it a motive by which it can justify itself verbally. Metempsychosis, heaven and hell, Christ's suffering for every sinner, are notions by which charity has often been guided and warmed. Like myth everywhere, these notions express judgments which they do not originate, although they may strengthen or distort them in giving them expression. The same myths, in cruel hands, become goads to fanaticism. That natural sensitiveness in which charity consists has many degrees and many inequalities; the spirit bloweth where it listeth. Incidental circumstances determine its phases and attachments in life. Christian charity, for instance, has two chief parts: first, it hastens to relieve the body; then, forgetting physical economy altogether, it proceeds to redeem the soul. The bodily works of mercy which Christians perform with so much tact and devotion are not such as philanthropy alone would inspire; they are more and less than that. They are more, because they are done with a certain disproportionate and absolute solicitude, quite apart from ultimate benefit or a thought of the best distribution of energies; they are also less, because they stop at healing, and cannot pass beyond the remedial and incidental phase without ceasing to be Christian. The poor, says Christian charity, we have always with us; every man must be a sinner—else what obligation should he have to repent?—and, in fine, this world is essentially the kingdom of Satan. Charity comes only to relieve the most urgent bodily needs, and then to wean the heart altogether from mortal interests. Thus Christianity covers the world with hospitals and orphanages; but its only positive

labours go on in churches and convents, nor will it found schools, if left to itself, to teach anything except religion. These offices may be performed with more or less success, with more or less appeal to the miraculous; but, with whatever mixture of magic and policy, Christian charity has never aimed at anything but healing the body and saving the soul.

Christ himself, we may well feel, did not affect publicans and sinners, ignorant people and children, in order to save them in the regimental and prescriptive fashion adopted by the Church. He commanded those he forgave to sin no more and those he healed to go, as custom would have it, to the priest. He understood the bright good that each sinner was following when he stumbled into the pit. For this insight he was loved. To be rebuked in that sympathetic spirit was to be comforted; to be punished by such a hand was to be made whole. The Magdalene was forgiven because she had loved much; an absolution which rehabilitates the primary longing that had driven her on, a longing not insulted but comprehended in such an absolution, and purified by that comprehension. It is a charitable salvation which enables the newly revealed deity to be absolutely loved. Charity has this art of making men abandon their errors without asking them to forget their ideals.

In Buddhism the same charity wears a more speculative form. All beings are to be redeemed from the illusion which is the fountain of their troubles. None is to be compelled to assume irrationally an alien set of duties or other functions than his own. Spirit is not to be incarcerated perpetually in grotesque and accidental monsters, but to be freed from all fatality and compulsion. The goal is not some more flattering incarnation, but escape from incarnation altogether. Ignorance must be enlightened, passion calmed, mistaken vocations revoked; only what the inmost being desiderates, only what can really quiet the longings of any particular will, is to occupy the redeemed mind. Here, though charity is truly understood, reason is wholly wanting; for it avails little to make of kindness a vicarious selfishness and to use neighbourly offices to plunge our neighbour deeper into his favourite follies. Such servile sympathy would make men one another's accomplices rather than friends. It would treat them with a weak promiscuous favour, not with true mercy and justice. In charity there can be nothing to repent of, as there so often is in natural love and in partisan propaganda. Christians have some-

that must co-operate to secure it, lie far afield, and his life will remain cramped and self-destructive so long as he does not envisage its whole basis and co-operate with all his potential allies.

The rationality which would then be attained is so immensely exalted above the microscopic vision and punctiform sensibility of those who think themselves practical, that speculative natures seem to be proclaiming another set of interests, another and quite miraculous life, when they attempt to thaw out and vivify the vulgar mechanism; and the sense of estrangement and contradiction often comes over the spiritually minded themselves, making them confess sadly that the kingdom of heaven is not of this world. As common morality itself falls easily into mythical expressions and speaks of a fight between conscience and nature, reason and the passions, as if these were independent in their origin or could be divided in their operation, so spiritual life even more readily opposes the ideal to the real, the revealed and heavenly truth to the extant reality, as if the one could be anything but an expression and fulfillment of the other. Being equally convinced that spiritual life is authoritative and possible, and that it is opposed to all that earthly experience has as yet supplied, the prophet almost inevitably speaks of another world above the clouds and another existence beyond the grave; he thus seeks to clothe in concrete and imaginable form the ideal to which natural existence seems to him wholly rebellious. Spiritual life comes to mean life abstracted from politics, from art, from sense, even in the end from morality. Natural motives and natural virtues are contrasted with those which are henceforth called supernatural, and all the grounds and sanctions of right living are transferred to another life. A doctrine of immortality thus becomes the favourite expression of religion. By its variations and greater or less transparency and ideality we can measure the degree of spiritual insight which has been reached at any moment.

CHAPTER 13

THE BELIEF IN A FUTURE LIFE

AT no point are the two ingredients of religion, superstition and moral truth, more often confused than in the doctrine of immortality, yet in none are they more clearly distinguishable. Ideal immortality is a principle revealed to insight; it is seen by observing the eternal quality of ideas and validities, and the affinity to them native to reason or the cognitive energy of mind. A future life, on the contrary, is a matter for faith or presumption; it is a prophetic hypothesis regarding occult existences. This latter question is scientific and empirical, and should be treated as such. A man is, forensically speaking, the same man after the nightly break in his consciousness. After many changes in his body and after long oblivion, parcels of his youth may be revived and may come to figure again among the factors in his action. Similarly, if evidence to that effect were available, we might establish the resurrection of a given soul in new bodies or its activity in remote places and times. Evidence of this sort has in fact always been offered copiously by rumour and superstition. The operation of departed spirits, like that of the gods, has been recognised in many a dream, or message, or opportune succour. The Dioscuri and Saint James the Apostle have appeared—preferably on white horses—in sundry battles. Spirits duly invoked have repeated forgotten gossip and revealed the places where crimes had been committed or treasure buried. More often, perhaps, ghosts have walked the night without any ostensible or useful purpose, apparently in obedience to some ghastly compulsion that crept over them in death, as if a hesitating sickle had left them still hanging to life by one attenuated fibre.

