the way silently and unmarked for the success of others. There are at this moment more plays written by young authors worth a hearing than any that the public are flocking to see. The sinews of war are wanted to fight their battle for them, for battle it *will* be to induce a public drunk with the froth of musical comedy exhilaration, and saturated with sketches and turns that are frankly farce or coarsely melodrama, to come in their numbers to see the most modern work of the most modern authors. There is as great a gulf between the work of the late Robert Marshall and the work of a Stanley Houghton as there is between a landscape by Leader and one by Wilson Steer. Alma Tadema and William Nicholson, Marcus Stone and Orpen, who has supplied the missing link between these two schools? They are suddenly among us, with us, and no one has cried out to us that the firmaments are changing or that a new star is rising on the horizon.

To this conclusion, therefore, must we come—that the public sits patiently waiting for the curtain to go up, and gladly pays its money if and when it can be sure that what it has paid for is the thing it wants to see. Something with elements familiar enough to be certain of, something not too strange to be shocking. If the scene is all unfamiliar, if it is all strange, there is always the danger of being a pioneer, and that word alone has something unconventional and adventurous about it. There is nothing the British as a *race* hate so much as being called adventurers—there is nothing the Briton as an *individual* loves so much as adventure. Only his adventures must be made without the eye-witness of his class, where there is no one to see him look ridiculous if he fails, and no one to laugh at him if he looks ridiculous while he is learning.

To the few men or women of deep convictions and no self-consciousness is left the onus of experimenting and leading. They lead them—so far as their means will permit—and, like all pioneers, when these means are exhausted, they leave others to carry on the experiment and others to reap the benefit of their forgotten efforts. They ask for no reward and rarely get it, for little is volunteered that is not begged; but because their message had to be delivered they delivered it at their Master's bidding and sank into oblivion. But it is these silent workers who have led—because they had not the power to dictate—and now and then a biographer or an historian stumbles across their names in his tracing of those first beginnings in which the money changers of the world have refused to help and to which the public is indif[illegible] handed down to posterity in the uncl[illegible] edia while their imitators will succ[illegible].

GERTRUDE KINGSTON

'THE SOCIOLOGICAL VALUE OF CHRISTIANITY:'

A NOTICEABLE BOOK

THE Founder and first Editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, more years ago than I care to remember, decided to publish, from time to time, a few reviews of noticeable books, and was so good as to ask me, among other of his contributors, to aid him in this design. He thought that out of the exceeding great multitude of volumes — most of them almost or entirely worthless—inflicted by publishers on a long-suffering world, a few really of importance, for one reason or another, such as intrinsic excellence or special opportuneness, might well be brought before his readers; and he left it to the friends whose co-operation he sought, to send him observations upon any such works as might come in their way. For a while this plan was carried out, with, as Sir James Knowles thought, a considerable measure of success. Then—why I never quite understood—it was given up; and the heading 'Noticeable Books' disappeared from these pages.[1] It appears to me that this was matter for regret. One does occasionally meet with a new book to which it is quite worth while to call the attention of the readers of the *Nineteenth Century*. Such a one is Dr. Chatterton-Hill's recently published volume *The Sociological Value of Christianity*, of which I propose to give a brief account; and I shall do so, as far as possible, in his own words, without note or comment, my object being to explain what *he* thinks, not what I think.

I may observe, in passing, that I know nothing of this writer beyond what his title-page reveals—that he is a Docent in Sociology at the University of Geneva and the author of two other philosophical works, one in English,[2] which I have not read, the other in French—and very good French[3]—which I have perused with some interest, with not a little amusement, and with almost complete dissent.[4] In the eight years which

[1] It appeared last in November 1896.—EDITOR, *Nineteenth Century and After*.

[2] *Heredity and Selection in Sociology.* [3] *La Physiologie Morale.*

[4] The book may possess a certain value as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the ethical theories of such writers as Herbert Spencer, Häckel, Büchner, and Maudsley.

have passed since its publication, Dr. Chatterton-Hill's views would seem to have undergone considerable modification, if I rightly interpret the book before me. At all events it is free from the worst crudities of his earlier work, and must be credited with originality of design and rationality of dialectic. In it he deals with a subject of transcendent importance in a way little followed, which is, however, a perfectly legitimate way: the way indicated by the words of the Latin poet: 'Exitus acta probat.' He holds, as a sociologist, that all religious doctrines must be judged by their consequences to society, such being the sole criterion for appreciating their sociological value.

