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Edited by

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By

LINDSAY DEWAR

Principal of Bishops' College, Cheshunt

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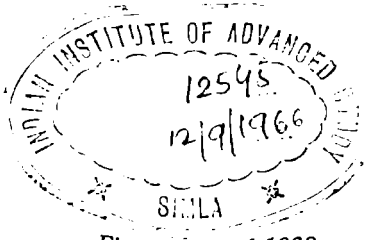

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With respect to any final aim or end, the greater part of mankind live at hazard. They have no certain harbour in view, nor direct their course by any fixed star. But to him that knoweth not the port to which he is bound, no wind can be favourable; neither can he who has not yet determined at what mark he is to shoot, direct his arrow aright.

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It takes most men a lifetime to know what they really want, and the vast majority of human beings have not learned it on their death beds.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

THIS little book is concerned with a great *practical* problem, namely, the problem of how to live. Nevertheless, it is impossible to avoid theoretical considerations altogether. The average Englishman is apt to be impatient of abstract discussions. He is anxious " to get on with the job." This attitude, however, is fundamentally unsound, and is responsible for the unenviable reputation of the British people for " muddling through." If a man is not going to " muddle through " life, he must be prepared to take the trouble to think as deeply and as clearly as he can about the fundamental problems of life.

Nevertheless, the British distrust of theory is not altogether unreasonable. It is possible to spend too much time in argument and to make philosophy (which is only " a peculiarly obstinate attempt to think clearly ") our excuse for doing nothing. While it is true that it is foolish to set out on the journey of life without first sitting down and making the necessary preparations, it is even more futile to spend one's whole life in the prepara-

tions, so that one never really begins to live at all. The reasonable course is to spend at least some time in surveying the map of life and then boldly to set out on one's journey, without waiting for the solution of every problem.

This is the plan which we have tried to adopt in the present volume. In the first portions of the book some attempt is made to face the fundamental problems of life. In the later portions we are concerned with the practical problem of living.

It cannot be denied that there is a sense of futility abroad to-day. Men are living from hand to mouth in more senses than one. They have no conception of what they are driving at. They have lost their sense of direction. This is true not only of individuals, but also of nations. They are being carried along, by forces which they do not understand, to an unknown destination. While professing that they seek peace, it must be perfectly clear to anybody who has any knowledge of history that, unless there is a fundamental change of attitude, the inevitable result will be another world con-

flagration which will bring our civilisation down in unutterable ruin.

There is a well-known test of intelligence which is as follows. Suppose that, while walking in a completely strange country and without a map, you come to four cross-roads. Unfortunately the sign-post has fallen down and is lying in the ditch. How are you to tell where the different roads lead? The answer is, that since presumably you know whence you have come, you have only to raise the sign-post and point the finger bearing the name of the place you have come from in that same direction; all the other three fingers will then automatically come into play. This is a parable of human life. If only men would pause to think where they have come from, they need never lose their sense of direction. They would be able to say with the Psalmist of long ago: "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever; Forsake not the work of thine own hands."

Unfortunately the majority will not stop to think. They seem to be frightened to think, or even to be alone. Every minute of

the day must be filled up with ceaseless activity. When not engaged in work, they must needs dash about the countryside in cars, or go to the cinematograph night after night. Even if they sit at home, the wireless blares forth continuously. There are no silent spaces; all is bustle, movement and noise. Far more than Wordsworth could have known have his words come true:

> The world is too much with us; late and soon,
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
> Little we see in Nature that is ours;
> We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

In a word, we have become futile. Nevertheless, there is a wistful seeking after the truth on the part of very many. There are numerous signs of this. One is the readiness with which the British public will read professions of belief by men and women of note who write on "What I believe." Only too often these opinions are not worth very much, because they are based on insufficient knowledge or a wrong attitude to life. The significant thing, however, is that they are evidently very good "copy." This is because, in the words of one of the greatest of

present-day thinkers, "the modern world has lost God and is seeking Him." [1]

That is the truth of the matter. Men have lost God, and without God human life loses its meaning. For our little human life is, in the oft-quoted saying, like the passage of the bird flying out of the darkness into the brightly lighted hall for a brief moment and then out into the dark again.

This book is an appeal to sensible men and women to make up their minds on this all-important question. Is there a Personal God, who has a purpose for *me*?

If there is, then my life can never be futile: it takes on a great meaning. I must co-operate with that purpose.

If there is not, let me at least be *sure* of that. The most futile attitude of all is the commonest; it is to halt for ever between two opinions, simply because the majority will not take the trouble to sit down *alone* and read and think. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision." To-day there is given to you, Reader, the opportunity to *think*. To-morrow may never come.

[1] Dr. A. N. Whitehead.

PART I

HAS THE WORLD ANY PURPOSE?

CHAPTER I

DID IT HAPPEN BY CHANCE?

WHY should the world have any purpose at all? Why should it not just have happened by chance? That seems to be a very natural question to ask. Thomas Huxley, I believe, once said that if a race of monkeys could be imagined as strumming on typewriters for an unlimited period of time, they would in the end hit upon all the books in the British Museum. Even so, it might be urged, all the wonderful works of creation may have originated by chance.

There are various answers which may be given to such a contention as this. In the first place, the argument of Huxley might be met with an incredulous denial. Is such a supposition really credible, whatever the mathematical theory of chance may have to say? Personally I am inclined to think that there is a " catch " somewhere, and that the incredulousness with which the average man greets this contention of Huxley's is justified. If mathematics supports so absurd a belief, so much the worse for mathe-

matics. We have to remember that it was "proved" mathematically that a machine heavier than air cannot be made to fly.

Secondly, however, it must be pointed out that Huxley's supposition, even if it were correct, does not really apply to the origin of the *universe*. His illustration holds good (if it does hold good) only because certain conditions are given—viz. monkeys and typewriters. In the origin of the universe, however, we are not at liberty to postulate the existence of any clear-cut units (whether of this kind or of any other) which, by means of an endless series of permutations and combinations, might ultimately produce an ordered universe. To presuppose the existence of such units is to posit already a large measure of coherence and order. But this is not permissible, since it is precisely the order of the universe which has to be explained. This objection is, in fact, fatal to all attempts to explain the origin of the universe by chance. If we presuppose an entirely nebulous and incoherent "matter," "without form and void"—which is all which by the hypothesis we are entitled to assume—no amount of

juggling can be made to account for the order of the cosmos. It is even more impossible than the conjuror's claim to produce rabbits out of an empty hat.

In the third place, even supposing that any order could be engendered in the universe by such a mode of operation, how are we to explain the fact that the order has remained permanent? To return to the illustration of the monkeys, even supposing the books in the British Museum had "turned up," what reason is there to suppose that they would have remained, and not have been immediately obliterated by the kaleidoscopic changes of the ever-flowing stream of life as soon as they had come into being?

> Worlds on worlds are passing ever from creation to decay,
> Like bubbles on a river, flowing, bursting, borne away.

Fourthly, we must point out the dangerous ambiguity of the word "chance." As the mathematician uses it, it involves a complete absence of purpose. But that is not the meaning which it has in everyday life. It is commonly used to imply not the absence of

purpose, but merely purpose which is alien from a particular agent or agents. Thus, for example, if I say that I met a friend in the street by chance, I merely refer to the fact that it was not part of my purpose, or of his, that we should meet. It does not follow that there was no purpose at all behind the event. It is quite possible that our meeting was, unknown to either of us, engineered by a third party. Once more, when we speak of an event as being an " accident," we do not thereby deny that any purpose was at work in it. On the contrary, it is generally agreed that this world in which accidents happen operates according to general " laws " which manifest the signs of purpose. When we describe an event as an accident, all that we mean is that it did not fulfil any *known* human purpose. If anybody should choose to assert that the world came into being by chance in this latter sense of the word, doubtless we cannot dislodge him logically from his position. But it must be made very clear to him that this is totally different from denying the existence of any purpose, according to the mathematical use of the term. This, as

we have seen, we are not in a position to do. But it is precisely this damaging use of the word " chance " which is generally intended by the agnostic. If we eliminate this meaning of the word it loses its worst terrors for the believer in Divine purpose.

We must beware in this connexion of falling into a very common error by which the problem we have been considering is evaded. It is too often assumed that when we have explained the *conditions* in which anything happens, we have found the cause. So it is said that the cause of everything in our experience is the operation of what are called blind laws. Everything happens because of its place in an endless chain of causes by which it is rigidly determined; but there is no question of purpose behind these " blind " laws. It is all one, therefore, whether we choose to speak of the world being governed by blind laws or by chance.

This is a very plausible argument, but it is fallacious. An endless chain of causes is no explanation at all. All that we mean by the word " cause" in such a context is " invariable sequence." For example, we

put a kettle on the fire, and it boils. We say that the heat of the fire is the cause of the boiling of the kettle. All that we are entitled to say, however, is that there is, in our experience, an invariable sequence between putting kettles on fires and the boiling of kettles. But this invariable sequence does nothing to explain exactly *why* the sequence happens. We have really not got beyond the old rhyme :—

> Big fleas have little fleas
> Upon their backs to bite 'em,
> And little fleas have lesser fleas,
> And so *ad infinitum.*

However far back we may go in this process, clearly we have not accounted for the origin of the flea.

Socrates tells us that when he was a young man he was very anxious to get to the bottom of this problem of the cause and origin of things, and that when he heard someone reading from the famous philosopher Anaxagoras, his hopes were raised to the highest pitch. He relates, however, that he was bitterly disappointed. Instead of enlightening him as to the cause of things, the

philosopher merely spoke about earth and air and fire and water, as if these could explain anything! He says that Anaxagoras seemed to him to be like a person who should endeavour to explain the actions of Socrates by pointing out that he was sitting there because his body was made up of bones and muscles. The bones, so he would say, are hard and have joints which divide them, and the muscles are elastic, and they cover the bones, which have also a covering or environment of flesh and skin which contains them; and as the bones are lifted at their joints by the contraction or relaxation of the muscles, Socrates is able to bend his limbs, and that is why he is sitting here in a curved posture. In all this, however, Anaxagoras is omitting to mention the true cause of his sitting there, which is that the Athenians have condemned him and that he has thought it right and proper to remain there and undergo his sentence rather than to run away.

To put this same point in another way, no amount of arguing about what Aristotle called efficient causes can give us what he called final causes, *i.e.*, purposes. However

much we may talk about natural laws, they really explain nothing. They are merely descriptive of the way in which things usually happen. Unfortunately the majority are easily deceived by a word. Thus if a person who has no scientific knowledge inquires *why* a stone falls to the ground, and he is told that it is due to "gravitation," his problem is not finally solved. If he thinks it is, he is merely being deceived by a word. Ultimately he is not much better off than the man who, after inquiring what a net is and being told that it is a reticulated fibre, replied with a sigh of satisfaction, "Ah, I see." To come nearer home, he is like the person who thinks himself much wiser when the doctor tells him that he is suffering from "influenza." If the doctor had said "abracadabra," he would have been equally enlightened.

It follows from this that, if we hear a person maintain that the universe originated by chance, we must press him to explain exactly what he means by the word. If he is using it in the mathematical sense of a number of permutations and combinations of definite units, his argument is a sheer

begging of the question. In speaking of units he is assuming the pre-existence of the very thing which he is claiming to prove. If he is not using the word "chance" in that sense, but employs it to signify a purpose unknown to ourselves—even as we commonly use the word "accident," we shall then point out to him that he has not disproved at all that the universe is the product of intelligent purpose. All that his position involves is that he does not know what that purpose is.

CHAPTER II

THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN

WE may, then, exclude as meaningless the hypothesis that this world came into being by chance. It follows that it must have some kind of purpose behind it. The question is, What kind of purpose? How are we to understand that purpose or design? We may conveniently begin by quoting a celebrated answer to this question :—

> In crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a *stone*, and were asked how the stone came to be there: I might possibly answer that, for anything I knew to the contrary, it has lain there for ever; nor would it perhaps be very easy to show the absurdity of this answer. But suppose that I had found a *watch* upon the ground and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place: I should hardly think of the answer which I had before given—that, for anything I knew, the watch might always have been there. Yet why should not this answer serve for the watch as for the stone? Why is it not as admissible in the second case as it is in the first? For this reason, and for no other, viz., that when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive (what we could not discern in the stone) that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose, *e.g.* that they are so formed and adjusted

as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the time of the day; that if the different parts had been differently shaped from what they are, of a different size from what they are, or placed after any other manner, or in any other order than that in which they are placed, either no motion at all would have been carried on in the machine, or none which would have answered the use that is now served by it . . . this mechanism being obscured. . . . The inference, we think, is inevitable, that the watch must have had a maker, that there must have existed at some time and at some place or other an artificer or artificers who formed it for the purpose which we find it actually to answer; who comprehended its construction and designed its use.[1]

Paley goes on to examine, in the light of this argument, many analogous instances of design—such as, for example, the eye—taken from Nature. After citing much evidence he says:

I have sometimes wondered why we are not struck with mechanism in animal bodies as readily and as strongly as we are struck with it, at first sight, in a watch or a mill. One reason of the difference may be that animal bodies are, in a great measure, made up of soft, flabby substances, such as muscles and membranes; whereas we have been accustomed to trace

[1] Paley, *Natural Theology*, Chap. I.

mechanism in sharp lines, in the configuration of hard materials, in the moulding, chiselling and filing into shapes of such articles as metals or wood. There is something, therefore, of habit in the case; but it is sufficiently evident that there can be no proper reason for any distinction of the sort.[1]

Finally, he concludes as follows:

Upon reluctant philosophy, the necessary resort is to a Deity. The marks of *design* are too strong to be gotten over. Design must have had a designer. That designer must have been a person. That person is God.[2]

The argument from Design as thus put forward by Paley may be said to be defunct. It was killed mainly as a result of Darwin's theory of Natural Selection, whereby it was shown that the wonderful adaptations of Nature are the result of the survival of the fittest, following upon the internecine strife of the animal world. In the first flush of excitement caused by the Darwinian theory, however, far too much was claimed for that theory. It is quite true that it disposed of Paley's view of a Designer who designs each animal organ separately. But it does not

[1] Paley, *Natural Theology*, Chap. IX.
[2] *Ibid.*, Chap. XXIII.

by any means dispose of the necessity of supposing the existence of a designer of some kind. For, granting the influence of natural selection in the carrying out of the design, we still have to account for the existence of the various and variable organisms which provide the raw material upon which it can work. If we were to start with a blank, undifferentiated sameness, no amount of "selection" would produce a single organism. There must first be something from which the selection is made, and that something presupposes a designer just as much as does the completed organism. We may perhaps illustrate the point in the following manner. We can imagine a schoolmaster choosing a team to represent the school in boxing simply by picking out half a dozen boys. On the other hand, we can suppose that he will choose a hundred boys and set them fighting among themselves, until they have all been knocked out except six, who will thus be chosen. The analogy is only rough, but it will sufficiently illustrate our point. In either case, it is clear, the design of the schoolmaster cannot be eliminated.

Thus the theory of Natural Selection is quite powerless to demolish the argument from design, even at the lowest level. Still more is this the case when we reach the higher levels of mind. Natural Selection does nothing whatever to explain the existence of man's moral principles. Goodness does not give a man greater "survival value," despite the proverb that honesty is the best policy. This is quite definitely not the case. As Dr. Inge has said, the best policy is to give the public what it wants and about ten per cent. more than it expects. It has been acutely remarked that, according to the upholders of the all-sufficiency of Natural Selection, the supreme moral quality should be hypocrisy, because, as Plato pointed out, this gives us the advantage of being thought to be good, together with all the benefits to be derived from unrestricted selfishness. Instead of this being the case, however, hypocrisy is universally regarded as a vice, and probably by a majority of people as one of the worst vices.