The mass of this evidence, ancient and modern, traditional and statistical, is beneath consideration; the palpating mood in which it is gathered and received, even when ostensibly scientific, is such that gullibility and fiction play a very large part in it. When due allowance has been made, however, for legend and fraud, there remains a certain residuum of clairvoyance and telepathy, and an occasional

abnormal obedience of matter to mind which might pass for magic. There are unmistakable indications that in these regions we touch lower and more rudimentary faculties. There seems to be, as is quite natural, a sub-human sensibility in man, wherein ideas are connected together by bonds so irrational and tenacious that they seem miraculous to a mind already trained in practical and relevant thinking.

Among the blind, the retina having lost its function, the rest of the skin is said to recover its primordial sensitiveness to distance and light, so that the sightless have a clearer premonition of objects about them than seeing people could have in the dark. So when reason and the ordinary processes of sense are in abeyance a certain universal sensibility seems to return to the soul; influences at other times not appreciable make then a sensible impression, and automatic reactions may be run through in response to a stimulus normally quite insufficient. Now the complexity of nature is prodigious; everything that happens leaves, like buried cities, almost indelible traces which an eye, by chance attentive and duly prepared, can manage to read, recovering for a moment the image of an extinct life. Symbols, illegible to reason, can thus sometimes read themselves out in trance and madness. Faint vestiges may be found in matter of forms which it once wore, or which, like a perfume, impregnated and got lodgment within it. Slight echoes may suddenly reconstitute themselves in the mind's silence; and a half-stunned consciousness may catch brief glimpses of long-lost and irrelevant things. Real ghosts are such reverberations of the past, exceeding ordinary imagination and discernment both in vividness and in fidelity; they may not be explicable without appealing to material influences subtler than those ordinarily recognised, as they are obviously not discoverable without some derangement and hypertrophy of the senses.

That such subtler influences should exist is entirely consonant with reason and experience; and while a new survey of the facts, in the light of natural science and psychology, is certainly not superfluous, it can be expected to lead to nothing but a more detailed and conscientious description of natural processes. The thought of employing such investigations to save at the last moment religious doctrines founded on moral ideas is a pathetic blunder; the obscene supernatural has nothing to do with rational religion. If it were discovered that wretched echoes of a past life could be actually heard

by putting one's ear long enough to a tomb, and if (*per impossibile*) those echoes could be legitimately attributed to another mind, and to the very mind, indeed, whose former body was interred there, a melancholy chapter would indeed be added to man's earthly fortunes, since it would appear that even after death he retained, under certain conditions, a fatal attachment to his dead body and to the other material instruments of his earthly life. Obviously such a discovery would teach us more about dying than about immortality; the truths disclosed, since they would be disclosed by experiment and observation, would be psycho-physical truths, implying nothing about what a truly disembodied life might be, if one were attainable; for a disembodied life could by no possibility betray itself in spectres, rumblings, and spasms. Actual thunders from Sinai and an actual discovery of two stone tables would have been utterly irrelevant to the moral authority of the ten commandments or to the existence of a truly supreme being. No less irrelevant to a supra-mundane immortality is the length of time during which human spirits may be condemned to operate on earth after their bodies are quiet. In other words, spectral survivals would at most enlarge our conception of the soul's physical basis, spreading out the area of its manifestations; they could not possibly, seeing the survivals are physical, reveal the disembodied existence of the soul.

Such a disembodied existence, removed by its nature from the sphere of empirical evidence, might nevertheless be actual, and grounds of a moral or metaphysical type might be sought for postulating its reality. Life and the will to live are at bottom identical. Experience itself is transitive and can hardly arise apart from a forward effort and prophetic apprehension by which adjustments are made to a future confidently foreseen. A postulate acted on is an act of genuine and dogmatic faith. I not only postulate a morrow when I prepare for it, but ingenuously and heartily believe that the morrow will come. This faith does not amount to certitude; I may confess, if challenged, that before to-morrow I and the world and time itself might conceivably come to an end together; but that idle possibility, so long as it does not slacken action, will not disturb belief. Every moment of life accordingly trusts in life's continuance; and this prophetic interpretation of action, so long as action lasts, amounts to continual faith in futurity.

A sophist might easily transform this psychological necessity into a dazzling proof of immortality. To believe anything, he might

say, is to be active; but action involves faith in a future and in the fruits of action; and as no living moment can be without this confidence, belief in extinction would be self-contradictory and at no moment a possible belief. The question, however, is not whether every given moment has or has not a specious future before it to which it looks forward, but whether the realisation of such foresight is incapable of failing. Now expectation, never without its requisite antecedents and natural necessity, often lacks fulfilment, and never anticipates its fulfilment entire; so that the necessity of a postulate gives no warrant for its prophetic authority. Expectation and action are constantly suspended together; and what happens whenever thought loses itself or stumbles might well happen at crucial times to that train of intentions which we call a particular life or the life of humanity. The prophecy involved in action is not insignificant, but it is notoriously fallible and depends for its fulfilment on physical conditions. The question accordingly really is whether a man expecting to live for ever or one expecting to die in his time has the more representative and trustworthy notion of the future. The question, so stated, cannot be solved by an appeal to evidence, which is necessarily all on one side, but only by criticising the value of evidence as against instinct and hope, and by ascertaining the relative status which assumption and observation have in experience.

The transcendental compulsion under which action labours of envisaging a future, and the animal instinct that clings to life and flees from death as the most dreadful of evils are the real grounds why immortality seems initially natural and good. Confidence in living for ever is anterior to the discovery that all men are mortals and to the discovery that the thinker is himself a man. These discoveries flatly contradict that confidence, in the form in which it originally presents itself, and all doctrines of immortality which adult philosophy can entertain are more or less subterfuges and after-thoughts by which the observed fact of mortality and the transcendental ignorance of death are more or less clumsily reconciled.