I suppose the vast majority of people see in Christ a mere preacher of individual regeneration and salvation, and in the Christian religion a mere individual phenomenon, a mere expression of individual emotion, of individual psychological needs. M. Salomon Reinach has tersely formulated that view in his *Orpheus*:

> La morale chrétienne [he affirms] n'est pas *sociale*: elle néglige les devoirs de l'homme envers la cité, parce qu'elle tend à la perfection, à la pureté individuelle: mais elle prépare l'homme à mieux remplir ses devoirs sociaux en condamnant la haine et la violence, en enseignant la fraternité.

Now the view which Dr. Chatterton-Hill takes is diametrically opposite to this. He does not, of course, deny that Christianity in condemning hatred and violence, and in teaching fraternity, qualifies man to fulfil his social duties; but he contends that 'the strength of Christianity and the secret of its survival amidst the storms of centuries are to be sought precisely in the fact that the doctrine of Jesus *is* a social doctrine—a doctrine that inculcates rules of social life indispensable to the persistence of Western civilisation.' It must be clearly understood that Dr. Chatterton-Hill writes simply and solely as a sociologist. Theology he puts aside altogether. He regards it as concerned with 'matters which lie outside the sphere of human knowledge,' with 'sterile controversies,' with 'unverifiable hypotheses.'

> We of the twentieth century [he writes] know not one iota more about the so-called 'fundamental truths of religion' than those of the first Christian century did; we stand to-day before the same unsolved riddles as did our Aryan ancestors of the Veda, who invoked Varuna, Usha, Savitri, the Asuras, with the same legitimate degree of confidence and certainty as Christians of the twentieth century invoke the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; exactly the same amount of theological truth was expressed in the daily Vedic sacrifice to Agni, as is expressed in the daily Christian sacrifice of the Mass. *Der Wahrheit letzter Schluss*, the last word of truth, to use the expression of Faust, was spoken by the worshippers of Isis at Thebes and Memphis, when, on the veil that concealed the face of the goddess to mortal eyes, they inscribed the sentence 'No mortal is able to raise my veil.' The esoteric worshippers of Isis used to impose on all new adepts an *épreuve de foi* on entering the association

of the faithful; they had to walk without trembling along the brink of an abyss, the depths of which were shrouded in darkness. This abyss, unfathomable to the eye of him who peered into it from above, symbolised the *Unfathomable Truth*. The abyss of truth remains as unfathomable to-day as it was unfathomable then; neither the blood of innumerable martyrs, nor the learned and persevering efforts of scientists and philosophers, have succeeded in lighting up the sombre recesses of the precipice. The great enigma of Life and Death has not been solved; none of those who have set sail on the great Ocean of Eternity have ever returned to 'give us a sign.' We still stand on the shores of the Ocean of Mystery, and wait for a sign, until our turn comes; and we have to embark on the journey from which there is no return, without ever having received the sign. The seven Genii of the Vision of Hermes, the seven Devas of India, the seven Amsphapands of Persia, the seven Angels of Chaldea, the seven Sephiroths of the Kabal, the seven Archangels of the Christian Apocalypse—none of these have given us the sign whereby we may comprehend the riddle of Life and Death.[5]

Such is the attitude of Dr. Chatterton-Hill's mind toward all theologies. But it does not follow that he thinks them useless or mischievous: far from it. He tells us:

We see in every religious system that has survived in the universal struggle for existence, a fundamental factor in the life of that society to which such a system belongs. Every religious system that survives is adapted to the necessities of the society in which it survives. Such a religious system is therefore *true* in the only sense in which truth can be proved—in the sense that it responds to the end in view of which it was evolved. Truth is necessarily a relative conception; and the truth of a religious system can be judged of only with reference to a given environment. In this environment the system is true (or untrue), and its truth (or untruth) can be proved by the concrete results of its influence on social life. Christianity is true for the Western world; Islam, Brahminism, Buddhism, Confucianism, are true in their respective environments. Each responds to the particular needs of heterogeneous social aggregates.[6]

He claims that the sociological study of religion initiated by a school of thinkers, of whom Professor Durkheim is one of the best known, has begun to open up to our vision a new aspect of religious belief, to exhibit it as something more than a mere individual hankering after hidden truths, as a fundamental and permanent factor of social existence and evolution. Instead of seeking, as theology does, to justify or condemn a religious system by an appeal to evidence which, as our author judges, never can be proved, this new school justifies or condemns a religious system by an appeal to the concrete results obtained, in the life of society, by its working and influence.