Nevertheless, although it is true that Paley's main contention stands despite the

theory of Natural Selection, there are other serious difficulties which it raises. In the first place, from a *finite* effect it can never be possible to infer an *infinite* cause. If God is merely likened to a watchmaker, then, arguing from our experience, He must suffer from the same kind of limitations as do human watchmakers, as we know them. All that these do, however, is to *design* watches, putting them together from already existing material. They do not, strictly, make the watch in the same kind of way as God is supposed to have created the world out of nothing. But there is a still more serious objection. Does the world as we know it resemble in any real sense a watch, or, indeed, a machine of any kind? In machinery, as we know it, we find an inanimate mass of material which is able to operate because a mind has previously planned it and other minds are continuously directing it. The world as we know it, however, does not really look like that. This description may, indeed, apply with a fair degree of accuracy to the movements of the heavenly bodies and the inanimate world (as we call it)

generally; but it certainly does not seem to be true of living bodies. These appear to live and move and have their being by means of an inherent principle of movement, which is quite different from a piece of clockwork machinery. The world is plastic and adaptable as no machine can ever be. There is, it is urged, a misuse of language in describing a self-propagating, self-stoking, self-adjusting body as a machine. Why, therefore, should we suppose that we are able to explain the existence of life by analogies taken from watchmakers or other mechanicians? Indeed, to posit in this way the existence of a Divine Mind behind the world is to fly in the face of all experience. The latter teaches us on every occasion that mind is *generated* from living matter. In every instance known to us we see mind generated from matter, and never matter from mind. We are therefore putting the cart before the horse (it is claimed) if we try to explain the purpose in the world by means of a pre-existent mind. In all our experience (it is true) we find purpose expressed by mind, but always by mind conjoined to matter and growing, waxing and

waning in conjunction with matter. What right have we, therefore, to presuppose a Divine Mind which has no body? Judging from our experience, as Hume argued long ago, the world is more like an animal or a vegetable than a watch or a knitting-loom.[1]

According to such a view as this, such purpose as the world exhibits must be an *unconscious* purpose which gradually unfolds itself as time goes on in the course of long ages. There seems indeed to be purposive Mind in the universe, but it is hardly to be likened to the clear purposiveness of the maker of a machine. The difference between the two cases is so great as to destroy the value of the analogy.

We are, therefore, compelled to discard the illustration of the watchmaker. Let us see if that of the artist is any better. Let us suppose that God created the world as an artist paints a picture. It must be admitted that here there is at any rate a closer resemblance between the two cases. For an artist does not necessarily have—what the maker of a machine must have—a clear plan

[1] *Dial. of Nat. Religion*, Part VII.

in his mind at the outset. He may begin to paint with a very vague plan, hardly amounting to more than the idea that he *is* going to paint a picture. The subject may come to him "from the blue" and develop itself he knows not how, as the work proceeds. Even so, according to this view, we should be led to suppose that the world process "emerges" from God even as a work of art emerges from an artist. The development of a picture bears at least more resemblance to the world process than does the making of a piece of machinery. A picture "emerges" from the mind of the artist in a way which is at any rate comparable to the emergent process of evolution. Even as the artist purposes to paint a picture, so (we may suppose) does God purpose to create the world. Are we to press the analogy further, and to argue that the actual process of world history is hidden from God before it comes to pass even as the work of art is partly unknown in advance to the artist? For a process completely known in advance would cease to be "emergent" and would be identical in form with the plan of the mechanician. In this

case we are back at the same point as we were before. Moreover, on the theological side it is very difficult to conceive of a God who is constantly being surprised at His own creative work. He would be a finite and a limited God, and therefore no God at all.

We must here digress for a moment to consider the great difficulty in any doctrine of a finite God. There are some modern writers, such as Mr. H. G. Wells, for example, who exploit this doctrine. In fact it is riddled with difficulties. Once we agree to make God more or less equivalent to the worlds which He has made, the door is open to all kinds of possibilities. In the first place, why should we suppose only one God? Why not several little Gods working in co-operation to produce the world? This indeed is more conformable to our experience than belief in one big God. Again, why may not these Gods be characterised by the fundamental human qualities of sex, and so we are back in the crudities of Greek polytheism? A limited, finite God, in fact, lacking precisely those transcendent qualities which are the marks of Deity, is not worthy

of human worship. If our argument from design cannot be expressed in such a way as to avoid such a conclusion, it is worse than useless.

To return to the analogies of the mechanician and the artist, it is clear that these do not carry us very far. The differences from God's creativity, as we must suppose it to be if it exists at all, are so numerous that the analogies become practically useless. We are compelled to admit that we have no real analogy which can be applied to the work of God as Creator.

We are, then, faced by this difficulty. We have no parallel which will enable us to judge how the Divine Mind operates. There is no analogy to creation. Does this mean that we must reject the idea entirely?

What is the alternative? The alternative is to suppose that this world and other worlds have existed from all eternity and that they have generated "spontaneously" the manifold forms of life and mind. Is such a possibility really conceivable? If we mean by "conceivable" "imaginable," then we must confess that it is, for anything which

is not self-contradictory is imaginable. It is, for example, impossible to imagine two adjacent mountains without a valley between, because such a supposition is self-contradictory. But it is quite possible to imagine a man with two heads and, for all we know, such a thing is possible. In this sense of the word, it is quite possible to imagine a material universe always existent and generating in the course of the ages the varied forms of life. All this is conceivable in the sense of being imaginable. But it is emphatically not understandable, and is therefore, strictly speaking, unintelligible.

For anything to be intelligible it must be understood by a mind. That is what we mean by the word "intelligible." Now, according to the theory we are examining, mind is an insignificant offshoot of the material world-process. This is something which is literally unintelligible. Nothing purely material can *mean* anything. If it is to have meaning it must be brought into relation to a mind; for meaning is mental. A stone has no meaning except for a mind; even so, the universe could have had no

meaning before the existence of a mind to give it meaning. To say that a purely material universe eternally existent is conceivable implies that it means something, whereas in fact it means nothing. We are therefore bound to conclude that the conception of an eternally existent material universe is unintelligible.

An attempt is sometimes made to evade this difficulty by speaking of the purpose and mind which the universe obviously displays as being *unconscious*. According to this view, the universe may be likened to a slumbering giant who does not awake to full self-consciousness until man appears on the scene. This suggestion, however, does not really meet the difficulty. The point is that prior to the existence of conscious mind the universe could have no meaning, and therefore no purpose. To suppose a 'meaningful' but unconscious universe gradually awaking to self-consciousness is just as unintelligible as to posit a purely material universe.

We are thus driven to conclude that there is a creative Mind behind the universe, because any alternative view renders the world

meaningless and involves intellectual suicide. However great the difficulty of understanding how such a Mind can exist, it is less than the impossibility of the alternative theory. The difficulty is mainly twofold.

First, creation is, as we have seen, unique. We have no parallel to it in our experience. We are therefore unable to find an explanation of it. Yet, supposing it to be a fact, we should not *expect* to find any parallel to it. If we could, it would obviously not be unique.

There are, however, in our experience approximations to it which throw some light upon it, although they can do nothing to prove it. Man has certain creative and inventive powers. These manifest themselves in painting, in sculpture, in music, in literature, and in applied science. These afford no true analogy to the creativity of God, because they all presuppose a pre-existent matter upon which the artist or the inventor works. But as far as they go they throw light on the problem. Moreover, our experience makes it clear that creative powers in some form are the outstanding characteristic of human personality. A person with

no outlet for his originality (however small) is hardly a personality at all. The greater the capacity for creative work, the greater the personality. We are therefore compelled to assume that if God be personal, He must also be creative.

The second objection to believing in the creative Mind of God is that an infinite mind is something outside our experience and therefore, it may be urged, unintelligible. We must reply that though it is difficult to imagine, it is not unintelligible. That is to say, it is not self-contradictory to think of a Mind which is unlimited in its range of thought. Indeed, our human experience suggests that the limitations of mind as we know it are the reverse of being essential to it. On the contrary, they "crib, cabin and confine" our thinking.

Our thinking is limited by the span of human consciousness. We can survey only a limited amount of data at a time, our survey being confined to the "specious present," which is that space of time covered by the word "now." There is, however, no difficulty in imagining this period which

we call " now " to be extended to include a wider span covering some of the immediate past. If we suppose this process of enlargement to be carried back indefinitely, it is clear that the whole of our past life would be brought before us in its totality at a single glance, even as our present experience is before the mind. There is, in fact, evidence for such an experience, which has at times occurred to people in moments of special crisis. Thus the drowning man is said to see the whole of his past life in a flash. In any case, there is nothing unintelligible in the hypothesis that the Divine Mind views all human experience in such a manner. Such a mode of thinking would obviously be free from any of the limitations in which it is at present involved.

Further than this, there is the evidence of what is known as precognition. Precognition is the name which is technically given to the human capacity for foreseeing events. This now seems to be a fairly well-established phenomenon. Precognition sometimes occurs in the waking state and sometimes in dreams. However it is experienced,

the most natural explanation seems to be to suppose that the span of consciousness is extended—in this case forwards—so as to include in the present "now" something which in ordinary speech is called "future." If there is anything in this attempt to explain what is a fact of experience, this will throw still further light upon God's method of cognition.

One or two instances of this phenomenon may be given. First, "Mrs. Atley dreams of reading family prayers in the hall instead of in the Chapel, as her husband, the Bishop, was away. After reading prayers she went into the dining-room, and saw a large pig standing between the table and the sideboard. Tells her dream before prayers. Fulfilled. The pig escaped from its sty while prayers were being read." Second, "Prof. Haslam, between waking and sleeping, visualises a jockey in scarlet, riding horse to win. Repeated. He does not know anything about the horses, jockeys, or colours in the next day's race. Tells several people beforehand. Finds jockey in scarlet riding and backs the horse. The horse wins." A

large number of similar instances may be seen in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research.*[1] In arguing for the existence of a fully conscious Mind behind the universe, however, there are two cautions which must be carefully observed. In the first place, in thinking of the purposiveness of the universe, we are not compelled to argue from specific adaptations of means to ends, as Paley did. This, in fact, has never been done by the greatest thinkers who have put forward this line of argument. They have always reasoned, not from *particular instances*, but rather from the general principle of order in the universe; that it is, in fact, a universe and not a 'multiverse', a cosmos rather than a chaos.

This point may be expressed in one of two ways. In the first place, reference may be made to the *general* order of the universe, as it is, for example, by the author of the 19th Psalm. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork." There is something greatly impressive in the wide sweep of the argument

[1] Part 134, Vol. 42, Feb. 1934.

of this form. On the other hand, reference may be made rather to what we may call specific order—that is to say, to the tendency everywhere existing in things to seek an end which is good for the thing itself, *i.e.* intrinsically good, and not extrinsically good. This was what Socrates did when he argued that if anyone desired to find out the cause of anything, he must find out what state of being was best for that thing. Consequently, he expected that Anaxagoras, as a teacher of the causes of existence, would tell him whether the world is flat or round by pointing out which was best for it to be. In like manner, St. Thomas Aquinas argues that beings have a tendency to seek that which is best, even when they are entirely unconscious, so far as we can judge. But things cannot tend towards an end unless they are directed by some being with knowledge and intelligence, as an arrow is directed by an archer. There must, therefore (he argues), be some intelligent being by whom all natural things are ordained towards a definite purpose, and this being we call God.

The second *caveat* is that we must not make

the too-common mistake of stating the argument as if the ends were specifically *human* ends. This is not involved in it, yet it is precisely this point of view that is most commonly taken by opponents of the argument. So, for example, Mr. Joad attacks the beneficent purpose of the universe on the ground that malaria exists and is propagated by what seems to be a peculiarly cunning and diabolical device. This standpoint assumes that man is the measure of all things, an assumption which it is not necessary to make. Dr. W. R. Matthews relates how Dr. T. A. Lacey once pointed out to his friends in this connexion, with regard to diphtheria germs, " We must not forget that these troublesome creatures may have a beautiful family life." As Matthews says, " We are not committed to the opinion that everything is designed for human convenience." [1] There may be, and indeed very probably are, ends which are intrinsically valuable, but which have no connexion at all with specifically human interests. " The End of the whole creation need not be one

[1] W. R. Matthews: *The Purpose of God*, p. 79.

which in all its details is comprehensible to the human intelligence." [1]

The position to which we are committed, then, is that the universe is *generally* purposive, and not that every particular phenomenon is adapted to human convenience. The most conspicuous proof of this purposiveness is the emergence of Mind itself. We do not sufficiently reflect upon this point. Modern writers are constantly reminding us of the wonders of creation and the vastness of the stellar spaces. Far more wonderful, however, than the distances of the stars is the fact that man can know and measure those distances. Mind cannot be unhorsed. To claim this is worse than putting the cart before the horse. It is putting the horse "in the cart."

Along with Mind must be considered the moral and the æsthetic capacities of man. First, we must examine moral nature. Man recognises what we call the moral law; that is to say, he has a sense of absolute obligation. Numerous attempts have been made in the past to explain this away, but the fact remains

[1] W. R. Matthews; *The Purpose of God*, p. 131.

that when man acts in complete and implicit obedience to this law he is more impressive than at any other time. Any instance of absolute obedience to duty and disregard of consequences makes this clear. We may mention one which occurs in Lord Mottistone's book, *Fear and be Slain.* During the Boer War, on one occasion, the English were pursuing and trying to capture a certain Boer Commander. He had been tracked to a particular farm, but he managed to slip away unobserved, leaving only his son, a boy of fourteen, behind. Colonel Seeley (as he then was) caught the boy and ordered him to say in which direction the Boer General had gone. He refused, saying resolutely, "I will not tell." Seeley told the boy that if he didn't tell he would be shot, and gave him two minutes to make up his mind. At the end of the time, the boy calmly said again, "I will not tell." So the boy was bound and stood with his back to a wall and the firing-party was told to get ready. Seeley gave him a last chance. The boy, whose eyes had hitherto been fastened upon the ground, looked Seeley straight in the face

and repeated calmly, "I will not tell." Such an instance as this speaks for itself. Nor is it unique; it can be paralleled by events which occur every day.

This absolute moral law in man's mind is also powerfully experienced when it is disobeyed. Every person who is honest with himself knows something of the poignancy of the feeling of a violated conscience. No earthly medicine can soothe the pains which come from deliberate refusal to obey the voice of conscience. It is idle to tell a person suffering from these pains that it doesn't matter; that everybody acts in this way; that the consequences will not be very serious. He knows that he has betrayed the noblest part of his being, and that a traitor he must always be.

How can such experiences as these be explained? An absolute moral law involves a Law-giver, and that Law-giver we call God.

This immensely important argument which, as Dr. J. R. Illingworth said, "may be stated in a sentence, but cannot be exhausted in a lifetime," [1] cannot be considered in detail

[1] J. R. Illingworth: *Personality Human and Divine*, Lecture 4.

here. Nor is it necessary for our purpose that it should be. It rests upon two facts of experience which everybody can easily examine at first hand for himself—viz., the sense of freedom and the sense of obligation. Much ink and paper have been wasted in the voluminous discussions which have taken place on the subject of "free-will and determinism." Many of the disputers have argued as if "freedom" meant absence of all determination. This, of course, is a parody of the situation, and is probably the result of the influence of a faulty imagination. Thus, we think of a weathercock as being free if it is capable of being turned by the wind with equal ease in any direction. That is not what is meant by the freedom of the will. A man who could as easily murder his friend as lay down his life for him would not correspond to what we call a free man. He would be rather at the mercy of every passing wind of impulse. By freedom we mean freedom to do what is best. In other words, we mean the power to choose what is right. Freedom consists in the power of choice, and that man is most free who always chooses rightly. Every right choice which is made

facilitates the making of future right choices. Contrariwise, every wrong choice makes further wrong choices more likely. A person is therefore determined by his own character, which he fashions for himself by innumerable acts of choice.