Many a man dies too soon and some are born in the wrong age or station. Could these persons drink at the fountain of youth at least once more they might do themselves fuller justice and cut a better figure at last in the universe. Most people think they have stuff in them for greater things than time suffers them to perform. To imagine a second career is a pleasing antidote for ill-fortune; the

poor soul wants another chance. But how should a future life be constituted if it is to satisfy this demand, and how long need it last? It would evidently have to go on in an environment closely analogous to earth; I could not, for instance, write in another world the epics which the necessity of earning my living may have stifled here, did that other world contain no time, no heroic struggles, or no metrical language. Nor is it clear that my epics, to be perfect, would need to be quite endless. If what is foiled in me is really poetic genius and not simply a tendency toward perpetual motion, it would not help me if in heaven, in lieu of my dreamt-of epics, I were allowed to beget several robust children. In a word, if hereafter I am to be the same man improved I must find myself in the same world corrected. Were I transformed into a cherub or transported into a timeless ecstasy, it is hard to see in what sense I should continue to exist. Those results might be interesting in themselves and might enrich the universe; they would not prolong my life nor retrieve my disasters.

For this reason a future life is after all best represented by those frankly material ideals which most Christians—being Platonists—are wont to despise. It would be genuine happiness for a Jew to rise again in the flesh and live for ever in Ezekiel's New Jerusalem, with its ceremonial glories and civic order. It would be truly agreeable for any man to sit in well-watered gardens with Mohammed, clad in green silks, drinking delicious sherbets, and transfixed by the gazelle-like glance of some young girl, all innocence and fire. Amid such scenes a man might remain himself and might fulfil hopes that he had actually cherished on earth. He might also find his friends again, which in somewhat generous minds is perhaps the thought that chiefly sustains interest in a posthumous existence. But to recognise his friends a man must find them in their bodies, with their familiar habits, voices, and interests; for it is surely an insult to affection to say that he could find them in an eternal formula expressing their idiosyncrasy. When, however, it is clearly seen that another life, to supplement this one, must closely resemble it, does not the magic of immortality altogether vanish? Is such a reduplication of earthly society at all credible? And the prospect of awakening again among houses and trees, among children and dotards, among wars and rumours of wars, still fettered to one personality and one accidental past, still uncertain of the future, is not this prospect wearisome and deeply repulsive? Having passed through

these things once and bequeathed them to posterity, is it not time for each soul to rest? The universe doubtless contains all sorts of experiences, better and worse than the human; but it is idle to attribute to a particular man a life divorced from his circumstances and from his body.

Dogmas about such a posthumous experience find some shadowy support in various illusions and superstitions that surround death, but they are developed into articulate prophecies chiefly by certain moral demands. One of these requires rewards and punishments more emphatic and sure than those which conduct meets with in this world. Another requires merely a more favourable and complete opportunity for the soul's development. Considerations like these are pertinent to moral philosophy. It touches the notion of duty whether an exact hedonistic retribution is to be demanded for what is termed merit and guilt: so that without such supernatural remuneration virtue, perhaps, would be discredited and deprived of a motive. It likewise touches the ideality and nobleness of life whether human aims can be realised satisfactorily only in the agent's singular person, so that the fruits of effort would be forthwith missed if the labourer himself should disappear.

To establish justice in the world and furnish an adequate incentive to virtue was once thought the chief business of a future life. The Hebraic religions somewhat overreached themselves on these points: for the grotesque alternative between hell and heaven in the end only aggravated the injustice it was meant to remedy. Life is unjust in that it subordinates individuals to a general impersonal law, and the deeper and longer hold fate has on the soul, the greater that injustice. A perpetual life would be a perpetual subjection to arbitrary power, while a last judgment would be but a last fatality. That hell may have frightened a few villains into omitting a crime is perhaps credible; but the embarrassed silence which the churches, in a more sensitive age, prefer to maintain on that wholesome doctrine—once, as they taught, the only rational basis for virtue—shows how their teaching has to follow the independent progress of morals. Nevertheless, persons are not wanting, apparently free from ecclesiastical constraint, who still maintain that the value of life depends on its indefinite prolongation. By an artifice of reflection they substitute vanity for reason, and selfish for ingenuous instincts in man. Being apparently interested in nothing but their own careers, they forget that a man may remember how little he counts in the world

and suffer that rational knowledge to inspire his purposes. Intense morality has always envisaged earthly goods and evils, and even when a future life has been accepted vaguely, it has never given direction to human will or aims, which at best it could only proclaim more emphatically. It may indeed be said that no man of any depth of soul has made his prolonged existence the touchstone of his enthusiasms. Such an instinct is carnal, and if immortality is to add a higher inspiration to life it must not be an immortality of selfishness. What a despicable creature must a man be, and how sunk below the level of the most barbaric virtue, if he cannot bear to live for his children, for his art, or for country!

To turn these moral questions, however, into arguments for a physical speculation, like that about human longevity, resurrection, or metempsychosis, a hybrid principle is required: thus, even if we have answered those moral questions in the conventional way and satisfied ourselves that personal immortality is a postulate of ethics, we cannot infer that immortality therefore exists unless we import into the argument a tremendous optimistic postulate, to the effect that what is requisite for moral rationality must in every instance be realised in experience.

Such an optimistic postulate is made not only despite all experience but in ignorance of the conditions under which alone ideals are framed and retain their significance. Every ideal expresses individual and specific tendencies, proper at some moment to some natural creature; every ideal therefore has for its basis a part only of the dynamic world, so that its fulfilment is problematical and altogether adventitious to its existence and authority. To decide whether an ideal can be or will be fulfilled we must examine the physical relation between such organic forces as that ideal expresses and the environment in which those forces operate; we may then perceive how far a realisation of the given aims is possible, how far it must fail, and how far the aims in question, by a shift in their natural basis, will lapse and yield to others, possibly more capable of execution and more stable in the world. The question of success is a question of physics. To say that an ideal will be inevitably fulfilled simply because it is an ideal is to say something gratuitous and foolish. Pretence cannot in the end avail against experience.