This, then, is Dr. Chatterton-Hill's position, and I have been at the pains to present it fully and clearly, because, in my judgment, the special value of his book depends upon the point of view from which it is written. A Catholic theologian would

[5] Pref. p. viii. [6] P. xiv.

probably arrive at conclusions not widely differing from his regarding the value of Christianity as a social factor and force. Dr. Chatterton-Hill, as we have seen, puts aside theology altogether, for the simple reason, as he frankly states, that he regards 'all beliefs of a suprarational (*i.e.* religious) nature as equally legitimate, seeing that they are, all of them, equally unprovable.' 'Legitimate,' not illegitimate, please note. He appears to be removed from the ordinary *libre penseur*, for whom all creeds are either illusions or impostures. He is well aware of the necessity of religious faith to man, because it corresponds to the deepest emotional needs of human nature. He knows that abstract doctrines cannot take its place as an inner light for the individual soul. But he contends that Christianity must rise above the individual—that its light must shine without into the world, in accordance with that great saying of its Founder. 'The permanent and the universal,' he insists, 'such must be the basis of Christianity, and not the ephemeral and the subjective'; and he finds that the very fact of its survival, of its triumph over pagan syncretism in the early ages of its existence, proves that the religion of Jesus possesses a principle—nay, is built on a principle—that is of a permanent and universal nature.

Dr. Chatterton-Hill begins his discussion by an emphatic repudiation of the doctrine of Animism, which, as he observes, is based on the fundamental notion of the individual as the centre of all religious phenomena, and which represents the primitive religious systems of humanity as 'grotesque illusions,' as 'ridiculous distortions of what to us are palpable facts.' The question then arises: How comes it that these religious systems of early stages of culture, with their absurdities, so manifest to us, were universally received? He regards it as evident that ceremonies and beliefs terribly burdensome to the individual in many ways, cannot have emanated from the individual, but must be derived from a power superior to the individual and able to impress unquestioning obedience on him. But here it will be well to let him more fully explain his meaning in his own way.

> The only power superior to the individual, within the limits of our experience, is the society. Hence the conclusion that the beliefs which exert so immense an influence on the life of primitive men are of a social, and not of an individual nature. Their origin must be sought in social necessities, not in individual necessities. They dominate the individual, because the individual cannot exist outside the society or independently of the society; because the society is able to enforce its will with irresistible force. The individual mind has not invented such beliefs; it has received them from the society—from the social mind. Such beliefs are of a collective nature, and, as regards each individual, *a priori*. The collective mentality, the social mind, is not synonymous with the individual mentality,

it is not a mere grouping of individual mentalities. The social mind, the collective mentality, is something *sui generis*, which is not subject to the laws that are operative in the domain of individual psychology. It is a force superior to the individual. True, the society is composed of individuals; but the life of society is as independent of the lives of the individuals composing it as the existence of the individual is independent of that of the cells composing the individual organism. As little as we can interpret the life of a man according to the life of one of the cells composing his organism at any given moment—as little can we interpret the life of society in the light of that of one of its individual components.

This is, of course, the teaching of the French school of sociology to which Dr. Chatterton-Hill adheres; and it issues in what he calls three fundamental facts: that society is a phenomenon *sui generis*, the evolution of which is independent of the evolution of its individual components; that religious beliefs and institutions are the product of society, of the workings of the social mind, and do not emanate from the individual; and that they constitute the most fundamental of all the forces underlying the vast process of social evolution. He continues:

Far, then, from being a mere individual phenomenon, religion appears to us as an essentially social phenomenon, as a product of social life, as a fundamental factor of social development. Religion, as M. Durkheim very justly observes, contains *in potentia* all the various elements which, subsequently dissociated and combined in a thousand ways, give rise to the diverse manifestations of social life. Science and poetry are derived from myths and legends; religious ornamentation and religious ceremonies have given birth to the plastic arts; ritual practices have engendered law and morals; parentage and relationship were originally conceived as purely mystical links; punishments, contracts, gifts, homage are but transformations of the doctrine of religious sacrifice; our philosophical conceptions concerning the soul, concerning immortality, concerning life itself, can be understood only by reference to the religious notions that constituted their first form. And the most recent researches, far from confirming the doctrine of historical materialism, show us the economic functions and structure of society as products of religious belief and religious influences. Engendered was religion by the social mind, because it is a factor of social existence, an instrument of social activity and evolution. Its diffusion is universal, because the same necessities, universally prevalent, gave rise to the same organs of social life.[7]

The next step in the inquiry is: What necessities can have engendered religion; to what social needs does religion respond? Our author replies that religion constitutes an indispensable element of social unity, of social cohesion and integration, in that it restrains individual liberty and subordinates the individual to society, in the interest of the continuity of social existence; for social existence is possible only if the individual limits his liberty, if he imposes certain restrictions on his desires, if he refrains from committing certain acts which his purely indi-