It is in the light of this power of choice that the sense of moral obligation possesses its meaning. We know that there are certain choices which we *ought* to make. When we use the word "ought" we are not thinking of our own conveniences, nor of the mere convenience of anybody else. Rather we are conscious of an absolute obligation which binds us, even though the heavens should fall. Such a sense of duty may indeed be fallacious, the result of the influence of some malignant demon, but nobody who can think clearly can fail to recognise that it is entirely different from any kind of social expediency. The most natural, and therefore the most reasonable interpretation of it, however, is to say that it is the voice of that supernatural Law-giver whom we call God.

We pass to the consideration of the experience of beauty, or, as it is generally

called, the æsthetic sense. We must deal with this at somewhat greater length, not only because of the very important place which it occupies in the argument from design, but also because it is too frequently overlooked in that connexion. We may begin by quoting a passage from J. B. Mozley's famous sermon on Nature.

Mozley points out the utter distinctness of these two effects of nature, viz., utility and beauty.

> Who [he asks] could possibly have told beforehand that those physical laws which fed us, clothed us, gave us breath and motion, the use of our organs, and all the means of life, would also create a picture? These two results are divided *toto cælo* from each other. . . . When the materialist has exhausted himself in efforts to explain utility in Nature, it would appear to be the peculiar office of beauty to rise up suddenly as a confounding and baffling *extra*, which was not even formally provided for in his scheme.

Moreover, there is a vital difference between utility and beauty. Utility—regarded in the widest sense, and not, as perhaps Mozley is rather inclined to look at it, viewed primarily from man's point of view—has its force independently of any mind to appreciate it.

The wonderful contrivances of Nature would hold good even though there were no human or animal mind to appreciate and enjoy them, even as a modern piece of man-made machinery fulfils its purpose unconsciously. But beauty can have no real existence except for a developed mind. These elements of human experience which we call beautiful, such as a snow-capped mountain range, or a lakeside scene, are presumably perceived by the mind of a horse or a dog, but it is doubtful whether they have any experience of beauty. It seems to be in the mind of man alone that the appreciation of beauty comes to its fruition. The beauty of Nature, therefore, can be explained only as being the product of the mind of the Creator who rejoices in His works.

There is only one way of escaping this conclusion, and that is to assert that the beauty of Nature is read into it by the mind of man. There are many thinkers at the present time who argue thus. For such persons the grandeur of a mountain scene is nothing more than the selection of certain features in the landscape by the mind, which

combines them into a picture. The process is thus (it is claimed) exactly parallel to the fashioning of a statue out of a block of marble.

In reply to this it must be said that this is not, as a rule, the way in which the poets and artists themselves conceive of beauty. Surely we may accept their testimony in preference to that of the philosophers who, in the interests of a purely naturalistic scheme of things, are obliged to explain away the objective existence of beauty. For once the existence of an objective beauty in Nature is granted, it follows inevitably that there must exist a Creative Artist. The poets themselves are conscious that in their experience of the beautiful they are lifted out of themselves into communion with a transcendent Being. Witness Wordsworth's famous lines:

> Sound needed none,
> Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
> The spectacle; sensation, soul, and form,
> All melted into him; they swallowed up
> His animal being; in them did he live;
> And by them did he live; they were his life.
> In such access of mind, in such high hour
> Of visitation from the living God,
> Thought was not, in enjoyment it expired.
> No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;

Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the Power
That made him; it was blessedness and love.

Those of us who are not poets can enter into this experience just because (as Wordsworth himself said) there are many poets in the world who "possess the vision and the faculty divine, yet wanting the accomplishment of verse."

So far from the world being the construction of man, we must needs think of the beauty of creation as being a hymn of praise to its Creator.

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
The unwearied sun from day to day
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an almighty hand.

What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;
What though no real voice or sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found;
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;
For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is Divine.

It is in the presence of such mighty works of Nature, moreover, that we are brought into full contact with the mysteriousness of creation, which the scientific mind is apt at times to overlook. We have wrested so many secrets from Nature that we are sometimes tempted to forget that our knowledge is but infinitesimal, and that we stand in the presence of a Great and Mysterious Being before whom all the inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers.

There is, indeed, one mood of modern scientific writers in which they constantly remind us of our insignificance in comparison with the wonders of the universe revealed by modern astronomy. But these writers too often use this argument to throw doubt upon the validity of man's knowledge. This it can never do. We must not allow ourselves to be victimised by what has been well described as "the fallacy of size." Though man's knowledge is as nothing compared with the greatness of the Creator, as far as it goes it is valid, and obviously the human reason can never be logically employed to cast doubts upon its own validity.

Mind can never be reduced to insignificance by the vastness of any merely *material* universe. For the mind which can know the stars is greater than stars which cannot know themselves. Man may be a mere reed in size, but he is, in Pascal's famous phrase, "a thinking reed," and thereby dwarfs any unthinking universe.

We must maintain, therefore, that the æsthetic aspect of human experience is a very important element in the argument from Design. It is, moreover, rightly understood, entirely free from the dangers of an unwarrantable emphasis upon the human point of view (usually called anthropomorphism) which have too often vitiated the teleological argument. Nobody supposes that the beauty of Nature exists for man's benefit.[1] Not thus do the painters and poets speak. Rather is it true that man is taken out of himself by the experience of the beautiful works of the Creator and made to feel his own unimportance. He is conscious that he is allowed,

[1] It is, I believe, a strange fact that the growths in horrible diseases, when seen under the microscope, are beautiful to behold.

as a great privilege, to enjoy these experiences, as a child is allowed to sit up late to enjoy an adult party. In the very act of enjoyment, he is all the time conscious of his unimportance. Yet this does not mar his joy, for the paradox always holds good with man that he is never so great as when he realises his own insignificance.

We have travelled a long way from Paley's illustration of the watch. It is, in fact, generally recognised that it is far too simple to do justice to the complexity of our experience. In other words, Paley's mistake was not that he went too far in claiming the existence of design in the universe, but that he did not go far enough. The complexity of the growth of the human embryo, for example, is infinitely greater than that of any mere clockwork. It may be impossible to understand "how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child," but it is equally impossible to overlook the purposiveness of the process. It is easy enough, doubtless, to cover up our ignorance by using high-sounding phrases and talking about "emergent evolution." But such

terms are merely descriptive, and tell us nothing new, and we are not a whit the wiser for using them. If it is claimed that the evidences of design come out of the cosmic process, we still have to explain how they got into the cosmic process.

The absurdity of this kind of talk is well illustrated by a famous incident in Old Testament history. When Moses was on Sinai in communion with God, the Hebrews began to grow impatient because he was absent from them for such a long time. They, therefore, came to Aaron and said, "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him." So Aaron told them to bring out their golden earrings and made therefrom a molten calf for them to worship. When Moses came down at length from the mount he was fiercely angry at what had happened. Aaron, however, defended himself by saying: "Thou knowest the people, that they are set on evil. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this

Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off; so they gave it me; and I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf."[1] Not very convincing.

[1] Exod. 32.

CHAPTER III

IS THERE A GOOD GOD?

We have argued that the purposiveness which the universe apparently displays cannot be explained away or accounted for by any supposition other than by positing the existence of conscious purpose. Behind the vast array of phenomena there must stand a fully conscious Mind. A vastly important question, however, now arises. What *sort* of a Mind? Is it good or is it bad? That there is much evil in the world is obvious on the face of it, and if we are to maintain that the Mind behind the universe is good, it is necessary to harmonise the existence of such a Mind with the presence of evil in the world.

It is important to notice at the outset that it is impossible to suppose that the Mind behind the universe is wholly bad, because our experience goes to show that something wholly bad cannot exist. There is a soul of goodness in things evil; even the Devil is not wholly bad. It is obvious, for example, that it is impossible for a person to possess

every conceivable fault, because some faults are incompatible with others. Complete laziness, for example, is a failing which is incompatible with inordinate jealousy, which is always trying to get equal with a rival. A totally bad being is self-contradictory because evil is self-destructive. Hence the truth of the proverb, "Honour among thieves." This, however, does not carry us very far. If we were to say that the Mind behind the universe were predominantly bad, *i.e.*, the mind of a devil, our conclusion could not be regarded as morally satisfactory.

There is another possibility which may be mentioned, merely to be set aside. The Mind behind the universe, it may be said, may be neither God—that is, perfectly good—nor Devil—that is, mainly bad, but merely indifferent to the needs of man. This possibility, however, is ultimately unsatisfactory because were the creative Mind behind the universe to be indifferent to the well-being of its creatures, it would be what we should judge to be evil. If, for example, it were like Thomas Hardy's President of the Immortals, indifferent to the sufferings of

his creatures, it would not be merely a neutral being, but definitely bad.

If it be objected that we cannot thus employ our standards of right as a criterion to judge the universe, we must reply that they are the only standards we have. We must, therefore, choose between two courses. Either we must put our trust in them and use them, or else we must adopt a complete agnosticism. The same thing holds good here as in the case of our human knowledge. The human method of knowing is the only method with which we are acquainted. We have, therefore, to choose between accepting it on trust and taking refuge in a complete and utter scepticism. Since nobody does this—for life would not be worth living on such terms—there is no reason why we should not equally trust our sense of moral values, as John Stuart Mill does in the celebrated passage which shall presently be quoted.

Assuming the existence of an infinite Mind, therefore, we are left with two possibilities only. Either that mind is good, or it is not good. That is to say, it is the mind of God, or the mind of a devil. Which alternative shall we adopt?

At the outset we must frankly admit that it is clearly impossible to *prove* the existence of a *good* God by arguing from a world which contains evil. If He is responsible for the world, He cannot escape the responsibility for any part of it. Consequently, no demonstrative proof of God's goodness is to be sought. On the other hand, a number of arguments may be brought forward to show that the evil of the world is *compatible* with the goodness of God. We must now proceed to consider some of these.

First, we must notice that liberty, or the power of choice, involves necessarily the possibility of a wrong choice, and therefore of all those forms of evil which are called moral. It is, of course, impossible for us to say *why* things should thus be, but we must accept the fact that they are. According to our experience it is simply meaningless to talk of liberty apart from the possibility of choosing wrong, as it is also impossible to imagine human personality without freedom. If we were not free, we should be machines and not men. It is true that philosophers have tried to argue that we are not free; but

the majority will agree with the robust common sense of Dr. Johnson when he remarked: "We know that we are free, and there is an end of it." This freedom of choice is not, as we saw in the last chapter, unlimited; far from it. Nevertheless, we all know the experience of deliberately choosing at times between two courses of action, and if this sense of choice is illusory, nobody has yet succeeded in showing how the illusion arises. If God intended that His children should be children and not marionettes, it is clear that He must needs give them freedom to do right, which necessarily involves freedom to do wrong. Consequently, with the creation of man the door is opened wide to moral evil, and it has come crowding in. We have said that it is impossible for us to prove that the world as we know it is the creation of a good God. What we can say, however, is that, granting that the existence of man was worth while, the possibility of evil was unavoidable. All our experience confirms this. We take it for granted, on all sides, that man is a moral being endowed with the power of choice and, within certain limits,

responsible for his actions. Sometimes we treat him as a patient, but sometimes we punish him and send him to prison or inflict other penalties upon him. We thus clearly distinguish between behaviour for which he is responsible and that for which he is not. It might be that, like the inhabitants of *Erewhon*, we should regard all misdemeanours as a disease and send our delinquent criminals to "moral straighteners." The fact remains that we do not, and the contemplation of such a possibility shows that it is chimerical in the extreme.

Closely allied with this is another consideration. The noblest thing known in man's experience is human character at its highest. The formation of character, however, involves growth and struggle, especially struggle against temptation. Were there no possibility of evil, this struggle could not be. Human life would be stagnation, not growth. This is a favourite thought of the poet Robert Browning. In one little poem, *Rephan*, he makes to speak an inhabitant from that star, where all is supposed to be mechanically perfect and free from the possibility of evil.

Time brings
No hope, no fear: as to-day, shall be
To-morrow: advance or retreat need we
At our stand-still through eternity?

There is nothing "to bless or curse, in such a uniform universe."

Where weak and strong,
The wise and the foolish, right and wrong,
Are merged alike in a neutral Best.

There is a better way than this, says Browning.

Why should I speak? You divine the test.
When the voice grew in my pregnant breast
A voice said, So would'st thou strive, not rest,
Burn and not smoulder, win by worth,
Not rest content with a wealth that's dearth,
Thou art past Rephan, thy place be Earth.

The fact that man is subject to evil is a sign of his promotion to a greater dignity. All the gamut of human ills

Brow-furrowed old age, youth's hollow cheek—
Diseased in the body, sick in soul,
Pinched poverty, satiate wealth—your whole
Array of despairs

can be made to minister to man's true greatness. He has been supernaturally awakened

By an infinite
Discovered above and below me—height
And depth alike to attract my flight,
Repel my descent; by hate taught love.

Oh, gain were indeed to see above
Supremacy ever, to move, remove,
Not reach—aspire yet never attain
To the object aimed at.

The existence of evil, then, can be reconciled with the existence of God on the ground that the possibility of it is the source of man's distinctive excellence. If only it could have been avoided, and existed as a mere possibility, all would be well, and there would be no incriminating charge to bring against the goodness of God. Unfortunately this, as we know by bitter experience, has not been the case. Man has chosen evil rather than good, and has even done so deliberately. How is such a fact to be reconciled with an all-wise and all-loving God? If He is all-knowing, He must have known that man would fail. How, then, can He be acquitted of the ultimate responsibility for man's defection? Moreover, if He foreknew and yet created man, how can His Love be defended?

This difficulty is so great that many have taken the line that there is no way out available to our limited human intelligence. We must be content to wait for fuller light (it is

said), the while cleaving fast to our positive knowledge of God's goodness, as far as that knowledge will take us.

To adopt such an attitude—although there is something to be said for it—can hardly be regarded as completely satisfactory. It is a frank confession of intellectual defeat, and may easily provoke the response from the unbeliever that, if things be so, agnosticism is at once a more honest and a more logical creed. He may urge that, if there is not enough evidence to vindicate God's goodness, there is not enough evidence to vindicate His existence at all, so that a complete agnosticism is our only refuge.

The position, however, is not quite so desperate as this. There is still one line of argument open in the face of our difficulties, and it is one which is being followed by an increasing number of thinkers. It is to show that evil, although entirely bad in itself, ministers to a greater good than would ever have been possible without it. In other words, not only the possibility of evil, but evil itself can be seen to be necessary to the highest in man's life and experience.

The line of thought takes its beginning from that form of experience which we know by the name of Victory. This experience, it is pointed out, is vital to much of what is noblest and most significant in human life. Qualities of character such as courage, perseverance and heroism of every kind are nothing more than victory in some particular form. But victory requires an antagonist who is overcome. This antagonist is what we mean by evil. Moreover, it is important to emphasise that the good of victory is not simply in the *result* of the struggle: it lies in the struggle itself. There may indeed be forms of good which do not involve necessarily this element of victory. That does not affect the argument. All that is required is that there should be *some* forms of good which require for their existence the element of victory.