Human life, lying as it does in the midst of a larger process, will surely not be without some congruity with the universe. Every creature lends potential values to a world in which it can satisfy

Gr.
P. m. t.
man.

of its ascetic meagreness and fear of life, has not known how to fill out the picture of heaven and has left it mystical and vague; but whatever paradise it has ventured to imagine has been modelled on the same primary ideal. It has represented a society of immortal beings among which there was no marriage nor giving in marriage and where each found his congenial mansion and that perfected activity which brings inward peace.

After this easy fashion were death and birth conquered in the myths, which truly interpreted the will to live according to its primary intention, but in reality such direct satisfaction was impossible. A total defeat, on the other hand, might have extinguished the will itself and obliterated every human impulse seeking expression. Man's existence is proof enough that nature was not altogether unpropitious, but offered, in an unlooked-for direction, some thoroughfare to the soul. Roundabout imperfect methods were discovered by which something at least of what was craved might be secured. The individual perished, yet not without having segregated and detached a certain portion of himself capable of developing a second body and mind. The potentialities of this seminal portion, having been liberated long after the parent body had begun to feel the shock of the world, could reach full expression after the parent body had begun to decay; and the offspring needed not itself to succumb before it had launched a third generation. A cyclical life or arrested death, a continual motion by little successive explosions, could thus establish itself and could repeat from generation to generation a process not unlike nutrition; only that, while in nutrition the individual form remains and the inner substance is renewed insensibly, in reproduction the form is renewed openly and the inner substance is insensibly continuous.

Reproduction seems, from the will's point of view, a marvelous expedient involving a curious mixture of failure and success. The individual, who alone is the seat and principle of will, is thereby sacrificed, so that reproduction is no response to his original hopes and aspirations; yet in a double way he is enticed and persuaded to be almost satisfied: first, in that so like a counterfeit of himself actually survives, a creature to which all his ideal interests may be transmitted; and secondly, because a new and as it were a rival aim is now insinuated into his spirit. For the impulse toward reproduction has now become no less powerful, even if less constant, than the impulse toward nutrition; in other words, the will

to live finds itself in the uncongenial yet inevitable company of the will to have an heir. Reproduction thus partly entertains the desire to be immortal by giving it a vicarious fulfilment, and partly cancels it by adding an impulse and joy which, when you think of it, accepts mortality. For love, whether sexual, parental, or fraternal, is essentially sacrificial, and prompts a man to give his life for his friends. In thus losing his life gladly he in a sense finds it anew, since it has now become a part of his function and ideal to yield his place to others and to live afterwards only in them. While the primitive and animal side of him may continue to cling to existence at all hazards and to find the thought of extinction intolerable, his reason and finer imagination will build a new ideal on reality better understood, and be content that the future he looks to should be enjoyed by others. When we consider such a natural transformation and discipline of the will, when we catch even a slight glimpse of nature's resources and mysteries, how thin and verbal those belated hopes must seem which would elude death and abolish sacrifice! Such puerile dreams not only miss the whole pathos of human life, but ignore those specifically moral virtues which might console us for not being so radiantly divine as we may at first have thought ourselves. Nature, in denying us perennial youth, has at least invited us to become unselfish and noble.

A first shift in aspiration, a capacity for radical altruism, thus supervenes upon the lust to live and accompanies parental and social interests. The new ideal, however, can never entirely obliterate the old and primary one, because the initial functions which the old Adam exclusively represented remain imbedded in the new life, and are its physical basis. If the nutritive soul ceased to operate, the reproductive soul could never arise; to be altruistic we must first be, and spiritual interests can never abolish or cancel the material existence on which they are grafted. The consequence is that death, even when circumvented by reproduction and relieved by surviving impersonal interests, remains an essential evil. It may be accepted as inevitable, and the goods its intrusion leaves standing may be heartily appreciated and pursued; but something pathetic and incomplete will always attach to a life that looks to its own termination.

The effort of physical existence is not to accomplish anything definite but merely to persist for ever. The will has its first law of motion, corresponding to that of matter; its initial tendency is to

continue to operate in the given direction and in the given manner. Inertia is, in this sense, the essence of vitality. To be driven from that perpetual course is somehow to be checked, and an external and hostile force is required to change a habit or an instinct as much as to deflect a star. Indeed, nutrition itself, hunting, feeding, and digestion, are forced activities, and the basis of passions not altogether congenial nor ideal. Hunger is an incipient faintness and agony, and an animal that needs to hunt, gnaw, and digest is no immortal, free, or essentially victorious creature. His will is already driven into by-paths and expedients; his primitive beatific vision has to be interrupted by remedial action to restore it for a while, since otherwise it would obviously degenerate rapidly through all stages of distress until its total extinction.

The tasks thus imposed upon the protoplasmic will raise it, we may say, to a higher level; to hunt is better sport, and more enlightening, than to lie imbibing sunshine and air; and to eat is, we may well think, a more positive and specific pleasure than merely to be. Such judgments, however, show a human bias. They arise from incapacity to throw off acquired organs. Those necessities which have led to the forms of life which we happen to exemplify, and in terms of which our virtues are necessarily expressed, seem to us, in retrospect, happy necessities, since without them our conventional goods would not have come to appeal to us. These conventional goods, however, are only compromises with evil, and the will would never have taken to pursuing them if it had not been dislodged and beaten back from its primary aims. Even food is, for this reason, no absolute blessing; it is only the first and most necessary of comforts, of restorations, of truces and reprieves in that battle with death in which an ultimate defeat is too plainly inevitable; for the pitcher that goes often to the well is at last broken, and a creature that is forced to resist his inward collapse by adventitious aids will some day find that these aids have failed him, and that inward dissolution has become, for some mechanical reason, quite irresistible. It is therefore not only the lazy or mystical will that chafes at the need of material supports and deprecates anxieties about the morrow; the most conventional and passionate mind, when it attains any refinement, confesses the essential servitude involved in such preoccupations by concealing or ignoring them as much as may be. We study to eat

as if we were not ravenous, to win as if we were willing to lose, and to treat personal wants in general as merely compulsory and uninteresting matters. Why dwell, we say to ourselves, on our stammerings and failures? The intent is all, and the bungling circumlocutions we may be driven to should be courteously ignored, like a stammerer's troubles, when once our meaning has been conveyed.