[7] P. 12.

vidual interests would urge him to commit. And, he continues, this liberty can be limited only by a power superior to him, and the only power superior to him, within the limits of our experience, is society. It is, then, society which, by means of religious belief, by means of collective representations imposing themselves *a priori* with irresistible force, controls the individual. Thus are individual interests sacrificed to social interests, and the sacrifice is necessary if the stability of society, if the continuity of social existence are to be maintained. 'Necessary': the individual has no choice between a diminished existence and no existence at all. If life can in any way be considered a blessing—and we have no possible justification for an affirmative solution of the riddle, as we know nothing of life and have nothing known wherewith to compare it—then we may say that the individual's interests are 'reconciled' with the interests of society.

Religion, therefore, the argument proceeds, is the instrument whereby the sacrifice of individual interests to social interests is obtained. Only quite secondarily, from the point of view of its conception, and quite subsequently, from the point of view of its historical development, does religion minister to individual needs. This is Dr. Chatterton-Hill's interpretation of the old doctrine, 'Primus in orbe deos fecit timor'; and he is unquestionably well warranted in insisting that the reign of religion was, originally, a reign of terror, and that only very late in mental evolution does it begin to temper severity with mildness, to blend its prohibitions with consolations, to seek not only to curb the individual by fear but to gain him by persuasion. 'The religion of Israel,' he observes, 'marks a beginning in this direction; the deity of the time of the later prophets appears possessed of more humanitarian sentiments than the old relentless Yahveh whose Ten Commandments represent him as "a jealous god."' He continues:

> But the great religious revolution, whereby religion, whilst remaining true to its fundamental function of assuring social integration and cohesion, became nevertheless a source of unequalled consolation for individual distress, of unrivalled hope and comfort for the individual—this great religious revolution was the work of Christianity. Christianity proved hereby its immense superiority, in that it succeeded—and succeeded magnificently—in combining the defence of social interests with the defence of individual interests, in acting at the same time as the supreme restraint on the individual and as the supreme consoler of the individual. Before Christianity, no religion had succeeded in effecting any sort of moral junction between the interests of society and those of the individual—no religion, unless we except the religion of Israel in its later stages, had ever made an effort to compensate the restrictions imposed on the individual, by rewards for complying with irksome and wearisome regulations, had ever sought to gain the individual by persuasion as well as grinding him down

by terror. The superiority of Christianity, the wonderful social adaptability possessed by it, consist essentially in the exquisite blending of severity and mildness. By the severity of the restraints imposed by it on the individual, Christianity proved its adaptability to social necessities: and by the unequalled consolation it offered, on the other hand, to the individual, Christianity proved its adaptability to individual needs. The older religions only manifested the single aspect of factors of social evolution: Christianity manifested the double aspect of a factor of social and of individual development.'

This, then, Dr. Chatterton-Hill holds, is the double aspect presented by Christianity, and, he insists, it is only when we consider it under this double aspect, it is only when we regard it as realising an equilibrium between social and individual interests—interests which are naturally and fundamentally antagonistic—that we can hope to judge rightly of its value. That equilibrium he considers to be as perfect as it is humanly possible to imagine. 'The necessity of individual sacrifice is well recognised by the Christian doctrine; but this individual sacrifice, which cannot be compensated for on earth and in this life, shall receive an adequate reward after death. The balance between social and individual interests, which is so unfavourable in this life to the individual interests, shall be adjusted in the life to come. If the individual be condemned to sacrifice himself now to the interests of society, he shall recover, so to speak, the lost part of himself in Eternity. The diminished existence which he must needs lead on earth is but the prelude to the integral life beyond the tomb.'[2]

But further. Social progress, considered from a mental point of view, consists in the diminution of the sphere of influence of collective representations, in the liberation of individual thought from the yoke imposed by the collective mind. But this means the formation of logical concepts, the growth of rational thought, a development of individualism threatening the foundation of social existence. Is that, however, in truth the function of this rationalism? Our author answers 'No. If such be indeed the social function of rationalism the latter certainly would never have been evolved; seeing that the development of an organ in a species that survives is always a proof of the utility of that organ, or, at any rate, of its indifference. As a matter of fact, the social function of rationalism [he insists] consists in its ability to secure the adaptation of society to environing conditions with less expenditure of social force. . . .

[1] P. 15.

[2] P. 17. Elsewhere he observes, 'As it is impossible that any benefits accrue in this world to the individual [from the sacrifices of egotism, so necessary to society], the reaping of such benefits is, with rare cleverness, adjourned by Christianity to the world to come—that is, to a world of which we can have no knowledge.'—P. 164.