However, if the goodness and ultimate reasonableness of the universe as we know it are to be vindicated, it is plainly necessary to show that *all* the evil in the world is, in fact, thus transmuted into good. This obviously cannot be done as a matter of logical demonstration; the evidence is too vast to

be surveyed. Nevertheless, by those who profess the Christian Creed such a claim is made. The consideration of this claim must be postponed until later. For the present it is enough to show the *possibility* of this solution of evil by making clear the nature of the unquestionable truth that evil can be, and frequently is, transmuted into a greater good. Examples of this abound. Physical pain, for example, is an evil; yet it can become the instrument of amazing selflessness of character. It is equally true that it can confirm a self-centred person still more fixedly in his self-centredness. Again, dishonesty is an evil; yet a dishonest man who repents, as Zacchæus for example, may well reach greater heights of character than one who has never fallen so low. Such an interpretation of facts like these is suggested by the old subject of debate: whether the greatest sinners do not become the greatest saints.

The logical retort to this line of thought is obvious and was made long ago: "Let us do evil that good may come." The answer is that we are not concerned simply with logical considerations. The question is also

a practical one; and in practice it is impossible to achieve the repentant state of mind (which is essential for bringing good out of evil) by this avenue of approach. Clearly, a person whose attitude was "Let us do evil that good may come" could never repent without a complete mental revolution.

Whether this world, "with all it yields of joy and woe," is to be judged good enough, therefore, ultimately depends upon the attitude which any person adopts towards it. If he judges the matter from a purely intellectualist standpoint, he can argue, with Schopenhauer, that even though it be "the best of all possible worlds," it was not worth choosing. But if he judges it from the practical standpoint of one who has entered into the meaning of self-sacrificing love, he will come to a different conclusion. He will conclude that no evil and no suffering can be too great if they can be made to yield up their quota of love. He may even be able to take upon his lips the daring words of the Easter Eve hymn in the Roman Breviary:

O felix culpa, quae tantum et talem meruit habere Redemptorem.

There is yet another line of argument which we must consider as showing that the existence of evil is not incompatible with the goodness of God. It proceeds thus. The very bitterness of the protest which the existence of evil arouses in men's hearts is itself a witness to God. The voice of the moral consciousness which condemns evil and strives to annul it is the voice of God. How else account for it? If evil were just an accident in a purposeless world, why should man not accept it, as he accepts the other elements of human experience? Evil, however, stands alone in that experience. It appears to man to be an alien and an intruder, something which ought not to be there. The more vigorously man resents the fact of evil, therefore, the more plainly does he bear witness—even though it be unconscious witness—to the essential goodness of the universe and, therefore, indirectly to the goodness of the Creator. Let Browning be again our teacher:—

> Is not God now i' the world His power first made?
> Is not His love at issue still with sin,
> Visibly when a wrong is done on earth?
> Love, wrong, and pain, what see I else around?[1]

[1] *A Death in the Desert.*

When all is said and done, however, the foregoing arguments can do not more than suggest that the evil of the world is *compatible* with the existence of a good God. They do not demonstrate His goodness. It may therefore be objected that they are ultimately futile, for it is just that certainty which we crave. But a very important consideration arises at this point. Supposing it were possible to demonstrate, so that all could understand, the existence of a good God, is it not clear that the essential nature of religion would disappear? For in that case religion would become a business proposition. Men would necessarily be driven to God by the crudest self-interest. The man who ignored God and left Him out of account in his life would be merely foolish. The element of trust and loyalty which, at present, is central in religious faith would disappear. Religion would be nothing more than betting on a certainty.

An analogy taken from human friendship makes this point clear. The life-blood of friendship is loyalty and trust. No friendship can be formed by any other means. A

man who sought proofs and guarantees from his acquaintances before admitting them to his friendship would obviously never be in a position to acquire that sympathetic insight which is the heart of friendship. It is equally futile to expect guarantees and proofs from God.

We can press the analogy further. Although friendship cannot co-exist with a demand for proofs and guarantees in advance, as it were, it does demand that at each stage the friend should not "let down" his friend. Those who have trusted God as a friend have borne unanimous testimony to the fact that God never fails.

It is quite true that there are some persons who think that the existence of God can be demonstrated by logical arguments. Whatever may be thought about these "proofs," however, one thing is clear. They may or may not be able to prove the existence of a Supreme Mind; they certainly cannot demonstrate the goodness of God—consequently, they break down at the critical point. For a Supreme Mind which is not also what we understand by a good Mind

is no true God, and can never command man's whole-hearted and unlimited allegiance. Most men and women will be able to echo John Stuart Mill's famous words :—

> I will call no Being good who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures; and if such a Being can sentence me to hell for not so calling Him, to hell I will go." [1]

[1] John Stuart Mill: *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy.*

PART II

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

CHAPTER IV

THE ANSWER OF THE PLEASURE-SEEKER

THUS far we have argued that the world has a purpose. But it still remains to be shown that it is "good enough." In other words, Is life worth living? Everybody knows the answer given by *Punch* to this question, "That depends on the *liver*." There is profound truth in the remark. A good deal of pessimism is due to the state of a person's physical health; the remainder is due to the *practical* attitude which he takes up towards life. Of course, there are those who propound pessimistic philosophies—and we have noticed some of these—but such persons are not always as pessimistic as they sound. Mr. G. K. Chesterton has written a story which tells of a university professor who was giving a course of lectures on philosophical pessimism in which he pointed out that life is not worth living. As he was walking across the quad after one of his lectures, an undergraduate who had been present suddenly appeared at a window and shot him through the top hat with a revolver. The professor with in-

credible speed dashed into a place of safety, thus belying his creed by his actions. There is obviously a sense in which we all find life worth living: otherwise we should put an end to it. But there are some who, like the Scotsman who was asked if the change which he had been given by the shopman was correct, reply "Only juist." Those who give such an answer do so for one of two reasons. Either their bodily condition is run down and they are "out of sorts," or else they are adopting an attitude to life which can only lead in the end to a pessimistic answer. It is important to remember that the attitude which a person adopts towards life is part of the total evidence as to whether it is worth living or not. Ultimately everybody chooses between the various interpretations of the universe for other than purely intellectual reasons. We have, for example, considered several possible answers to the question, Has the world any purpose? Only one of these, we have suggested, can be definitely refuted—the doctrine that it has happened "by chance." Which of the others we decide to "plump for" must therefore

depend upon the operation of some other factor. There is only one other possible factor, and that is the personal equation. We can never get away from this. "Pretend what we may," wrote William James, "the whole man within us is at work when we form our philosophical opinions." This holds good of all opinions. What we are, obviously contributes to the making of all our judgments. For example, one man thinks that jazz music is beautiful, whereas to another it is execrable. The identically same music is judged in flatly contradictory ways by the two men. This familiar fact of experience is expressed in the well-known tag, *de gustibus non disputandum.* Bertrand Russell has said that when people wish to spread some particularly erroneous doctrine, they like nothing better than to choose a Latin tag for the purpose. It is certainly true that this one may be very misleading. It may suggest that there is no such thing as objective truth. This is only another way of saying that all things are governed by chance—a doctrine which we have definitely rejected. The real significance of the Latin

dictum is not that there is no ultimate and objective truth, but that it is never possible to cut out the personal equation.

It follows from this that it is impossible to give a categorical answer to the question, Is life worth living? As *Punch* truly said, everything depends on the liver. The only possible way of finding an answer is to consider in a broad manner the various attitudes which persons adopt towards life and to observe carefully the outcome of these several attitudes. This is the method I propose to adopt.

We may roughly distinguish between five different standpoints. First, there is the attitude of the pleasure-seeker. This takes various forms, as we shall see. Secondly, there is the questioning attitude to life; that of the intellectual and the "highbrow." Thirdly, there is the attitude of devotion to duty. Finally, there are two points of view which it is very important for us to understand at the present time. I have described them as pseudo-optimism and true optimism, respectively. What they are will appear in the sequel.

The first attitude to life which we must consider is that of the pleasure-seeker. The pursuit of pleasure seems on the face of it to be such an obvious objective that it is hardly surprising that it has always had many advocates. Many would echo Pope's words :—

> O Happiness ! our being's end and aim !
> Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content ! whate'er thy name :
> That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,
> For which we bear to live, or dare to die.

What can be more inevitable than the pursuit of pleasure ?, we are inclined to ask. When all is said and done, do not all men really aim at pleasure ? It is all very well for Carlyle to stigmatise this as a "pig philosophy," but can it be seriously denied that pleasure is really the practical guide of life ? The only difference between people in this respect is that they differ in their views of pleasure. One man finds pleasure in getting drunk. Another man finds pleasure in saying his prayers or going as a missionary to the heathen, and even, it may be, being burned at the stake, singing hymns to God after the manner of the early Christian martyrs.

If this line of argument were sound, then there would be only one possible attitude to life—viz. that of the pleasure-seeker, or hedonist, as he is called by philosophers, and we should have to recast the whole of our argument. In fact, however, there is a fallacy in this point of view. It is no doubt true that in the end men find pleasure in doing that which they approve, and that, as far as pleasure goes, "the pleasure of push-pin is as great as the pleasure of poetry," as Jeremy Bentham once said. But it does not follow that everybody *aims* at pleasure. On the contrary, to aim directly at pleasure is not the best way of getting it, and may well result in losing it. For example, if a person goes to a concert in order to get as much pleasure for himself as possible, he will not obtain so much as he would have done if his object had been merely to enjoy the concert. If he continually asks himself during the evening, Am I enjoying this? he will inevitably lose much of the pleasure which is obtainable. His object, in a word, must be to enjoy the concert, and not to enjoy the pleasure of the concert. And this

is what every true artist does. He pursues his art and leaves the pleasure to look after itself. The same is true of all other forms of enjoyment. The man who is moved to sacrifice everything for his wife and children is certainly not aiming directly at his own pleasure, although he may, on balance, as a result of his action, obtain more pleasure from a good conscience than from the bitterness of a violated conscience.

We conclude, therefore, that pleasure-seeking is not a satisfactory attitude to life. At the same time, it is certainly one of the commonest. Probably the majority of mankind do adopt this objective. Some do so without realising consciously what they are doing. Many, on the other hand, do it quite deliberately. Even so, there are many different ways in which it may be done. One method to adopt is that of the voluptuary, of whom the poet Byron affords a good example. The net result of this is infinite boredom.

But *carpe diem*, Juan, *carpe, carpe !*
To-morrow sees another race as gay
And transient, and devour'd by the same harpy.
" Life's a poor player,"—then play out the play.

Or consider this :—

> Through life's road, so dim and dirty,
> I have dragg'd to three and thirty.
> What have those years left to me?
> Nothing, except thirty-three.

There is no attitude to life which shows so clearly as does that of the voluptuary that the answer to the question, Is life worth living? is inseparably bound up with a person's mode of life. If Byron had used his gifts and opportunities differently, it is fairly obvious that he would have given a different answer to the question we have propounded.

It is, however, possible to make pleasure-seeking one's objective while being the reverse of a voluptuary. Pleasure can be sought with a scrupulous care to avoid excess. Such was the method of life advocated in the Epicurean philosophy and revived to-day by such writers as Mr. Lippman. It is quite incorrect to suppose that Epicureanism is a doctrine of voluptuousness. On the contrary, Epicurus enjoined a strict moderation in all things as the means of gaining the greatest amount of pleasure. "The happy and

blessed state belongs not to abundance of riches or dignity of position or any office or power," he wrote, "but to freedom from pain and moderation in feelings and an attitude of mind which imposes the limits ordained by nature" (Fragment 85, translated by Cyril Bailey). Yet it can hardly be said that the majority of persons would pronounce life worth living on this view; for the greatest of joys, according to Epicurus, is the cessation of pain. His philosophy was essentially that of the lunatic who used to sit down and hit himself a good many times on the head with a hammer. When asked why he did this, he replied, "Because it is so lovely when you leave off." Not many people would be prepared to espouse that creed. There is, indeed, as one might expect, a great sadness brooding over the writings of Epicurus, and a certain artificiality of thought. One feels that he is not a pessimist only because he has said to himself, "I am damned if I will." No normally constituted person could but feel an inner sadness and vacancy in the presence of such a view of life. Schopenhauer, who held a similar view of pleasure as

being the absence of pain, was far more logical in saying:—

> There is no doubt that life is given us not to be enjoyed, but to be overcome—to be got over. . . . In old age it is indeed a consolation to think that the work of life is over and done with. . . . There is some wisdom in taking a gloomy view, in looking upon the world as a kind of Hell, and in confining one's efforts to securing a little room that shall not be exposed to the fire.[1]

Or consider such a passage as the following:

> Most of the glories of the world are mere outward show, like the scenes on a stage: there is nothing real about them. Ships festooned and hung with pennants, firing of cannon, illuminations, beating of drums and blowing of trumpets, shouting and applauding—these are all the outward sign, the pretence and suggestion —as it were the hieroglyphic—of *joy*: but just there, joy is, as a rule, not to be found; it is the only guest who had declined to be present at the festival. . . . In brilliant festivals and noisy entertainments, there is always, at bottom, a sense of emptiness prevalent. A false tune is there: such gatherings are in strange contrast with the misery and barrenness of our existence. The contrast brings the true condition into greater relief. Still, these gatherings are effective from the outside; and that is just their purpose. Chamfort makes the excellent remark

[1] E. Schopenhauer: *Counsels and Maxims*, Chap. I.

> that *society—les cercles, les salons, ce qu'on appelle le monde*—is like a miserable play, or a bad opera, without any interest in itself, but supported for a time by mechanical aid, costumes and scenery. . . . Everything in the world is like a hollow nut; there is little kernel anywhere, and when it does exist, it is still more rare to find it in the shell.[1]

There can be little doubt that, apart from a few exceptional people, Schopenhauer's view of the situation is right. Those whose objective is self-seeking, whether it be the gross self-seeking of the voluptuary or the more refined and philosophical self-seeking of the Epicurean, are sooner or later driven to the conclusion that life is barely worth living. That is the lesson of history, from the long-ago of Ecclesiastes to the present-day novelist, such as Mr. Aldous Huxley or Mr. Ernest Hemingway. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. But it does not seem to have occurred to many of them that if they had essayed to put a different theory of life into practice, they might have come to a different conclusion.

It is important to bear in mind, however,

[1] *Ibid.*

that the hedonistic motive may exist without being explicitly formulated. There are, in fact, many who adopt it without at all realising what they are doing. Many who find fault with the world and who wish to mend "this sorry scheme of things" are oblivious of the fact that their complaints spring from this source. Dr. Inge has said that this world is a failure as a pleasure-garden, but that it was never meant to be a pleasure-garden. To quote another writer, Professor W. R. Sorley:—

> The world cannot exist simply for the purpose of producing happiness or pleasure among sentient beings: else any sufferer might have given hints to the Creator for the improvement of His handiwork.[1]

The hedonistic standpoint lies behind the very common and disastrous misconception that the reward of virtue is prosperity or pleasure in some form. Very many are led to say that life is not worth living because they argue from this supposition. When visited by some misfortune they ask what they have done to deserve this, and, contrari-

[1] W. R. Sorley: *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 338.

wise, they expect their virtuous deeds to be rewarded with prosperity. This idea, which finds expression in certain parts of the Old Testament, is fundamentally at variance with the religion of the Cross, where the Eternal Goodness is put to bitter shame and sorrow; but it dies very hard, and it is surprising how many professing Christians are victimised by it. It is certainly responsible for the despairing and pessimistic attitude of many who find it hard to believe that life is worth living.

This vague and ill-defined kind of hedonism, about which we have been speaking and which is so common, is in the case of many people the result of their early upbringing. Take, for example, the child who has been spoilt. He is taught from his earliest years that every passing desire should be satisfied. When he was a small baby lying in his pram, at his first cry his mother or his nurse would rush to the pram and minister to his needs. Whenever he has been frustrated it has only been necessary for him to lift up his voice and cry aloud. It is not surprising that with such an upbringing he should come to

the conclusion that life exists to satisfy his every whim. Consequently, when he comes to years of maturity and finds that it is not so, he is apt to have a grudge against life in general and to be disappointed.