Even animal passions are, in this way, afterthoughts and expedients, and although in a brutal age they seem to make up the whole of life, later it appears that they would be gladly enough outgrown, did the material situation permit it. Intellectual life returns, in its freedom, to the attitude proper to primitive will, except that through the new machinery underlying reason a more stable equilibrium has been established with external forces, and the freedom originally absolute has become relative to certain underlying adjustments, adjustments which may be ignored but cannot be abandoned with impunity. Original action, as seen in the vegetable, is purely spontaneous. On the animal level instrumental action is added and chiefly attended to, so that the creature, without knowing what it lives for, finds attractive tasks and a sort of glory in the chase, in love, and in labour. In the Life of Reason this instrumental activity is retained, for it is a necessary basis for human prosperity and power, but the value of life is again sought in the supervening free activity which that adjustment to physical forces, or dominion over them, has made possible on a larger scale. Every free activity would gladly persist for ever; and if any be found that involves and aims at its own arrest or transformation, that activity is thereby proved to be instrumental and servile, imposed from without and not ideal.

Not only is man's original effort aimed at living for ever in his own person, but, even if he could renounce that desire, the dream of being represented perpetually by posterity is no less doomed. Reproduction, like nutrition, is a device not ultimately successful. If extinction does not defeat it, evolution will. Doubtless the fertility of whatever substance may have produced us will not be exhausted in this single effort; a potentiality that has once proved efficacious and been actualised in life, though it should sleep, will in time revive again. In some form and after no matter what intervals, nature may be expected always to restore conscious-

ness. But beyond this planet and apart from the human race, experience is too little imaginable to be interesting. No definite plan or ideal of ours can find its realisation except in ourselves. Accordingly, a vicarious physical immortality always remains an unsatisfactory issue; what is thus to be preserved is but a counterfeit of our being, and even that counterfeit is confronted by omens of a total extinction more or less remote. A note of failure and melancholy must always dominate in the struggle against natural death.

This defeat is not really problematical, or to be eluded by reviving ill-digested hopes resting entirely on ignorance, an ignorance which these hopes will wish to make eternal. We need not wait for our total death to experience dying; we need not borrow from observation of others' demise a prophecy of our own extinction. Every moment celebrates obsequies over the virtues of its predecessor; and the possession of memory, by which we somehow survive in representation, is the most unmistakable proof that we are perishing in reality. In endowing us with memory, nature has revealed to us a truth utterly unimaginable to the unreflective creation, the truth of mortality. Everything moves in the midst of death, because it indeed *moves*; but it falls into the pit unawares and by its own action unmakes and disestablishes itself, until a wonderful visionary faculty is added, so that a ghost remains of what has perished to reveal that lapse and at the same time in a certain sense to neutralise it. The more we reflect, the more we live in memory and idea, the more convinced and penetrated we shall be by the experience of death; yet, without our knowing it, perhaps, this very conviction and experience will have raised us, in a way, above mortality. That was a heroic and divine oracle which, in informing us of our decay, made us partners of the gods' eternity, and by giving us knowledge poured into us, to that extent, the serenity and balm of truth. As it is memory that enables us to feel that we are dying and to know that everything actual is in flux, so it is memory that opens to us an ideal immortality, unacceptable and meaningless to the old Adam, but genuine in its own way and undeniably true. It is an immortality in representation—a representation which envisages things in their truth as they have in their own day possessed themselves in reality. This is no subterfuge or superstitious effrontery, called to disguise or throw off the lessons of experience; on the contrary, it is experience itself, reflection

itself, and knowledge of mortality. Memory does not reprove or postpone the changes which it registers, nor does it itself possess a permanent duration; it is, if possible, less stable and more mobile than primary sensation. It is, in point of existence, only an internal and complex kind of sensibility. But in intent and by its significance it plunges to the depths of time; it looks still on the departed and bears witness to the truth that, though absent from this period of time, and incapable of returning to life, they nevertheless existed once in their own right, were as living and actual as existence is to-day, and still help to make up, in company with all past, present, and future mortals, the filling and value of the world.

As the pathos and heroism of life consists in accepting as an opportunity the fate that makes our own death, partial or total, serviceable to others, so the glory of life consists in accepting the knowledge of natural death as an opportunity to live in the spirit. The sacrifice, the self-surrender, remains real; for, though the compensation is real, too, and at moments, perhaps, apparently overwhelming, it is always incomplete and leaves beneath an incurable sorrow. Yet life can never contradict its basis or reach satisfactions essentially excluded by its own conditions. Progress lies in moving forward from the given situation, and satisfying as well as may be the interests that exist. And if some initial demand has proved hopeless, there is the greater reason for cultivating other sources of satisfaction, possibly more abundant and lasting. Now, reflection is a vital function; memory and imagination have to the full the rhythm and force of life. But these faculties, in envisaging the past or the ideal, envisage the eternal, and the man in whose mind they predominate is to that extent detached in his affections from the world of flux, from himself, and from his personal destiny. This detachment will not make him infinitely long-lived, nor absolutely happy, but it may render him intelligent and just, and may open to him all intellectual pleasures and all human sympathies.