By enabling us to comprehend the working of natural laws, rationalism enables us to put ourselves into harmony with those laws, to adapt ourselves to them—thereby permitting a positive increase of happiness, and a positive diminution of misery.' Herein, our author judges, is the true function of rationalism. But, he adds, it must be limited; universal rationalism conduces not to social welfare but to social disintegration, for it leads to an excessive unilateral assertion of individual rights which is incompatible with the co-existence of social rights.

It is here that religion steps in. In primitive societies, as we have said, religion and society are synonymous terms—religious thought is synonymous with social thought. But, in the measure that individual thought differentiates itself from collective thought, the latter tends also to become ever less co-extensive with religious thought. *The differentiation of the terms religion and society is the counterpart of the differentiation of the terms individual and society.* In the later religions, notably in the religion of the Israelites and in Christianity, we find ever more and more developed the idea of a Moral law[10] exterior to society, which at once dominates society and completes the latter. In Christianity this idea of the Moral Law attains the highest point of its evolution. In Christianity we find the Moral Law acting at once as a reinforcement and as an extension of the social law. In other words, the moral sphere contains the social sphere, but is not limited by it. The ethical religions, and especially Christianity, constitute an extension of society and of the social law, in that they subordinate directly to themselves that part of the individual which has liberated itself from social control. Religion thus imposes a limitation on rationalism, a limitation which responds to the necessities of social life. *By limiting rationalism in this way, religion adapts it therefore to its social function.*[11]

The first social function of religion, then, in the higher states of culture is, as Dr. Chatterton-Hill holds, the limitation of rationalism in order to adapt it to the social uses which it is destined to serve. Religion establishes an equilibrium between the individual and society, in the interests of both, by means of the idea of duty—a Categorical Imperative reinforced by an Absolute Sanction.

It constitutes the counterpart of the notion of Rights; and, in the moral system of Christianity, an exact correlation between the two is established, so that the rights of every individual—rights which are conditioned by capacity—are exactly balanced by his duties Reason suffices for the dictation of individual rights; but it is not capable of dictating to the individual the corresponding duties—much less of attaching to the notion of duty the notion of an adequate sanction. The limitation of the rationalised personality by religion, as also the subordination of the still socialised part of human conduct to social laws—both imply the sacrifice of individual (*i.e.* egotistical) interests. In primitive societies, where the individual is wholly under social control, this sacrifice is effected without the slightest recompense being offered or, indeed, hoped for. It must not be thought that primitive

[10] Dr. Chatterton-Hill's conception of the Moral Law is strictly transcendental. 'The Moral Law,' he writes, 'is eternal because absolute.'—P. 46.

[11] P. 25.

men are more disinterested than civilised ones—for the psychological motives underlying human conduct remain invariably the same. If primitive man sacrifices himself to society without receiving or hoping for any compensation, this is due solely to the fact that he is so solidly embedded in the group to which he belongs that his existence as individual is reduced to the lowest possible minimum. Living exclusively for the collectivity, thinking almost exclusively by means of representations coined for him *a priori* by the collectivity, dominated at every moment of his existence by the all-absorbing influence of society, the power of the latter is sufficient to compel him to make all the sacrifices of his personal liberty required by the group. It is only later, when the individual has emancipated himself in a certain degree from social tyranny, when thought has become partly rational, that the utility of sacrificing individual interests to social interests will come to be questioned. As the necessity of a certain sacrifice of egotism remains, it becomes indispensable to counterbalance the notion of sacrifice by the notion of recompense. . . . Christianity understood this well. . . . Individualism and egotism, being derived from the development of rational thought, cannot be curbed by acts of material pressure, but only by an efficient moral control. But a moral control, if it is to be efficacious, cannot neglect the fundamental sentiments at the basis of the moral and mental life of the individual, once this life commences to evolve independently of collective representations—that is to say, the egotistical sentiments. Such a moral control must, to be efficacious, utilise these sentiments: and this is precisely what Christianity did. Christianity restrained egotism in this life by the hope of compensation hereafter—it vanquished egotistical desires by other egotistical desires. In so doing, it showed its consummate knowledge of human psychology, its profound sense of realities. And not only that: but also its profound sense of justice. For does not justice require that Duty and Compensation be correlative notions?[12]

Such, then, in the view of Dr. Chatterton-Hill, is the sociological value of Christianity as realised in European civilisation. That civilisation is very far removed from the primitive condition in which all the power of the community over the individual could be *directly* exercised. It is sectioned into many sub-divisions—classes, professions, corporations, syndicates—which are intermediates between the whole society and the individual. And in these the individual is incorporated and controlled, all being adapted to the end in view of which they were evolved—namely, his 'socialisation.' 'The individual is in such a case attached to society by means of the notion of duty, and his egotism is subordinated to higher, extra-individual aims; this being so, he will work through the agency of his class, or professional organisation, for the benefit of the whole society.' No doubt that is, as a matter of fact, a correct account of the social organism as formed by Christianity. For, when religion has ensured an equilibrium between the individual and society, it has *ipso facto* ensured an equilibrium between the sub-divisions of society and the whole. To these sub-divisions, as to the individual, Christianity had a message—the message summed

[12] P. 28.

up in the word 'duty,' which, in effect, means the subordinating of class interests to social interests.