Here, indeed, is the root of the neurotic attitude to life, which is far more common than many people suppose and which, moreover, is rarely understood. The neurotic has *unconsciously* adopted a pleasure-seeking attitude to life. Most frequently, he arrives at it through being "spoilt." On the other hand, it may be the result of bullying. If a person has been ill-treated and repressed during his early years, he may be driven to selfishness, and thus arrive at a hedonistic point of view by another route.

There is, indeed, in human nature a fatal bias towards self-seeking pleasure. On the face of it, it might seem perfectly natural for the young child who had arrived at the state of self-consciousness to pass from the self-centredness of the infant to the altruism of the adult. This, in fact, never happens. In every case, so far as our experience teaches us, there is a fatal bias which prevents this

transition being smoothly made. The child hugs his self-centred attitude even into adult life, and therefore it is not until after many difficulties and much discipline that it learns the true secret of life, which consists in finding one's pleasure in serving others and not in serving oneself. The man who has not outlived this ego-centricity of the child, although he may have reached what are called years of maturity and discretion, is, in fact, nothing but a big baby. He regards the whole world as one enormous sweet to be sucked. It is hardly surprising if it does not come up to his expectations.

We may assert therefore, with considerable confidence, that the pleasure-seeker is on the wrong track. Whether he pursues his objective with the zest of the voluptuary or the studied moderation of the Epicurean, whether he pursues it consciously or unconsciously, he is doomed to disappointment, for such a person can never grasp the meaning and purpose of life.

CHAPTER V

THE ANSWER OF THE 'HIGH-BROW'

WE next come to the attitude of the intellectual. "Too much questioning and too little responsibility," wrote William James, "lead, almost as often as sensualism does, to the edge of the slope, at the bottom of which lie pessimism and the nightmare or suicidal view of life." "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow, and much study is a weariness to the flesh," said the author of Ecclesiastes. Doubtless the degree of pessimism will vary very considerably, and many of this intellectual variety of "pessimists" may find life well enough worth living to behave as Chesterton's professor behaved in the story related above. Yet it is not very common to find an abundant *joie de vivre* in such individuals. At best they tolerate life and pass through it without enthusiasm.

We may take as an instance of this point of view Bertrand Russell's eloquent and famous essay on *A Free Man's Worship*.

> The life of Man is a long march through the night, surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by

weariness and pain, towards a goal that few can hope to reach, and where none may tarry long. One by one, as they march, our comrades vanish from our sight, seized by the silent orders of omnipotent Death. Very brief is the time in which we can help them, in which their happiness or misery is decided. Be it ours to shed sunshine on their path, to lighten their sorrows by the balm of sympathy, to give them the pure joy of a never-tiring affection, to strengthen failing courage, to instil faith in hours of despair. Let us not weigh in grudging scales their merits and demerits, but let us think only of their need—of the sorrows, the difficulties, perhaps the blindnesses, that make the misery of their lives; let us remember that they are fellow-sufferers in the same darkness, actors in the same tragedy with ourselves. And so, when their day is over, when their good and their evil have become eternal by the immortality of the past, be it ours to feel that, where they suffered, where they failed, no deed of ours was the cause; but wherever a spark of the divine fire kindled in their hearts, we were ready with encouragement, with sympathy, with brave words in which high courage glowed.

Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man, condemned to-day to lose his dearest, to-morrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day; disdaining the coward

> terrors of the slave of Fate, to worship at the shrine that his own hands have built; undismayed by the empire of chance, to preserve a mind free from the wanton tyranny that rules his outward life; proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate, for a moment, his knowledge and his condemnation, to sustain alone, a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned despite the trampling march of unconscious power.[1]

There are some who would say at once that such an expression of opinion goes far to prove that the answer to our question should be a negative one. If those who think most are inclined to decide that life is barely livable, surely they are more entitled to a hearing than any other group of persons, seeing that it may be taken for granted that they have probed most deeply into the secrets of life? The answer, however, is not quite so simple. There is some truth in the saying that a little thinking may make a man into an agnostic, but much thinking makes him into a believer. The greatest thinkers have not by any means all been unbelievers or pessimists. Yet many, doubtless, have been, and this demands an explanation. This is, I

[1] Bertrand Russell: *Mysticism and Logic*, pp. 56–7.

believe, to be found in the fact that the power of reason appears to have primarily a practical significance. Our minds seem to have been given us, in the first instance, to enable us to live rightly[1] rather than to discover the answer to all the questions which may be raised in heaven and in earth; certainly not to satisfy the curiosity of that particular brand of intellectuals who, as Plato said, are like puppy dogs, trying to pull everything to pieces. The great weakness of the mere philosopher is that he is at best "a *spectator* of all time and all existence," and, as a rule, a spectator of a very much more limited scene. The great game of life, however, seems to have been designed not for spectators but for players, or at any rate only for those spectators who are also, at other times, players. One great drawback of the purely "highbrow" standpoint is that it usually lacks that intimate inside knowledge which is to be obtained only in the rough and tumble of the game. For example, a spectator who has never himself played Rugby football is gravely handicapped

[1] What "rightly" means in this context we shall consider later on.

from entering into the real meaning of the game and can never really do so. The " high-brow," as a rule, has never been " up against " life.

Moreover, the intellectualist viewpoint suffers from another great drawback. It is at root merely another form of hedonism. The " high-brow " is, in fact, bowing at the altar of pleasure, albeit intellectual pleasure. His attitude is essentially self-centred. His underlying motive is pride. Even his altruism is rooted in egoism, as the quotation from Bertrand Russell shows. Hence the obstinacy and quarrelsomeness of so many of the intellectuals. There have been not a few unedifying squabbles in the history of science.[1] The bitter dispute between Newton and Leibniz as to who was the discoverer of the differential calculus is a case in point. If we could read the hearts of men we should doubtless find the pleasure of self-love widely prevalent in the intellectual. Among

[1] It will perhaps be said that the same holds true of theology. This is what we should expect, for theology claims to be the Queen of the Sciences; consequently the theologian is likely to be lifted up with pride. The theologian too often adopts the " highbrow " attitude.

the learned, intellectual pride is unfortunately far from uncommon. I was once talking with a distinguished mathematician, a Fellow of his College, who told me that when reading a mathematical journal he constantly finds himself unable to understand it. He pointed out that there are not a few scholars who cultivate obscurity deliberately, in order that they may appear to be profound and wise. This cult of the obscure is an instance of intellectual pride. It is, as everybody knows, a very common attitude in the adolescent, who is apt to suppose that he understands and knows everything. A good deal of unorthodoxy in theological matters springs from this source also. There is a certain distinction in being a heretic and setting up one's opinion against the authority of one's elders, and it is interesting to remember that not a few of the heretics notorious in Christian history come under this heading. We read, for example, how one of the chief heretics in the third century, Paul of Samosata by name, "stopped the psalms that were sung in honour of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the late compositions of modern men, but in honour

of himself he had preferred women to sing at the great festival in the midst of the church, which one might shudder to hear." [1] To follow the path of orthodoxy is apt to appear dull and undistinguished. To be heterodox and original appeals far more to the self-love of the individual. Persons who adopt a standpoint such as this are as blind and as self-deceiving as the crude voluptuary. Indeed, in many instances there is less hope for them than for him. They are unlikely to discover the true "worthwhileness" of life. Their much learning has deprived them of the capacity for sound judgment. They are in danger of falling into the errors of that English Sovereign of whom it was said that

> He never said a foolish thing,
> And never did a wise one.

It cannot be said, however, that the danger of adopting the "highbrow" attitude to life is, for the majority of persons, a very real one. The average person is far too indolent in mind for this to be the case. The danger is indirect rather than direct in most cases

[1] Eusebius: *Ecclesiastical History*, Book VII, Chap. 30.

(with one exception, which we shall consider later). It arises in the following way. The average man, though intellectually lazy himself, is inclined to pay special heed to the utterances of the pundits. Indeed, he is probably unconsciously compensating for his own mental indolence by doing so, on the principle that hypocrisy is the homage which vice pays to virtue. Consequently, the comparatively few who profess to adopt the "highbrow" attitude to life exert an influence out of all proportion to the smallness of their numbers. The average man is apt to receive the utterances of men like Mr. H. G. Wells or Mr. Bernard Shaw with something like the veneration and respect which a Christian pays to the Bible. The result is that a very large number of people adopt a kind of pseudo-highbrow attitude to life. They let other people do their thinking for them, but they adopt and cling to their opinions as obstinately as if they were the result of their own thought. Perhaps, indeed, they hold to them even more obstinately, again by reason of a kind of unconscious compensation.

It is, of course, impossible to obtain

statistics in a matter of this kind. It would, however, be very interesting to discover how many people there are in England at the present time who are adopting what we have called the pseudo-highbrow attitude to life. The very large sale of such a book as Sir James Jeans', *The Mysterious Universe* seems to indicate that it is not inconsiderable. This book is quite beyond the capacity of the average person to understand. I remember once talking to a very distinguished scholar about it, and hearing him say that he could not understand it. That such a book has found so many readers seems to be due, in part at least, to the fact that it appeals to and fosters the pseudo-highbrow view of life.

It can hardly be doubted that Broadcasting has also done something to foster this attitude. Brief wireless "talks"—necessarily somewhat superficial—on all kinds of high and difficult matters may easily lead people to suppose that they know something on subjects about which they are really profoundly ignorant. In previous generations they would have been ignorant and known that they were ignorant. In these days they are ignor-

ant without knowing it. Professing themselves to be wise, they have become bigger fools. They have become victims of that "little learning which is a dangerous thing."

This pseudo-highbrow attitude is doubtless comparatively harmless in many departments of life. For example, I remember on one occasion tuning in the wireless set at random and finding myself at the beginning of a talk on "The Bed Bug." Almost against my will, I listened to the end, repelled and yet fascinated! As a result, I have learned something on that recondite subject and I might easily pose as something of an authority on it, on the principle of the French proverb that in the Kingdom of the Blind the one-eyed man is King. Such a pose would be comparatively harmless in this instance. But if some profound theological or ethical matter had been the subject of the "talk," it would be harmful and dangerous in the extreme to suppose that I was entitled to a serious opinion about it, on the basis of a single talk or even a series of talks. Yet, human nature being what it is, I should have

been strongly tempted to this, and I should probably have been less inclined to submit to any authority in the matter.

It is in its attitude towards legitimate authority that the pseudo-highbrow outlook on life is most dangerous. There was a time in Europe when men were content to rely upon the authority of the Church in matters of religion. Many causes went to the jettisoning of that authority, some of them (in part) legitimate, others altogether illegitimate. Obviously, we cannot enter now into a discussion of these causes. What I am concerned to point out here is the deplorable fact that in the place of that authority the average man is content to set up either his own (usually untutored and ill-informed) opinion, or else the opinion of (say) a popular man of letters or a novelist, or even, it may be, a "film star" or a professional footballer. It is not seriously open to doubt that if John Jones, the centre-forward of Aston Villa and a well-known international player, were to preach in a given church, his theological opinions would be heard with far greater attention by a majority of the people in the

parish than those of the Vicar, even though he be a Doctor of Divinity!

What is the reason for this strange fact? The answer seems to be that the breakdown of Church authority (in the eyes of the average man) has left him a prey to any and every charlatan who can claim his attention. Professing that every man is entitled to his own opinion, he is subconsciously aware that his own opinion is, after all, not very securely founded, and so he seeks rather wistfully some authority to which he can appeal. The average man, in fact, is a pseudo-highbrow not only in the sense that, as a rule, he has neither the learning nor the capacity of the true high-brow, but also because deep down in his subconscious self he knows that he is ignorant. Consequently he is all the while looking for some new thing in the way of authority.

We must, however, now turn to the exception (mentioned above) to the rule that the average man never *directly* claims to be high-brow. This exception is provided by the adolescent period of a person's life. As is well known, this is the time in the life of

the individual when he knows everything and is quite prepared to put everybody else right.

In these days of increased educational advantages, when a Secondary-school training is open to a much larger number of young men and women in this country than ever before, it is evident that this tendency is likely to be increased rather than diminished. When this period is over, a man or a woman usually settles down to a more humble state of mind, and begins to realise that there are more things in heaven and earth than were taken account of by his or her adolescent philosophy. But while it lasts, this state of mind is apt to be seriously misleading, and it may well start a person walking upon altogether the wrong road in life, a road on which it may be very difficult indeed to turn back later. Most likely a man will continue to persist in his wrong course of life, encouraging himself in his mischief, by adopting the pseudo-highbrow attitude towards existence. In other words, having perhaps done a little thinking for himself during the brief period of adolescence, he is content to rest on his oars and henceforward to allow other

minds to row him along, or to drift with the current tide of opinion.

The root objection to the highbrow attitude to life—whether in its genuine or its spurious form—is that it is fundamentally individualist. Its watchword is *quot homines tot sententiæ* which we may paraphrase as, There are as many creeds as men. It fails to take account of the fact that man is a social animal, and that he can only live a full and perfect life in a perfect society, which shall exercise its beneficent authority upon him. That men ignore this profound truth at their peril is shown clearly to-day by the powerful movements known respectively as Communism and Fascism, which are simply reactions against the excessive individualism of the modern world. Owing to this individualism, men are seriously beset by a terrible feeling of loneliness, which is driving them to extreme forms of Collectivism.

This individualism is, directly and indirectly, the result of the "highbrow" attitude of modern science. It results directly because scientific investigation and thought are apt to be a one-man affair. Science

progresses by means of " pioneers," and every scientist assimilates the knowledge which has been won, as an individual, and as an individual he is taught to criticise it. There is no such thing as corporate scientific thinking. There may indeed be co-operation between several men of science in carrying out an investigation or an experiment, but it remains broadly true that the thinking is done in single and, to a large extent, isolated minds. The individual scientist is taught to stand on his own feet. More likely than not he will seek to vindicate his knowledge and ability by putting forward " original " views of his own, except in so far as he is overawed by some of the great " dogmas " of science—such as the dogma of Evolution—which he cannot openly question without running the risk of ostracism at the hands of his fellows. Scientific men may form themselves into societies, but, for all that, they do not surrender their individualistic standpoint. Anybody who has attended meetings of learned societies cannot have failed to realise that there is an almost entire absence of corporate life therein.

The indirectly individualistic influence of science makes itself felt by means of the inventions of applied science. It is perhaps largely a matter of accident that these have fostered individualistic tendencies, but of the fact there can be no question. There are, in particular, two such inventions which have a powerful influence in the direction of individualism. The first of these is the cinema. To go to a cinema performance is essentially an individualistic activity. It is utterly different from going to the theatre. In a theatre the audience is in a true sense a corporate body, with a common attitude of mind which has great influence upon the players. In the course of the performance it may even acquire something approaching a corporate mind. In a cinema the audience counts for nothing at all: it is merely a collection of separate individuals. It has happened to myself to discover that I was practically the only person left in the house when the performance ended. This in no way interfered with my enjoyment of the film,—a fact which plainly demonstrates that the cinema fosters individualism. It

cannot be doubted that the cinema is doing a great deal to root people in their individualistic standpoint.

Much the same holds good of broadcasting. This is also predominantly individualist from the listeners' point of view. To "listen in" to a concert is very different from going to hear it in the concert hall, although one cannot eliminate altogether the influence of the audience. Here we have a *solus cum solo* relationship between speaker and listener. In any case, each listener, as he sits by his own fireside, is quite indifferent to other listeners. For all he cares, they may have shut off their sets entirely. It matters nothing to him. He switches on and switches off as it pleases him, being merely his own private affair.