There is accordingly an escape from death open to man; one not found by circumventing nature, but by making use of her own expedients in circumventing her imperfections. Memory, nay, perception itself, is a first stage in this escape, which coincides with the acquisition and possession of reason. When the meaning of successive perceptions is recovered with the last of them, when a survey is made of objects whose constitutive sensations first arose inde-

pendently, this synthetic moment contains an object raised above time on a pedestal of reflection, a thought indefeasibly true in its ideal deliverance, though of course fleeting in its psychic existence. Existence is essentially temporal and life foredoomed to be mortal, since its basis is a process and an opposition; it floats in the stream of time, never to return, never to be recovered or repossessed. But ever since substance became at some sensitive point intelligent and reflective, ever since time made room and pause for memory, for history, for the consciousness of time, a god, as it were, became incarnate in mortality and some vision of truth, some self-forgetful satisfaction, became a heritage that moment could transmit to moment and man to man. This heritage is humanity itself, the presence of immortal reason in creatures that perish. Apprehension, which makes man so like a god, makes him in one respect immortal; it quickens his numbered moments with a vision of what never dies, the truth of those moments and their inalienable values.

To participate in this vision is to participate at once in humanity and in divinity, since all other bonds are material and perishable, but the bond between two thoughts that have grasped the same truth, of two instants that have caught the same beauty, is a spiritual and imperishable bond. It is imperishable simply because it is ideal and resident merely in import and intent. The two thoughts, the two instants, remain existentially different; were they not two they could not come from different quarters to unite in one meaning and to behold one object in distinct and conspiring acts of apprehension. Being independent in existence, they can be united by the identity of their burden, by the common worship, so to speak, of the same god. Were this ideal goal itself an existence, it would be incapable of uniting anything; for the same gulf which separated the two original minds would open between them and their common object. But being, as it is, purely ideal, it can become the meeting-ground of intelligences and render their union ideally eternal. Among the physical instruments of thought there may be rivalry and impact—the two thinkers may compete and clash—but this is because each seeks his own physical survival and does not love the truth stripped of its accidental associations and provincial accent. Doctors disagree in so far as they are not truly doctors, but, as Plato would say, seek, like sophists and wage-earners, to circumvent and defeat one another. The conflict is physical and can ex-

tend to the subject-matter only in so far as this is tainted by individual prejudice and not wholly lifted from the sensuous to the intellectual plane. In the ether there are no winds of doctrine. The intellect, being the organ and source of the divine, is divine and single; if there were many sorts of intellect, many principles of perspective, they would fix and create incomparable and irrelevant worlds. Reason is one in that it gravitates toward an object, called truth, which could not have the function it has, of being a focus for mental activities, if it were not one in reference to the operations which converge upon it.

This unity in truth, as in reason, is of course functional only, not physical or existential. The beats of thought and the thinkers are innumerable; indefinite, too, the variations to which their endowment and habits may be subjected. But the condition of spiritual communion or ideal relevance in these intelligences is their possession of a method and grammar essentially identical. Language, for example, is significant in proportion to the constancy in meaning which words and locutions preserve in a speaker's mind at various times, or in the minds of various persons. This constancy is never absolute. Therefore language is never wholly significant, never exhaustively intelligible. There is always mud in the well, if we have drawn up enough water. Yet in peaceful rivers, though they flow, there is an appreciable degree of translucency. So, from moment to moment, and from man to man, there is an appreciable element of unanimity, of constancy and congruity of intent. On this abstract and perfectly identical function science rests together with every rational formation.

The same function is the seat of human immortality. Reason lifts a larger or smaller element in each man to the plane of ideality according as reason more or less thoroughly leavens and permeates the lump. No man is wholly immortal, as no philosophy is wholly true and no language wholly intelligible; but only in so far as intelligible is a language a language rather than a noise, only in so far as true is a philosophy more than a vent for cerebral humours, and only in so far as a man is rational and lives in the eternal is he a mind and not a sensorium.

It is hard to convince people that they have such a gift as intelligence. If they perceive its animal basis they cannot conceive its ideal affinities or understand what is meant by calling it divine;

if they perceive its ideality and see the immortal essences that swim into its ken, they hotly deny that it is an animal faculty, and invent ultramundane places and bodiless persons in which it is to reside; as if those celestial substances could be, in respect to thought, any less material than matter or, in respect to vision and life, any less instrumental than bodily organs. It never occurs to them that if nature has added intelligence to animal life it is because they belong together. Intelligence is a natural emanation of vitality. If eternity could exist otherwise than as a vision in time, eternity would have no meaning for men in the world, while the world, men, and time would have no status in eternity.

By having a status in eternity is not meant being parts of an eternal existence, petrified or congealed into something real but motionless. What is meant is only that whatever exists in time, when bathed in the light of reflection, reveals an indelible character and discloses irreversible relations; every fact, in being recognised, takes its place in the universe of discourse, in that ideal sphere of truth which is the common and unchanging standard for all assertions. Language, science, art, religion, and all ambitious dreams are compacted of ideas. Life is as much a mosaic of notions as the firmament is of stars; and these ideal and transpersonal objects, bridging time, fixing standards, establishing values, constituting the true history of all living, are the very furniture of eternity, the goals and playthings of that reason which is an instinct in the heart as vital and spontaneous as any other. Or rather, perhaps, reason satisfies a supervening instinct by which all other instincts are interpreted, just as the *sensus communis* or transcendental unity of apperception is a faculty by which all perceptions are brought face to face and compared. So that immortality is not a privilege reserved for a part only of existence, but rather a relation pervading every part. We may, in leaving the subject, mark the phases of this ideal status of all events.