The social integration realised by religion implies, therefore, the checking of individual egotism and of class egotism. When the former is checked the latter will *ipso facto* be held under restraint. *Vice versa* does the growth of individual egotism always entail the correlative growth of class egotism. Egotism being naturally the most powerful sentiment in individual life, the tendency must always be present to make use of the power and influence derived from the class, in order to further egotistical interests. Present in all classes, such a tendency is inevitably stronger in the classes at the top of the social hierarchy. It requires discipline of a rare force to be able to prevent the individual with much capacity, much power, and many riches from misusing these advantages—to be able to induce him to employ these advantages for the collective welfare, rather than for individual welfare, The biographer of Jesus of Nazareth tells us that the young man whom the Master counselled to sell his goods and give the proceeds to the poor went away very sorrowful—for he was rich. And Jesus pronounced the words that millionaire Christian company promoters prefer to pass over in silence: 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.' The words do not signify that Jesus condemned riches *per se*. But Jesus saw in wealth, not an end, but a means to an end—a means for doing good to the community. When he said that the rich shall have difficulty in entering the Kingdom of God, he was insisting on the immense difficulty, for the rich man, of combating egotism, of putting his wealth at the service of higher ideals, of not employing that wealth solely for the satisfaction of egotistical wants and desires. And thereby did Jesus once more manifest his profound knowledge of human life and of the human character.[13]

Everything depends, then, on social integration; on the efficacy of the principles on which the notion of duty is based; on the efficacy of the sanction which gives to this notion the character of a categorical imperative. The Moral Law if not absolute is nothing. It incorporates social laws into religion; it exhibits duty as the very voice of God. Obedience to the powers that be is grounded upon a Divine sanction: they are ordained of God: 'whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God.' But more: the Moral Law embraces every segment of human life; acts and thoughts not under social control are subject to it; and its aim confounds itself with the aim of religion generally, the subordination of the individual, the repression of egotism.

Such are the essential ideas of Dr. Chatterton-Hill's treatise. Having laid them down, he proceeds to consider 'the theory and practice of Christianity—the teaching of Jesus and the concrete applications of this teaching given by the Church.' Those applications, he holds, must necessarily be judged according as they asserted themselves under the influences of a Christian *régime* acting on an entirely Christianised society. He contends, most

[13] P. 34.

justly, that from a sociological point of view it is quite impossible to draw any distinction between the Church of the first four centuries and the Church of the Middle Ages, which merely carried into the domain of concrete practice and application principles already laid down. Of course, it was only when the Church was definitely victorious, after the meeting of the Council of Nicæa in 325, or, even later, after the death of Theodosius in 395, that the seed sown by Jesus, and germinating during nearly four hundred years, ripened to maturity. Then we see the application of His teaching to social conditions. And if we find such application, on the whole, beneficial to society, we may say unhesitatingly that the social value of Christianity has been duly proved.

And here Dr. Chatterton-Hill is led to consider a view very prevalent in these days—the view of the Founder of Christianity as teaching the dogmas of modern democracy. This view represents Him, indeed, as the democrat *par excellence*, as the preacher of equality, as the apostle of universal peace and humanitarianism, as the forerunner of socialism, or, as Tolstoy will have it, of anarchism. It attributes to Him the origin of all the sickly sentimentalism which has been current since the eighteenth century. Now this argument, which seeks to separate theory and practice in Christianity, to place the teaching of Jesus in antagonism to the entire development of the Christian doctrine and practice during nearly twenty centuries, Dr. Chatterton-Hill shows conclusively, as it seems to me, to be untenable and indeed absurd. In some closely reasoned pages he combats the view that social evolution is a merely arbitrary process, a mere thing of choice, the product of chance and chaos and haphazard. We know that in the realm of nature the survival of an organ, the persistence of a species, proves that they are adapted to surrounding conditions, that they are in harmony with their environment; and he contends that similar conditions prevail in social life. I quote a portion of his argument:

Whether the view be taken that Christianity, in general, be a negligible factor in social evolution, that Christianity in general has exerted practically no influence on the formation and development of Western civilisation, or whether the view be taken that Church Christianity in particular has exerted a noxious and evil influence on social evolution—in both cases the diffusion and remarkable persistence of Christianity, precisely under the form of what we may term Church Christianity, remain enshrouded in a veil of impenetrable mystery, and can only be explained as the effect of a miracle. If Christianity be destitute of sociological value and bereft of sociological importance, what is the meaning of its diffusion and persistence? If the form under which Christianity has asserted itself be a distorted form and hostile to the real interests of society, why should precisely this distorted form have asserted itself victoriously and persisted? Such is the dilemma

to which partisans of either theory are reduced. And the only way out of the dilemma is to suppose social evolution to be absolutely arbitrary, to be the result of chance and haphazard, to be a chaotic and incomprehensible process. If, however, we accept the idea of social evolution as determined by fixed and unchangeable laws, in the same way as any other order of phenomena in the natural world is determined, the theories in question become quite untenable. It is curious to observe that those who, in general, insist most strongly on the notion of natural law, and seek thereby to shake the foundations of supernatural belief, are often those who ignore absolutely the working of natural law in social evolution. It is to this ignorance of the working of immutable social laws that we must attribute the popular belief that social evolution is a thing of choice, that society can be recast and re-formed at will, according to the likes and desires of legislators and would-be social reformers. To those who ignore social laws, the idea of the fruitful teaching of Jesus remaining barren, or of the noxious teaching of the Church prospering and developing, has nothing surprising in it. By such as these, the idea of an indissoluble link existing between the society of the Middle Ages and the society of to-day is entirely ignored. The fact is that these persons, who constitute, unfortunately, the majority, are wholly ignorant of the rudiments of social philosophy. They are ignorant of the fact that heredity and selection constitute fundamental laws of social existence, just as much as the same factors determine the life of biological species and organisms. They know not that every society is the offspring of heredity, that in its past history lies its indispensable vital patrimony.[14]

No doubt that is so. The extraordinary success of the Christian Church was due to the fact that, as the ideas of its Founder responded to the immediate needs of society, they afforded an adequate basis for reconstructing a moribund civilisation. They gave to the Western world a fresh ideal, capable of securing anew its integration, of maintaining discipline and repressing insubordination: they revealed the true laws of social existence, chief among them being the subordination of the individual to higher ends, the necessity of suffering, the maintenance of authority and discipline.

The debt, then, of the Western world to Christianity is, Dr. Chatterton-Hill concludes, a colossal one, for it is to Christianity that European civilisation owes its survival. We live in an age when there is a very widespread tendency to cast off Christianity among the nations which it has formed. The individualism which, as our author remarks, constitutes the foundation of Protestantism, as cast by Rousseau into the form of Egalitairism, was the central idea of the French Revolution. 'Hoc fonte derivata clades.' Issuing from France this false dogma has become European. It is, and cannot help being, a doctrine of disintegration; for society is organic, and that implies differentiation and inequality. It is flatly opposed to the facts both of biology and of human history. It is equally opposed, as Dr. Chatterton-Hill has shown at length, in an excellent chapter

[14] P. 59.

of his book, to the Christian doctrine of fraternity, 'All men are brothers—but all men are not equal: such is the truth contained in the Gospel message.'

The doctrine of fraternity, as preached by Christianity, implies the existence of three underlying conditions, without which it can be but an empty and meaningless phrase: firstly, the subordination of individual aims to social aims; secondly, the recognition of the equal dignity, of the equal *moral* value, of all categories of labour—or, in other words, the recognition of individual dignity, of the moral value of the individual, irrespective of the latter's capacities or social position; thirdly, individual humility, as contrasted with the arrogance, vanity, and self-satisfaction we find so widely prevalent at the present day. When we come to analyse more closely the idea of fraternity, we shall find, effectively, that this notion implies the existence of the three conditions aforesaid. All men are brothers, because all work with a view to realising aims which are common to all—because all are strongly integrated in a whole dominated by powerful ideals that act as a bond of unity; all men are brothers, because all are equal in dignity before the Moral Law; all men are brothers, because all are conscious of their moral insufficiency—because this consciousness incites to solidarity, since each must show indulgence to the failings of others, even as he needs the indulgence of others for his own failings. Social integration, the recognition of human dignity, individual humility—are thus the conditions presupposed by the doctrine of fraternity. If these conditions fail, fraternity may exist on paper, as in the first and third Republics in France; but it cannot exist as a living reality.