It would be hard to over-estimate the effect of these two most popular of modern forms of amusement in fastening upon people the individualistic point of view, which agrees so naturally with "highbrowism" and "pseudo-highbrowism." It is difficult for people subject to such influences to live a normal and healthy existence in association

with their fellows. Doubtless there is gain as well as loss. Films of a truly educative nature may do something to counteract the false tendency which has been mentioned. Still more is this true of broadcasting. Nevertheless, it remains true that it is difficult for men and women who live subject to such influences not to be perverted by the evils of the pseudo-highbrow standpoint, and therefore to find the true "worth-whileness" of life.

CHAPTER VI

THE ANSWER OF THE DUTIFUL PERSON

THE extreme antithesis to the belief that pleasure is the aim and object of life is to put a sheer sense of duty before us as the goal. This was done pre-eminently by two great men, Immanuel Kant and Thomas Carlyle. Kant emphasised the importance of duty, and of what he called the goodwill, to such an extent that he was parodied by Schiller in the following lines :—

Gladly I serve my friends, but alas I do it with pleasure.
Hence I am plagued with the doubt that I am not a virtuous person.

In reply the answer is given :

Sure your only resource is to try to despise them entirely,
And then with aversion to do what your duty enjoins you.

Thomas Carlyle, however, is the great, popular champion of this attitude of mind. It is perhaps not very fashionable in these days, but it is one which will never disappear, and is more than likely to revive again by way

of reaction in time to come. Carlyle, the apostle of duty, had the most profound contempt for hedonism. He sarcastically addresses the hedonist in these terms :

> But what, in these dull, unimaginative days, are the terrors of Conscience to the diseases of the Liver! Not on Morality, but on Cookery, let us build our stronghold: there brandishing our frying-pan, as censer, let us offer sweet incense to the Devil, and live at ease on the fat things *he* has provided for his Elect! [1]

According to Carlyle, the only attitude to life which is worthy is that which puts duty in the forefront. The situation in which duty was not the ideal, he says, was never yet occupied by man. His gospel is, secondly, the gospel of work.

> Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it! How, as a free-flowing channel, dug and torn by noble force through the sour mud-swamp of one's existence, like an ever-deepening river there, it runs and flows;—draining-off the sour festering water, gradually from the root of the remotest grass-blade; making, instead of pestilential swamp, a green fruitful meadow with its

[1] Thomas Carlyle: *Sartor Resartus*, Book II, Chap. VII.

clear-flowing stream. How blessed for the meadow itself, let the stream and *its* value be great or small! Labour is Life: from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God; from his inmost heart awakens him to all nobleness—to all knowledge, "self-knowledge" and such else, so soon as Work fitly begins. Knowledge? The knowledge that will hold good in working, cleave thou to that; for Nature herself accredits that, says Yea to that. Properly thou hast no other knowledge but what thou hast got by working: the rest is yet all a hypothesis of knowledge; a thing to be argued of in schools, a thing floating in the clouds, in endless logic-vortices, till we try it and fix it. "Doubt, of whatever kind, can be ended by Action alone." [1]

Unfortunately, however, this attitude is one which is at war with nature; thus it usually comes to pass with the apostles of duty that they seem to regard themselves, Promethean-like, as standing over against a hostile universe. So Carlyle writes again:—

How true, for example, is that other old Fable of the Sphinx, who sat by the wayside, propounding her riddle to the passengers, which if they could not answer she destroyed them! Such a Sphinx is this Life of ours, to all men and

[1] Thomas Carlyle: *Past and Present*, Book III, Chap. II.

societies of men. Nature, like the Sphinx, is of womanly celestial loveliness and tenderness; the face and bosom of a goddess, but ending in claws and the body of a lioness. There is in her a celestial beauty—which means celestial order, pliancy to wisdom, but there is also a darkness, a ferocity, fatality, which are infernal. She is a goddess, but one not yet disimprisoned; one still half-imprisoned—the articulate, lovely still encased in the inarticulate, chaotic. How true! And does she not propound her riddles to us? Of each man she asks daily, in mild voice, yet with a terrible significance, "Knowest thou the meaning of this Day? What thou canst do To-day, wisely attempt to do?" Nature, Universe, Destiny, Existence, howsoever we name this grand unnameable Fact in the midst of which we live and struggle, is as a heavenly bride and conquest to the wise and brave, to them who can discern her behests and do them; a destroying fiend to them who cannot. Answer her riddle, it is well with thee. Answer it not, pass on regarding it not, it will answer itself; the solution for thee is a thing of teeth and claws; Nature is a dumb lioness, deaf to thy pleadings, fiercely devouring. Thou art not now her victorious bridegroom, thou art her mangled victim, scattered on the precipices, as a slave found treacherous, recreant, ought to be and must.[1]

The fact is, of course, that this attitude is one-sided. Carlyle saw only one side of the

[1] Thomas Carlyle: *Past and Present*, Book I, Chap. II.

truth about man's nature and destiny. Like Kant, he saw the dignity and immensity of the Moral Law. He realised that morality is the essence of things, that wrong is proved to be wrong, that right is the only might, but he never took the further step of asking and inquiring into the character of this Moral Law itself, and he overlooked the fact that it is for a Christian the law of Love, whereby all the whole creation is bound together by golden chains round the throne of God. Duty for him, as for Milton, was "the great taskmaster." He had the ruggedness of the old Scottish Calvinists. We seem to hear rising from his lips, as Sir Henry Arthur Jones says, the cry of the Breton sailor: "My God, protect me! My barque is so small and Thy ocean so vast." And herein is the essential weakness of Calvinism in every form. It emphasises the transcendence of God and of duty, but fails to realise that the God who issues divine commands to men is also the "strength and stay upholding all creation." Magnificent as is this attitude to life in many ways—and there are not a few who would wish for more people of this kind

in the present easy-going days—it can never be completely satisfactory because, as we have seen, there lies at its heart a contradiction.

In these times, however, we do not very often meet with the thorough-going Apostle of Duty, such as Kant or Carlyle was. The form which the dutiful attitude to life takes nowadays is rather different. It is most commonly found in the kind of person who says, " I try to obey my conscience," thereby claiming freedom from all external moral or spiritual authority. Such people are often conscientious, up to a point, but they fail to realise that they are building their life upon the sand. They are making the fatal mistake of forgetting that conscience requires not only to be obeyed, but also to be educated and enlightened.

When the primitive man cooks and eats his grandmother, or other relative, he is " obeying his conscience." Nobody among us, presumably, would claim that he was doing what is right. Plainly the conscience of such a person needs to be enlightened and educated. But it is not only primitive

savages who are in that condition. We all are in constant need of enlightenment. We need to be able " to perceive and know what things we ought to do."

When we begin to look into this matter carefully, one of the most striking facts we encounter is that some of the worst deeds in history have been done by men and women with a clear conscience. Our Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples that the time would come when those who killed them would think that they were doing God service. There can be little doubt that the men who were directly responsible for the Crucifixion were convinced that they were doing what was right. They appear to have been what we should call " conscientious " people. We read that one of them stood up and made a speech just before Christ was arrested in which he pointed out that it was better that one man should perish rather than the whole nation.

It is this capacity for self-deception which makes the merely dutiful attitude to life hopelessly unsatisfactory in practice, apart from the theoretical objection which was

noticed above. It is so fatally easy to argue with our conscience and persuade ourselves that the convenient thing is the right thing. There is always " something to be said for " almost any course of action which presents itself. Moreover, the more a person argues with his conscience the more easily can it be stultified, until, in the end, it rarely troubles him. He is then apt to suppose that he has " a clear conscience." In fact, he has something quite different—a smothered or a falsified conscience. But he can without difficulty delude himself into thinking that he is a truly conscientious person, who tries to do his duty.

The majority of persons are perhaps " conscientious " in this sense of the term. They do not often have to act in definite opposition to their conscience. Long continuance in a particular mode of life has succeeded in enabling them to accommodate their conscience to the needs of the situation. For example, if it has been found necessary to tell a certain type of lie in their business, they have grown accustomed to doing so, and can now lie without any qualms. When they

first began, they doubtless felt considerably uneasy. But now it is different. They have grown accustomed to lying, at any rate in that form, and they have been able, in one way or another, to persuade themselves that it is harmless or necessary. It is, however, quite likely that they unconsciously compensate for this by being specially severe on *other* kinds of lying.

This kind of attitude to life—which is a very common one—is thoroughly unsatisfactory. Anybody who adopts it is living a life of self-deception, and there is no condition which is more difficult to tackle than this. The light which is in them has become darkness, although they do not know it. They put sweet for bitter and bitter for sweet, as the Hebrew prophet said. They may even reach the terrible condition of those whose moral sense was so debased that they accused Jesus Christ of being in league with the Devil. This is the sin against the Holy Spirit, the lie in the soul.

The truth of this matter is that, while everybody ought to try to do what he believes his duty to be, nobody should be too con-

fident that he knows what it is. It is necessary to be humble and teachable in such matters, and to seek guidance for the conscience. Once more we are brought up against the dangers of excessive individualism. It is, in fact, necessary to hold fast to the precious gift of individuality without falling into the snare of individualism.

The discovery of the individual may, in a true sense, be ascribed to Christianity. We are so accustomed to the idea of the liberty of the individual conscience that we forget that it is, historically speaking, almost a novelty. This point comes out very clearly if we consider, for instance, two of the greatest of the ancient Greek plays, the *Antigone* of Sophocles and the *Prometheus* of Æschylus. In each case we see the conflict between the individual conscience and society, but in order that the audience may perceive that there is any problem at all—so little was the idea of the liberty of the individual conscience appreciated—the author had to put the offender in the most favourable light and the other side in the most unfavourable. Yet this great discovery of the individual becomes

the source of terrible evil if it be allowed to run to the extreme of supposing that the individual, untutored conscience is sufficient guide for life.

We are bound to maintain, therefore, that the dutiful attitude to life, as such, is insufficient. The human conscience, although a most delicate instrument, indeed because it is so delicate an instrument, needs to be most carefully handled. Otherwise it becomes like a pair of delicate scales which, owing to rough treatment, cease to yield reliable results. Doubtless a man or a woman may be very fairly well satisfied with himself or herself in this mode of life, but the true meaning and value of life has not been grasped. If there is an after-life, in which the meaning and values of this one are carried on to a higher stage, such persons cannot fail to be the victims of a very rude awakening, when they are brought face to face with realities. In other words, the life of the self-sufficing, "conscientious" person is largely a sham. While he prides himself upon his grasp on life, it is all the time slipping through his fingers.

CHAPTER VII

THE ANSWER OF FUTILITY

LET us imagine that we are travelling in a railway train. It is going so fast that we are not conscious of any movement at all. It is beautifully fitted up with every kind of modern convenience, and scarcely a day passes without fresh improvements being made. The heating, the lighting, the upholstery, the plumbing—all these have been brought to a marvellous pitch of perfection; though it is true that not all the carriages on the train are by any means equally comfortable. Indeed, we notice a strange contrast, some of them being luxurious in the extreme, whereas others are broken-down and ramshackle. As we look round upon our fellow-passengers, moreover, we find that they are a curious assortment—literally all sorts and conditions of men. There are men and women with white faces, men and women with black faces, and others with yellow faces and brown faces, speaking all kinds of different languages. Although the train apparently never stops, new faces continually appear, and others as

mysteriously disappear. When we get into conversation with some of our fellow-passengers we discover, to our astonishment, that comparatively few of them know where they have come from; neither do they know their destination. I exclaim, "But surely this is rather absurd: to be on a train and not know where you are going!" I am greeted with the reply, "Oh, well, we are content to enjoy the journey as much as we can." I object, "But surely you must be going somewhere. Would it not be more sensible to find out exactly where you are going?" More often than not the only reply I get is an incredulous shrug of the shoulders.

The meaning of this parable of human life—for such it is—is sufficiently obvious. It exactly describes life as it is lived by too many people to-day. They find life worth living, indeed, in the sense that they do not put an end to it—they do not jump off the train—yet there is something utterly futile about their attitude of mind. It has been said with some truth that the most disconcerting thing in this modern age is the growing sense of futility which has spread

through all classes. Let us consider some examples which illustrate this.

Here is a clerk in the City. Every morning he gets up at the same time—probably at the last minute—bolts his breakfast and dashes off to the station. He sits in a train for half an hour, boxed up with nine other men and women, and reads the newspaper. He gets out of the train when it arrives at the terminus and hurries off to the office. After sitting on a stool for four hours he goes out and has a meal, and then returns to the office for another three hours. Then back to the station; half an hour more in the train reading the evening paper; home to his evening meal. By this time he is pretty tired; too tired, perhaps, to do much except listen in a drowsy manner to the wireless and then go to bed. And so the process goes on—day after day, week after week, year after year. On Sundays, indeed, it is different; he has a free day. If he is fortunate enough to possess a small car, he will probably spend the day dashing at as high a speed as possible about the country, and return to his home late in the evening perhaps a little more tired than usual.

Take another instance, a successful business man. Day in and day out he slaves at his business. Every minute of the day is a working minute. He scarcely has time to eat his meals. He neglects his wife and family in order to make more money. He has no time even to make friends. Seven days a week he puts his nose to the grindstone. If he is not in his office, then he shuts himself up in his library at home with his books and papers. More and more money he amasses, and at last finds himself the possessor of a large fortune. What is the aim and object of it all? One day, he says to himself, he will retire and enjoy the reward of his labours; but the day never comes. He is sitting in his office as usual one morning when he has a seizure; and that is the end of all his labours. "And the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?" (Luke 12^{20}, R.V.).

Let us look at two other pictures, taken from scenes of life differing from one another as widely as possible. Here is a Society woman. She stays up half the night dancing; she stays in bed half the day sleeping. The rest of her life is a ceaseless round of social

engagements. During the season she is in London. At other times she lives in the country, living practically for fox-hunting and nothing else. Or perhaps she is touring round the world. Her mind is filled with thoughts of hunting and dancing and social functions. She has little time for anything else except to see that she is dressed appropriately in the latest fashion for every occasion. For a time all may go well with her, as she is carried forward on wave after wave of excitement; but sooner or later she will know what it is to be in the trough of the wave, and to be overcome with boredom. What is to be the end of all this?

Here is a scene in a provincial town. We are standing outside a Labour Exchange. There is a queue of unemployed near by. Let us approach one of them at random and talk to him about himself. What is his life? From the moment when he drags himself out of bed in the morning, to the time when he lies down at night, his life is futile. Day after day he goes through the same, monotonous routine, standing outside the Labour Exchange and waiting for the job which he knows

will probably never come. At other times he lounges about the street with nothing to do, except perhaps to waste his miserable pittance, on which he is supposed to live, by trying to "spot a winner." The bitterness and futility of his life are not due so much to the fact that he is unemployed and living barely above the starvation level; they lie rather in the thought that he is not wanted, that nobody cares what happens to him, that he is living a useless existence. He is like a piece of old iron thrown on to the scrapheap.

When we contrast these two strangely different pictures, what impression do we receive? Both these kinds of lives are futile, as they are generally lived. The only essential difference between the two is that whereas the lady of fashion does not realise the futility, the man who is out of work does. There is, therefore, more hope for him than for her.

The dismal story might be almost indefinitely prolonged. Perhaps at some time we have stood at a railway terminus in one of our big cities and watched the suburban trains pouring out their occupants. They stream out of the station in their crowds,

these black-coated workers. What are they doing? What are they driving at? What is the purpose of this scurrying activity? In what way are these hurrying beings essentially different from black beetles in a deserted kitchen, scuttling away as soon as the light is turned up? Look at the faces of these people as you meet them. They wear earnest and strained expressions, yet combined with a certain vacancy. How comparatively seldom do we see a face which bears the mark of inward satisfaction and peace. "It is but lost labour that ye haste to rise up early, and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness: for so he giveth his beloved sleep" (Ps. 127^3, P.B.V.).