Animal sensation is related to eternity only by the truth that it has taken place. The fact, fleeting as it is, is registered in ideal history, and no inventory of the world's riches, no true confession of its crimes, would ever be complete that ignored that incident. This indefeasible character in experience makes a first sort of ideal immortality. It was a consolation to the Epicurean to remember that, however brief and uncertain might be his tenure of delight, the past was safe and the present sure. "He lives happy," says Horace, "and

CHAPTER 1

THE BASIS OF ART

MAN EXISTS amid a universal ferment of being, and not only needs plasticity in his habits and pursuits but finds plasticity also in the surrounding world. Life is an equilibrium which is maintained now by accepting modification and now by imposing it. Since the organ for all activity is a body in relation to other material objects, objects which the creature's instincts often compel him to appropriate or transform, changes in his habits and pursuits leave their mark on whatever he touches. His habitat must needs bear many a trace of his presence, from which intelligent observers might infer something about his life and action. These vestiges of action are for the most part imprinted unconsciously and aimlessly on the world. They are in themselves generally useless, like footprints; and yet almost any sign of man's passage might, under certain conditions, interest a man. A footprint could fill Robinson Crusoe with emotion, the devastation wrought by an army's march might prove many things to a historian, and even the disorder in which a room is casually left may express very vividly the owner's ways and character.

Sometimes, however, man's traces are traces of useful action which has so changed natural objects as to make them congenial to his mind. Instead of a footprint we might find an arrow; instead of a disordered room, a well-planted orchard—things which would not only have betrayed the agent's habits, but would have served and expressed his intent. Such propitious forms given by man to matter are no less instrumental in the Life of Reason than are propitious forms assumed by man's own habit or fancy. Any operation which thus humanises and rationalises objects is called art.

Of all reason's embodiments art is therefore the most splendid and complete. Merely to attain categories by which inner experience may be articulated, or to feign analogies by which a universe

tradition imposing itself contagiously or by force on each new generation.

Art is action which transcending the body makes the world a more congenial stimulus to the soul. All art is therefore useful and practical, and the notable aesthetic value which some works of art possess, for reasons flowing for the most part out of their moral significance, is itself one of the satisfactions which art offers to human nature as a whole. Between sensation and abstract discourse lies a region of deployed sensibility or synthetic representation. This region, called imagination, has pleasures more airy and luminous than those of sense, more massive and rapturous than those of intelligence. The values inherent in imagination, in instant intuition, in sense endowed with form, are called aesthetic values; they are found mainly in nature and living beings, but often also in man's artificial works, in images evoked by language, and in the realm of sound.

Productions in which an aesthetic value is or is supposed to be prominent take the name of fine art; but the work of fine art so defined is almost always an abstraction from the actual object, which has many non-aesthetic functions and values. To separate the aesthetic element is more misleading than helpful; for neither in the history of art nor in a rational estimate of its value can the aesthetic function of things be divorced from the practical and moral. What had to be done was, by imaginative races, done imaginatively; what had to be spoken or made, was spoken or made fitly, lovingly, beautifully. Or, to take the matter up on its psychological side, the ceaseless experimentation and ferment of ideas, in breeding what it had a propensity to breed, came sometimes on figments that gave it delightful pause; these beauties were the first knowledges and these arrests the first hints of real and useful things. The rose's grace could more easily be plucked from its petals than the beauty of art from its subject, occasion, and use. An aesthetic fragrance, indeed, all things may have, if in soliciting man's senses or reason they can awaken his imagination as well; but this middle zone is so mixed and nebulous, and its limits are so vague, that it cannot well be treated in theory otherwise than as it exists in fact—as a phase of man's sympathy with the world he moves in. If art is that element in the Life of Reason which consists in modifying its environment the better to attain its end, art may

estimation which any man may sincerely make, and in applying dialectic to it, so as to let the man see what he really esteems. What he really esteems is what ought to guide his conduct; for to suggest that a rational being ought to do what he feels to be wrong, or ought to pursue what he genuinely thinks is worthless, would be to impugn that man's rationality and to discredit one's own. With what face could any man or god say to another: Your duty is to do what you cannot know you ought to do; your function is to suffer what you cannot recognise to be worth suffering? Such an attitude amounts to imposture and excludes society; it is the attitude of a detestable tyrant, and any one who mistakes it for moral authority has not yet felt the first heart-throb of philosophy.

More even than natural philosophy, moral philosophy is something Greek: it is the appanage of freemen. The Socratic method is the soul of liberal conversation; it is compacted in equal measure of sincerity and courtesy. Each man is autonomous and all are respected; and nothing is brought forward except to be submitted to reason and accepted or rejected by the self-questioning heart. Indeed, when Socrates appeared in Athens mutual respect had passed into democracy and liberty into license; but the stalwart virtue of Socrates saved him from being a sophist, much as his method, when not honestly and sincerely used, might seem to countenance that moral anarchy which the sophists had expressed in their irresponsible doctrines. Their sophistry did not consist in the private *seat* which they assigned to judgment; for what judgment is there that is not somebody's judgment at some moment? The sophism consisted in ignoring the living moment's *intent*, and in suggesting that no judgment could refer to anything ulterior, and therefore that no judgment could be wrong: in other words that each man at each moment was the theme and standard, as well as the seat, of his judgment.

Socrates escaped this folly by force of honesty, which is what saves from folly in dialectic. He built his whole science precisely on that intent which the sophists ignored; he insisted that people should declare sincerely what they meant and what they wanted; and on that living rock he founded the persuasive and ideal sciences of logic and ethics, the necessity of which lies all in free insight and in actual will. This will and insight they render deliberate, profound, unshakable, and consistent. Socrates, by his

genial midwifery, helped men to discover the truth and excellence to which they were naturally addressed. This circumstance rendered his doctrine at once moral and scientific; scientific because dialectical, moral because expressive of personal and living aspirations. His ethics was not like what has since passed under that name—a spurious physics, accompanied by commandments and threats. It was a pliant and liberal expression of ideals, inwardly grounded and spontaneously pursued. It was an exercise in self-knowledge.