It was by realising these fundamental conditions that Christianity integrated society, knitting the members of the community together as *domestici Dei*, in the love and veneration of a common tradition. Social inequality has from the first been recognised and preached by the Catholic Church, whose constitution is essentially hierarchical. And here she was but following and applying the doctrine of her Founder. The inequality that necessarily exists in social life, and which results from differences of capacity constantly engendered by heredity and constantly accentuated by selection, was as clearly admitted and recognised by Jesus as was the equality of all before the Moral Law. Inequality is the law of the finite world: equality of the infinite. But in the system of Christian ethics the greater the superiority of the individual, the more important his duty, the graver his responsibilities.

> What is grandeur? What is power?
> Heavier toil, superior pain.

Solidarity is the true law of the social organism: the family—not the individual—is the foundation of the State, which indeed may truly be regarded as the extended family. To that solidarity the Revolution—which is merely an incarnation of the Rousseauan doctrine of equality, or perhaps one should rather say equivalence—of the sufficiency of the individual in the

order of thought and the order of action—is fatal. One of the profoundest students of man and society that ever lived has admirably observed 'En coupant la tête à Louis XVI., la Révolution a coupé la tête à tous les pères de famille.' Balzac continues 'Il n'y a plus de famille aujourd'hui; il n'y a plus que des individus.' Yes, the French Revolution ushered in an age of unbridled individualism, and logically enough rejected Christianity which is the effective curb of individualism, for, to quote Balzac again, Christianity, of which he finds Catholicism the only expression worth considering, 'is a complete system of repression of the depraved tendencies of men, and the greatest element of social order.'

But in the present age the belief prevails that social progress is to be sought in the ever greater development of individualism, in the reduction of social authority to a minimum, in the unrestricted domination of rationalism. It is anarchy plus the policeman—the only authority left if religion is rejected: anarchy in the economic sphere, anarchy in family life, anarchy in morals, anarchy in politics—all the inevitable outcome of the loss of the fundamental notion of human solidarity, of the Christian tradition by which our forefathers solved the problem of the relation of the individual to society. Anarchy is the inevitable result of the principle of counting heads as the criterion of right and wrong, on which the pseudo-democracy of our time is based. Authority so derived is an illusion and a snare. What sanctity can apply to the will, or rather whim, of the multitude? To be real and efficacious authority must rest upon the moral conviction of the governed. The political system—if system it can be called—based on the sophism of individual equivalence, is radically incapable of instituting authority of any sort—except the authority of brute force, which must fall by its own weight: 'Vis consili expers mole ruit sua.' Look, our author bids us, at France:

> Lacking in all authority, unable to appeal to any principles whereby liberty may be limited and discipline imposed, French democracy has seen, during thirty years, disorder and anarchy gradually spread until the whole edifice of French civilisation is undermined. Chronic strikes wantonly declared without economic justification, indiscipline in all branches of the public services; the incredible tyranny exercised by the revolutionary labour syndicates, and to check which the constituted authorities are powerless; the systematic undermining of the fundamental ideas of social solidarity, such as the idea of patriotism; the disorganisation of family life, and the incoherence and corruption of political life—such are some of the symptoms by which the bankruptcy of the democratic system of government in France may be recognised. And this bankruptcy is due to the lack of all the principles whereon Authority, indispensable to the maintenance of social integration, may be based.

What, then, is the prospect before us? Dr. Chatterton-Hill answers:

> The great problem confronting Western society to-day is not that of how to best safeguard and develop liberty, but the problem of how to best safeguard the great principle of authority—of how to safeguard that discipline without which social integration is an impossibility. And the only social organisation in our midst in which authority and discipline are adequately safeguarded is the organisation of the Catholic Church. . . . As long as Western society is to survive, it must continue to be based on those fundamental principles of government which Christianity, and particularly Catholic Christianity, enunciated—on those fundamental traditions of social policy which we owe to the genius of the Catholic Church. Of the social teaching of Jesus, and of the great principles of social organisation and government derived from that teaching, the words of the Master are true: Cœlum et terra transibunt, verba autem mea non transibunt.[15]

W. S. LILLY.

---

[15] Pp. 250-257. It is only fair to Dr. Chatterton-Hill to quote the following words: 'In order to prevent all misunderstanding, it is necessary that we should add that we by no means imply that Western society, if it is to survive, must needs go back to the Middle Ages, and re-establish complete religious under the authority of the Papal See. . . . What we mean is that every effort made with a view to securing the greater integration and cohesion of Western society, to placing efficient restraints on our individualism which threatens to undermine the fabric of our civilisation, must needs be based on the same principles as those which inspired the Catholic Church in her work of building up and consolidating European Society.'