Again, consider the nations of the world. How futile is their behaviour! Hardly more than twenty years have passed since the world conflict came to an end, a conflict which, we were told, was the "war to end war." Since the Armistice there has been nothing but strife and unsettlement, and at this present moment two considerable wars are in progress; the great nations, once more armed to the teeth, stand glaring suspiciously at one

another while professing their desire for peace. The peoples of Europe and of the so-called civilised world as a whole are once more groaning under the burden of excessive taxation; millions and millions of pounds being poured out to make instruments of destruction. "Why do the heathen so furiously rage together: and why do the people imagine a vain thing?" (Psalm 2[1], P.B.V.). Why this futility? The answer is that a nation, after all, consists of individuals, and too many of them are living as if there were no God.

A man of my acquaintance was standing one day on a balcony overlooking St. James's Park in London. He had just had a very good dinner and was smoking an expensive cigar with the feeling of satisfaction which is peculiar to anyone in that state. He was, it might appear, a happy and successful man on whom the world was smiling as he stood there on that beautiful summer evening at peace, it would seem, with himself and with the world. He suddenly heard these words: "The man who forgot God." They came with such force into his life that it was

changed from that moment. He knew without hesitation that that man was himself. Yet surely he was the representation of millions of other men and women. The weakness of the lives of so many is that they are not desperately wicked, but rather that they leave God out of account, and in that sense are futile.

The effect of modern civilisation has been to cause men to need God not less but more than ever; apart from Him modern life is, in some ways, more futile and desperate than in any other period of history. The reason for this is twofold. In the first place, the development of modern applied science has caused the world to shrink to an amazing extent. Whereas a century ago it took about twelve months to go round the world, it can now be done in about twelve days. The motor car, the aeroplane, the telephone and broadcasting have brought it to pass that the world is one community. It is no longer possible for a nation to say that it has no concern with what the other nations are doing. During the Great War there was a popular song containing the refrain: "The more

we are together, the happier we shall be." This is a profound error. The more we are together the more likely we are to quarrel. It is comparatively easy to get on well with a person whom one sees for only two or three minutes a day, or from time to time; it is quite another matter to live with him happily in the same house. And what is true of the individual is true of nations. The shrinking of the world has thrown the nations together in such wise that there is continual tension between them. There is desperate need of some power to hold them together. The tragedy of modern life is that no such power is universally recognised, as it was at one time in European history. The grandiose attempt to unite all the nations in the League of Nations has in a large measure failed, and for those who have eyes to see this is not surprising. In the Covenant of the League of Nations the name of God is nowhere mentioned. In other words, it is an attempt to bind the nations together, while leaving God out of account.

The second result of modern civilisation has been an enormous addition to the power-

fulness of the instruments of warfare. The natural result is a tremendous increase of fear and of the suspicion which is its invariable concomitant. The nations are more dangerous than ever before; to put more power into a person's hands without a corresponding increase of wisdom is disastrous. It is bad enough that a homicidal maniac should be at large; it is infinitely worse if he possesses a loaded revolver. That is the condition of the modern world. Modern man has learned to control the material world in a marvellous degree; he has made no corresponding increase in the art of self-control. Only trust in God can enable him to achieve this.

We must beware, however, of unduly narrowing the meaning of the phrase "trust in God." It is too commonly supposed that if a man is well-intentioned and trying to please God, that is sufficient. This, however, is to ignore what we mean by God. We mean by God a personal being who is not only absolutely good, but also absolutely righteous and true. It is impossible, therefore, truly to honour and trust God unless we are prepared to take the trouble to think, and to refuse to

live at the superficial level at which life is lived by the majority. It is the shallow attitude of mind which characterises the majority of people which makes it so easy for them to be misled by any passing demagogue or dictator, a process which we can see being enacted before our eyes to-day. If the majority of men and women had a real belief in, and apprehension of, God, it would be impossible for them to be led away, as, for example, is the case in Germany to-day. It is a highly significant fact that the only considerable resistance to the Nazi régime is being made by Christians, both Roman Catholic and Evangelical.

The following extract from Professor Brady's book, *The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism*, will make this point clear.

> According to the Nazis the mass of the people are dumb. They are unintelligent, childlike, and inarticulate. They will accept without serious question whatever they hear or are told. They believe everything they read. They do not bother to think; they feel. Their lives are not pivoted on logic, but on emotion. They have no real initiative, no true creative powers, and they are incapable of any sort of self-discipline. They desire to be fed, to be entertained with

exotic and melodramatic fancies, and they yearn to follow.

Like the child, they are unstable, irresponsible, and capricious, turning easily from one brightly coloured fancy to another. They will be attracted by whatever is simple and naïve, whatever is dark, dangerous, and thrilling, whatever is extreme in size, or distance, or accomplishment, whatever is heroic and unheard of, whatever brings the gasp of wonder or the hush of awe.

They are likewise essentially and naïvely pleasure-loving. But, though lovers of ease, they are so thoroughly irrational that they do not count the cost of achieving their pleasures. Like the child who works assiduously for hours in the garden, or the soldier wallowing in the mud of the front-line trenches, they will be satisfied for their labour and sacrifices by a cheap bauble, a medal, a badge, or a bit of palely reflected but resonantly heralded glory.

Nor, the Nazis assume, are the rank and file able to tell the difference between symbols and realities. Thus they may be given symbols instead of realities. They can be made to fight for "God and Fatherland," for "German Kultur," for "Blood and Honour." They can be made to endure poverty and die in rags and filth for "Mother and Home," the "Leader," the "People." They can be brought to sacrifice everything for "the good of the community," and to escape "Jewish Marxism." If necessary they can be conditioned to people the forests with demons, be fearful of black cats, and vomit at the sight of a Jew.

> The "leaders," in other words, are free to choose not only the causes for which they wish to rally the support of the people, but also the symbols which sway their emotions.[1]

Anatole France has a story of a young king who, wishing to discover the lessons of history, appointed a commission of learned men to discover what they are. The story relates that the last survivor of this commission, on his death-bed, whispered to the king the result of their labours: "Men are born, they suffer, they die; that is all." Yet such a view of life is strictly incredible, and reduces it to "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." It has been said that man's extremity is God's opportunity, and the saying is true. The more desperate the position from the point of view of man, the more hope there is that man will learn the beginning of wisdom, which is to find God; in other words, to realise the purpose of life, which is to do the will of God. From one point of view history may appear to be a series of wicked and foolish

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 78–9. Everybody who wants to understand what is going on in the world to-day should read this book.

wars, yet the lessons of history for those who have eyes to read are plainly written. It is only righteousness that exalteth a nation; that people and kingdom which ignores the living God is doomed ultimately to destruction. It is those times when men are saying peace and safety and that all things are well which are fraught with the greatest danger. So our Lord taught. He told His disciples that there should be "upon the earth distress of nations . . . men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world . . . but when these things begin to come to pass, look up, lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke $21^{25, 26, 28}$, R.V.).

Let us examine this situation a little more closely. We have suggested that fundamentally the cause of this futility is the fact that men and nations are trying to live without God. In other words, man apart from God is futile. It has been truly said that God minus man equals infinity, man minus God equals nothing. Man is literally nothing. The deepest truth about our human life is this nothingness of man; but it is the most

difficult of all lessons for man to learn. Experience shows, moreover, that it is never so difficult as in times of material prosperity. It was at the zenith of Victorian prosperty that Swinburne had the effrontery to sing: "Glory to man in the highest; man is the master of things." That is why the present situation, rightly understood, is far from hopeless. Man's extremity is ever God's opportunity.

> Vanity, vainglory: who shall tear these from the heart of man. The sweetness of glory [said Pascal] is so great that join it to what we will, even to death, we love it . . . vanity is so anchored in the heart of man that a soldier, a camp-follower, a cook, a porter, makes his boasts, and is for having his admirers; even philosophers wish for them. Those who write against it, yet desire the glory of having written well, those who read, desire the glory of having read; I who write this have, it may be, this desire; and perhaps those who will read it.[1]

At the same time, this very vanity is, as Pascal pointed out, a mark of the nothingness of our own being:

> Because we are so little content with the life which we have in ourselves, we try to live an imaginary life in the idea of others, and to this

[1] Pascal: *Pensées.*

> end we strive to make a show; we labour incessantly to embellish and preserve this imaginary being, and we ignore the truth; and if we have either calmness, generosity or fidelity, we hasten to let it be known, that we may attach these virtues to that imaginary being; we would even part with them for this end, and gladly become cowards for the reputation of valour. It is a great mark of the nothingness of our own being, that we are not satisfied without the other, and that we so often renounce one for the other.[1]

We build up mountainous phantasies of our own importance, and thereby merely succeed in hiding ourselves from ourselves. We are like the patient of whom Dr. J. A. Hadfield has written, who, after the doctor had been trying to suggest that perhaps he was too pleased with himself, remarked at length, "Oh, I see; you think I have too high an opinion of myself. I assure you No! I do not really think highly enough." Hence the blindness of the human heart. There are none so blind as they who will not see, and many *will* not see the truth about themselves.

We are, in very fact, nothing. All man's glory is a reflected glory. As St. Paul says: "And what hast thou that thou didst not

[1] Pascal: *Pensées.*

receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" [1] We are as the moon is to the sun. We are dead, barren, cold, devoid of heat and light. Indeed, in a sense we are less than that; the moon at least has a considerable material existence. On the material side we are evidently nothing. "A little morsel of dust about the size of a nut," said the Curé of Ars. Our spiritual existence too is rooted in a false and lying vanity. In God we live and move and have our being; He takes away our breath and we die. A hundred years ago where were we? A hundred years hence where shall we be? We stand for a pin-point of time between two immensities. "Under God's measureless our atom width." "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass." [2] We all do fade as a leaf. It is this profound truth which is expressed with great eloquence in the closing passages of the book of Job.

[1] 1 Cor. 4^{7} (R.V.). [2] Isa. $40^{6,7}$ (R.V.).

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Declare, if thou hast understanding.
Who determined the measures thereof, if thou knowest?
Or who stretched the line upon it?
Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened?
Or who laid the corner stone thereof;
When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?
Or who shut up the sea with doors,
When it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb;
When I made the cloud the garment thereof,
And thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,
And prescribed for it my decree,
And set bars and doors,
And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further;
And here shall thy proud waves be stayed?
Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days began,
And caused the dayspring to know its place;
That it might take hold of the ends of the earth,
And the wicked be shaken out of it?
It is changed as clay under the seal;
And all things stand forth as a garment:
And from the wicked their light is withholden,
And the high arm is broken.
Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea?
Or hast thou walked in the recesses of the deep?
Have the gates of death been revealed unto thee?
Or hast thou seen the gates of the shadow of death?
Hast thou comprehended the breadth of the earth?

Declare, if thou knowest it all.
Where is the way to the dwelling of light,
And as for darkness, where is the place thereof;
That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof,
And that thou shouldest discern the paths to the house thereof?
Doubtless, thou knowest, for thou wast then born,
And the number of thy days is great![1]

Man has, indeed, certain gifts, certain powers—notably the power of thought—which raise him above all the rest of creation.

> The whole dignity of man lies in thought [said Pascal], but what is this thought, how foolish it is. . . . Man is evidently made for thought, this is his whole dignity and his whole merit; his whole duty is to think as he ought. Now the order of thought is to begin with self and with its author, and its end. But of what thinks the world? Never of these things, but of dancing, playing the lute, singing, making verses, tilting at the ring, *et cetera*; of fighting, making ourselves kings, without thinking what it is to be a king, or what to be a man.[2]

As for his moral achievements, they are in a still worse case. This very self-consciousness, which is the pre-condition of our intellectual powers, is only too liable to pervert hopelessly

[1] Job, 38^{4-21}. [2] *Op. cit.*

our moral and spiritual life. We become so greatly occupied with ourselves that we fail to find God, or, if we find Him, we fail to give Him due recognition. All our righteousness is as filthy rags; it is defiled by the trail of self. If and when we have done any good, it has been through God's sustaining power, and even then, how seldom, if ever, has that good been perfectly done. How often have we failed to correspond with the Divine Grace and Inspiration. How often have we hardened our hearts. How often has our vision been dim and our hearing dull. How often have our feet been slow to follow the Divine call. How often have we lost spiritual opportunities through not being alert in soul. How often have we failed to render to others the help which we might have given. How often have we failed to speak the word in season. How often have we spoken the wrong word. How often have we said nothing when we ought to have spoken. And as we reflect upon the past, and our misuse of our divine gifts and opportunities, let us remember this, that we have quite certainly forgotten the vast majority of such occasions.

Self-love is the greatest forgetting force in the world; Freud has at least shown that. Some things stick in the mind for very shame, it is true, but the vast majority sinks into a peaceful oblivion. Nietzsche put the matter very plainly: "'I have done that,' says my memory; 'I cannot have done that,' says my pride. Finally memory yields."

We are, then, literally nothing; nay, we are worse than nothing. Nothing is, at least, harmless. Nobody has in truth any right to the remark, "I have never done anybody any harm." We have gone astray ever since we were born. In the full and frequent acceptance of this truth lie all our strength and all our joy, for thus only can we be redeemed from the futility of life, because we recognise the source of all our power and all our riches.

It is a strange paradox that when we recognise our nothingness we are then capable of becoming something; but so long as we vaunt ourselves and strut across the stage of life, we are merely ridiculous and futile. We must beware of the danger underlying the thought of self-respect.

I say it again and again [said St. Teresa], let our self-respect be ever so slight, it will have the same result as the missing of a note on the organ when it is played—the whole music is out of tune. It is a thing which hurts the soul exceedingly in every way, but it is a pestilence in the way of prayer.[1]

Apart from this "self-noughting," as Mother Julian of Norwich called it, our very virtues, the things which should have been for our wealth, become unto us an occasion of falling. Again and again do the saints insist on this truth.

God, when we had no being, created us out of nothing; and now that through Him we have a being, He wills that the whole spiritual fabric should be based on this foundation, namely, the knowledge of our own nothingness. And the deeper this knowledge becomes, the higher will the building rise. And according as we dig out the earth of our own wretchedness, so much the more will the Divine Architect bring the most solid stones to advance the building.

Never imagine, beloved, that you can ever dig deep enough; but, on the contrary, believe this of yourself, that if any thing in a creature could be infinite, it would be your vileness.

With this knowledge, practically carried out, we possess all good; without it, we should be

[1] *Autobiography of St. Teresa*, p. 295 (E.T.).

little better than nothing, though we had done all the works of the Saints, and were ourselves continually occupied with God.

O blessed knowledge, which makes us happy on earth and glorious in Heaven! O light, which rises out of darkness, and brightly illuminates the soul! O unspeakable joy, which shines amidst our impurities! O nothingness, which, when known, puts all things in our power![1]

Our human life, then, is a complete paradox. On the one hand, we are literally nothing; on the other hand, we are made in God's image and are called to the wonderful destiny of becoming "partakers of the divine nature."[2] There is a profound dignity in human nature even when it is sinful and erring —it is this fact which the great tragedians portray—yet the dignity is borrowed from God, in whose image we are made. "As having nothing," he possesses "all things."[3] But if he ceases to be mindful of the rock whence he was hewn, he becomes merely futile.