Socrates' liberality was that of a free man ready to maintain his will and conscience, if need be, against the whole world. The sophists, on the contrary, were sycophants in their scepticism, and having inwardly abandoned the ideals of their race and nation—which Socrates defended with his homely irony—they dealt out their miscellaneous knowledge, or their talent in exposition, at the beck and for the convenience of others. Their theory was that each man having a right to pursue his own aims, skilful thinkers might, for money, furnish any fellow-mortal with instruments fitted to his purpose. Socrates, on the contrary, conceived that each man, to achieve his aims must first learn to distinguish them clearly; he demanded that rationality, in the form of an examination and clarification of purposes, should precede any selection of external instruments. For how should a man recognise anything useful unless he first had established the end to be subserved and thereby recognised the good? True science, then, was that which enabled a man to disentangle and attain his natural good; and such a science is also the art of life and the whole of virtue.

The autonomous moralist differs from the sophist or ethical sceptic in this: that he retains his integrity. In vindicating his ideal he does not recant his human nature. In asserting the initial right of every impulse in others, he remains the spokesman of his own. Knowledge of the world, courtesy, and fairness do not neutralise his positive life. He is thoroughly sincere, as the sophist is not; for every man, while he lives, embodies and enacts some special interest; and this truth, which those who confound psychology with ethics may think destructive of all authority in morals, is in fact what alone renders moral judgment possible and respectable. If the sophist declares that what his nature attaches him to is not "really" a good, because it would not be a good, perhaps, for a different creature, he is a false interpreter of his own heart,

and rather discredibly stultifies his honest feelings and actions by those theoretical valuations which, in guise of a mystical ethics, he gives out to the world. Socratic liberality, on the contrary, is consistent with itself, as Spinozistic naturalism is also; for it exercises that right of private judgment which it concedes to others, and avowedly builds up the idea of the good on that natural inner foundation on which everybody who has it at all must inevitably build it. This functional good is accordingly always relative and good for something; it is the ideal which a vital and energising soul carries with it as it moves. It is identical, as Socrates constantly taught, with the useful, the helpful, the beneficent. It is the complement needed to perfect every art and every activity after its own kind.

Rational ethics is an embodiment of volition, not a description of it. It is the expression of living interest, preference, and categorical choice. It leaves to psychology and history a free field for the description of moral phenomena. It has no interest in slipping far-fetched and incredible myths beneath the facts of nature, so as to lend a non-natural origin to human aspirations. It even recognises, as an emanation of its own force, that uncompromising truthfulness with which science assigns all forms of moral life to their place in the automatic system of nature. But the rational moralist is not on that account reduced to a mere spectator, a physicist acknowledging no interest except the interest in facts and in the laws of change. His own spirit, small by the material forces which it may stand for and express, is great by its prerogative of surveying and judging the universe; surveying it, of course, from a mortal point of view, and judging it only by its kindliness or cruelty to some actual interest, yet, even so, determining unequivocally a part of its constitution and excellence. The rational moralist represents a force energising in the world, discovering its affinities there and clinging to them to the exclusion of their hateful opposites. He represents, over against the chance facts, an ideal embodying the particular demands, possibilities, and satisfactions of a specific being.

This dogmatic position of reason is not uncritically dogmatic; on the contrary, it is the sophistical position that is uncritically neutral. All criticism needs a dogmatic background, else it would lack objects and criteria for criticism. The sophist himself, without confessing it, enacts a special interest. He bubbles over with con-

tices serve to render those interests vital and genuine, and what external alliances might lend them support and a more glorious expression. The difficulty in carrying rational policy very far comes partly from the refractory materials at hand, and partly from the narrow range within which moral science is usually confined. The materials are individual wills naturally far from unanimous, lost for the most part in frivolous pleasures, rivalries, and superstitions, and little inclined to listen to a law-giver that, like a new Lycurgus, should speak to them of unanimity, simplicity, discipline, and perfection. Devotion and singlemindedness, perhaps possible in the cloister, are hard to establish in the world; yet a rational morality requires that all lay activities, all sweet temptations, should have their voice in the conclave. Morality becomes rational precisely by refusing either to accept human nature, as it sprouts, altogether without harmony, or to mutilate it in the haste to make it harmonious. The condition, therefore, of making a beginning in good politics is to find a set of men with well-knit character and cogent traditions, so that there may be a firm soil to cultivate and that labour may not be wasted in ploughing the quicksands.

CHAPTER 9

POST-RATIONAL MORALITY

WHEN SOCRATES and his two great disciples composed a system of rational ethics they were hardly proposing practical legislation for mankind. One by his irony, another by his frank idealism, and the third by his preponderating interest in history and analysis, showed clearly enough how little they dared to hope. They were merely writing an eloquent epitaph on their country. They were publishing the principles of what had been its life, gathering piously its broken ideals, and interpreting its momentary achievement. The spirit of liberty and co-operation was already dead. The private citizen, debauched by the largesses and petty quarrels of his city, had become indolent and mean-spirited. He had begun to question the utility of religion, of patriotism, and of justice. Having allowed the organ for the ideal to atrophy in his soul, he could dream of finding some sullen sort of happiness in unreason. He felt that the austere glories of his country, as a Spartan regimen might have preserved them, would not benefit that baser part of him which alone remained. Political virtue seemed a useless tax on his material profit and freedom. The tedium and distrust proper to a disintegrated society began to drive him to artificial excitements and superstitions. Democracy had learned to regard as enemies the few in whom public interest was still represented, the few whose nobler temper and traditions still coincided with the general good. These last patriots were gradually banished or exterminated, and with them died the spirit that rational ethics had expressed. Philosophers were no longer suffered to have illusions about the state. Human activity on the public stage had shaken off all allegiance to art or reason.

Life is older and more persistent than reason, and the failure of a first experiment in rationality does not deprive mankind of that mental and moral vegetation which they possessed for ages in a wild state before the advent of civilisation. They merely revert to their uncivil condition and espouse whatever imaginative ideal