[1] L. Scupoli: *The Spiritual Combat*, Chap. 32.
[2] 2 Peter 1^4 (R.V.).
[3] 2 Cor. 6^{10}.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ANSWER OF THE OPTIMIST

WE have now to consider the answer given by the true optimist—that is to say, the optimist who not only believes that life is supremely worth living, but who also has solid grounds for that belief. It cannot be too emphatically stated that there is and can be only one such ground, and that is belief in a loving God. That such a belief cannot be demonstrably proved we have already seen, but it is vital to grasp the fact that apart from such a faith optimism is merely a will-o'-the-wisp, which depends either upon a sanguine temperament or a pathetic trust in human nature, to which the whole of human history (with the single exception of One Life) gives the lie. Here, as Dr. Niebuhr has truly said, is

> the real crux of the issue between essential Christianity and modern culture. . . . The conflict is between those who have a confidence in human virtue which human nature cannot support and those who have looked too deeply into life and their own souls to place their trust in so broken a reed. . . . The utopianism of liberalism has run its course, but the utopianism

> of naturalism in general will not be spent until it is proved that the civilisation which the proletarian rebels against a bourgeois civilisation will build, will not achieve the perfect justice which they expect." [1]

In other words, the true optimist finds in a God of love the supreme answer to the problem of life. Love, he maintains, is the only power which can give life its true worth. If we set out upon life's journey determined to follow Love, we shall find the true meaning of life, but we can only do this if we are fortified first by the conviction that Love reigns upon the throne of the universe—in other words, if we are persuaded that God is love. Otherwise the ideal must seem to be hopelessly impracticable, and chimerical in the extreme.

If Love reigns upon the throne of the universe, however, it follows that Love is the stuff of which things are made. Love, therefore, will be the activating principle of all life. To live according to love will thus be to live according to Nature, in the true sense of the word. This mode of life does not,

[1] R. Niebuhr: *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, pp. 132, 133.

or rather should not, suggest "the noble savage" so much as the most highly and fully developed human personality conceivable. The most serious—perhaps the only serious—objection to this belief is found in the existence of evil. Something has been said on this subject in a previous chapter. As a matter of theoretical argument it is possible to maintain that evil is a means to greater good. But more than this is required to produce a genuine optimism. For this we need a deep, even a passionate conviction that this world is the best of all possible worlds. Such a conviction can arise only from the Christian belief in a God of love. In other words, the only true optimist is the Christian. One sometimes hears the remark that such and such a thing is "too good to be true." According to the Christian philosophy this is literally impossible; rather we must say that a thing is not good enough to be true.

In considering the optimistic answer to the question, Is life worth living? it is almost impossible—personally, I find it altogether impossible—not to turn to Robert Browning

to interpret it; for Browning has expressed, as, I think, no other writer has done, the true significance of Christian love.

Love, according to Browning, is at the heart of all created life,

> No mere mote's breadth but teems immense
> With witnessings of Providence.[1]

> Love which on earth, amid all the shows of it,
> Has ever been the sole good of life in it,
> The love, ever growing there, spite of the strife in it,
> Shall arise, made perfect, from death's repose of it.
> And I shall behold thee, face to face,
> O God, and in thy light retrace
> How in all I loved here, still wast thou![2]

There runs through the animal world that wonderful thing, the parental instinct, which is the manifestation of pure love. Browning does not make the too common mistake of supposing that instinctive life is purely self-seeking. There is

> in the creation some cause
> Such as is put into a tree, which turns
> Away from the north wind with what nest it holds.[3]

Again,

> Brute and bird, reptile and the fly,
> Ay and, I nothing doubt, even tree, shrub, plant

[1] *Christmas Eve.* [2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ring and Book—Giuseppe Caponsacchi*, 1374–1376.

And flower of the field, all in a common pact
To worthily defend the trust of trusts,
Life from the Ever Living.[1]

And he devotes a poem to the story of the Russian mother who allowed her three children to be torn from her breast by the wolves as they followed the sledge, thus saving her own life. When she reaches the place of safety, she falls on her knees before Ivan Ivanovitch, the village carpenter, asking for his comfort. Immediately, without uttering a word, he lifts his axe, and with a mighty blow cuts off her head, for

I hold that, failing human scuse,
The very earth had oped, sky fallen, to efface
Humanity's new wrong, motherhood's first disgrace.[2]

Love is a universal good. Wherever it exists "it leaves completeness in the soul." In man there comes to fruition that love

Whose attributes had here and there
Been scattered o'er the visible world before,
Asking to be combined, dim fragments meant
To be united in some wondrous whole,
Imperfect qualities throughout creation,
Suggesting some one creature yet to make,

[1] *The Ring and the Book—The Pope*, 1076–1081.
[2] *Ivan Ivanovitch.*

Some point where all those scattered rays should meet,
Convergent in the faculties of man.[1]

Apart from love, life is unintelligible,

Only a scene
Of degradation, ugliness and tears,
The record of disgrace best forgotten.
A sullen page in human chronicles
Fit to erase.[2]

It is, therefore, the essential purpose of life that a person should learn the meaning of love.

For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
And hope and fear—believe the aged friend—
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.[3]

Even when gravely imperfect love is still supreme

Since in the seeing soul, all worth lies, I assert—
And nought i' the world, which, save for soul that sees, inert
Was, is and would be ever—stuff for transmuting—null
And void until man's breath evoke the beautiful—
But, touched aright, prompt yields each particle its tongue
Of elemental flame—no matter whence flame sprung
From gums and spice, or else from straw and rottenness,
So long as soul has power to make them burn.[4]

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[1] *Paracelsus.* [2] *Ibid.*
[3] *A Death in the Desert.* [4] *Fifine at the Fair.*

The theme of the wonderful poem, *Paracelsus*, is the story of one who adopted the ultra-intellectual attitude to life. With his dying breath he confesses that his life has been a great mistake, because he had failed to love. He had despised the poet Aprile, whose ambition it had been to "love infinitely." The dying Paracelsus raises himself in the bed and says:

I saw Aprile—my Aprile there!
And as the poor melodious wretch disburthened
His heart, and moaned his weakness in my ear,
I learned my own deep error; love's undoing
Taught me the worth of love in man's estate,
And what proportion love should hold with power
In his right constitution; love preceding
Power, and with much power, always much more love;
Love still too straitened in his present means,
And earnest for new power to set love free.
I learned this, and supposed the whole was learned;
And thus, when men received with stupid wonder
My first revealings, would have worshipped me,
And I despised and loathed their proffered praise—
When, with awakened eyes, they took revenge
For past credulity in casting shame
On my real knowledge, and I hated them—
It was not strange I saw no good in man,
To overbalance all the wear and waste
Of faculties, displayed in vain, but born
To prosper in some better sphere: and why?
In my own heart love had not been made wise

To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind,
To know even hate is but a mask of love's,
To see a good in evil, and a hope,
In ill-success; to sympathise, be proud
Of their half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim
Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,
Their prejudice and fears and cares and doubts;
All with a touch of nobleness, despite
Their error, upward tending all though weak,
Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,
But dream of him, and guess where he may be,
And do their best to climb and get to him.
All this I knew not, and I failed. Let men
Regard me, and the poet dead long ago
Who loved too rashly; and shape forth a third
And better-tempered spirit, warned by both:
As from the over-radiant star too mad
To drink the life-springs, beamless thence itself—
And the dark orb which borders the abyss,
Ingulfed in icy night—might have its course
A temperate and equidistant world.
Meanwhile, I have done well, though not all well.
As yet men cannot do without contempt;
'Tis for their good, and therefore fit awhile
That they reject the weak, and scorn the false,
Rather than praise the strong and true, in me:
But after, they will know me. If I stoop
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
Close to my breast; its splendour, soon or late,
Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge one day.
You understand me? I have said enough?

This love which is given to man to taste is found in its fullness only in the Incarnate Christ, who is none other than God Himself.

By His infinite self-giving, He has revealed the heights and depths of love. It is in the light of this love that the true basis of our Life is to be seen.

Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst thou—so wilt thou!
So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown—
And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with death!
As thy Love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being Beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever: A Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!

The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?
So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!

Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee!"

There are, however, two *caveats* which we must carefully observe. First, we must beware of looking upon this Christian optimism as being, so to say, a merely private affair between the soul and God. This new thing—for it was a new thing brought to light by Christianity—was revealed not to the isolated Christian, but to the Christian Fellowship. Love, according to the teaching of the New Testament, is the greatest of the fruits of the Holy Spirit; it is supremely manifested in what the New Testament calls *philadelphia*, *i.e.*, the love of the brethren. This wonderful human love—for which a new word (*agape*) had to be invented—was clearly seen by the first Christians to be the fruit of the divine love. It is essentially supernatural. "See how these Christians love one another." The remark is uttered sometimes in these days as a piece of cynicism, but it was originally spoken in all seriousness. It was not until the State, in the person of

Constantine, took Christianity under its wing, and it became fashionable and easy to profess oneself a Christian, that the purity of Christian love was watered down—a process from which the Church has never recovered. Yet the truth of Christian Love abides. It is the only basis of optimism. This is "God's lamp." If we hold it close "its splendour, soon or late, will pierce the gloom."

The second caution to be observed is that we must be very careful to distinguish true Christian optimism from the pseudo-optimism for which it is sometimes mistaken. The nature of true optimism is most clearly manifested in the strange paradox of Christianity which, taking as its chief symbol the instrument of agony and disgrace, is, nevertheless, the only religion which has been in any true sense a religion of hope. Christianity brought hope to a distracted world. The very word "hope," indeed, like the word "love" in the New Testament, may truly be said to be the creation of Christianity. The Greek word for hope, *elpis*, meant in pre-Christian times merely "expectation," which

might be either good or bad. The "blessed hope" of Christianity is an entirely different thing. The true disciple of Jesus Christ is never depressed for long, because he knows that Love is on the throne of the universe. It is in this sense that Christianity is other-worldly; not as being indifferent to the injustices and inequalities of his life, but as having its treasure in Heaven, where the God of Hope reigns.

This is a very different thing from the shallow optimism which is so frequently mistaken for the real thing; the shallow optimism which would heal the hurt of the world lightly, saying "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. The Christian is optimistic and light-hearted, not because he fails to look the evil and the suffering of the world in the face, but because he knows the gaiety of love, even when it is crucified. This tremendous paradox is something which

> The world's coarse thumb,
> And finger fails to plumb.

Nevertheless, it is true. The most popular saint in modern days is Francis of Assisi, yet it is probable that comparatively few of

his admirers realise that the gaiety of God's troubadour was that of one who bore literally in his body the marks of the Cross. Strange paradox as it is, in that Cross is the secret of optimism. The world will never capture the spirit of optimism until it is prepared to face the Cross; in other words, until it is prepared to carry love to extreme lengths. "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth." The Cross is the key to optimism because in a wicked world love must always sooner or later find the Cross.

It is a real misfortune that the last book in the Bible, the Revelation of St. John, is so little appreciated. To the average English reader it probably means hardly anything at all; yet it is above all a book for dark days, and it was never more appropriate than it is to-day. It was written to encourage the little body of faithful Christians in a time of fierce persecution, when the Church was fighting for her life. That is why so many of the ideas are hidden under what appears to a Western mind somewhat strange imagery. However, those who will take the trouble to

study the book with the aid of one of the many excellent available commentaries, will be richly rewarded. The symbolism is not so obscure as it appears at first sight, and a little study will throw a flood of light upon it. Even apart from this, however, a merely cursory reading enables us to see that the book breathes the true spirit of Christian optimism. It begins with a glorious vision of the exalted Christ, and following upon the letters to the seven Churches there is another wonderful vision of the worshipping Church in heaven. In like manner the book ends with a vision of the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, the company of the redeemed; and during the course of the book, every now and again the veil is lifted in a series of interludes, and the theme, although in varying forms, is always essentially the same: "And I heard, as it were, a voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thundering, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God, the omnipotent, reigneth." It is the age-long theme of the saints, which in the old dispensation was greeted from afar, but which in the new dispensation is seen

and known to be a great reality. "The Lord sitteth above the water-flood: and the Lord remaineth a King for ever. The Lord shall give strength unto his people: the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace" (Ps. 29^{9-10}, P.B.V.).

PART III

WHAT AM I TO DO WITH MY LIFE?

CHAPTER IX

UTILITY OR APPRECIATION, WHICH?

WE have argued that the universe expresses the purpose of a Mind, infinite in Wisdom and in Goodness, in other words, in Love; and we have seen that life becomes worth living in the highest sense to those who seek to enter into, and to co-operate with, that Loving Mind. We are now in a position to consider the all-important question which everybody must face for himself and to which we have been gradually leading up: What should be the purpose of *my* life? The answer which the foregoing argument would suggest is that I must seek a mode of life which will enable me increasingly to *appreciate* the living and the loving God. This is only another way of saying that I must make worship the aim and centre of my life. For true worship is precisely the appreciation of the Creator by the creature. In the words of the Shorter Catechism: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever."

To quote from a widely differing source, we find St. Ignatius Loyola in the Principle and

Foundation of the famous *Spiritual Exercises* saying the same thing: "Man was created to praise, do reverence to and serve the Lord our God, and thereby to save his soul." A sailor-boy once went to a Jesuit house to make a retreat. He was given a paper with the Principle and Foundation (of which we have quoted the beginning) printed on it, and after a brief explanation was left to himself. When the priest who had charge of him returned, he found him in a state of violent agitation. Being asked, "What did you do at meditation?" he replied: "Do? I tramped up and down the room saying, 'Damn it, it's true; damn it, it's true.'" He was told that he had made just the meditation St. Ignatius wanted!

It must be clearly understood that there are two, and only two, fundamental attitudes to life. One is the appreciative attitude; the other is the utilitarian. Every person must decide, and in fact does decide (consciously or unconsciously), which of these two he is going to adopt. If appreciation is made primary, we have what is essentially a religious attitude to life (even though it be idolatrous);

if utility is made primary, we have a state of mind which is essentially irreligious.

Let us examine these two contrasted attitudes. First of all, consider the utilitarian. The utilitarian theory of life regards all things as means to human happiness or human comfort. At first sight it seems to be the most reasonable attitude to take. After all, did not the Creator intend us to be happy? Apart, however, from the fact that it ignores the claims of the Creator, it suffers from two grave drawbacks.

The first of these is that it somehow fails to achieve its own avowed object. Experience teaches very plainly that to aim directly at happiness as our objective is a sure way of missing it. The man who is chiefly concerned with his own comfort and his own happiness seems rarely to find it. Nor is the matter much improved if we aim at the general happiness, *i.e.* "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." Once we subordinate all other interests to the pursuit of happiness, we are degrading instead of elevating human nature. We are ignoring altogether the heroic elements in man.

Secondly, the utilitarian attitude to life breaks down entirely in the face of the experience of beauty, goodness or truth, and looks ridiculous beside them. Two homely illustrations will prove this. The first is a picture by George Morrow in which a young man and a young woman are seen sitting on a hillside looking at a glorious sunset sky lined with bars of gold. "Ain't it lovely?" says the girl. "Yes," replies the man, without enthusiasm, adding, "That reminds me, Maria. I *must* remember to tell my landlady that I like my bacon streaky." The other illustration is that of a small boy taken to see Niagara Falls for the first time. His mother, fully expecting him to be impressed, waits for his reaction to the wonderful scene. The little boy exclaims: "Is that like the douche I use for my nose?"

These trivial examples—and they must needs be trivial in order to illustrate our point—show that the attempt to view all experience from the utilitarian standpoint ultimately becomes ridiculous. It is this tendency which has considerably weakened, in certain cases, the great argument from

Design which we considered earlier in the book. This has too often been stated from the human point of view, as if the world were made for man's convenience and comfort. The *reductio ad absurdum* of this is the argument that the world must have a benevolent Designer owing to the fact that fleas have a special fondness for white surfaces, which makes it possible for men to catch them!

The converse of the utilitarian attitude to life is the appreciative. Here man, instead of asking or seeking to discover what *use* he can make of this or that object of experience, first seeks to appreciate it for its own sake. It is evident, as we have already seen, that in the realm of art this is the only possible attitude to adopt. In art, indeed, there is no utility at all, strictly speaking. It is, accordingly, in art that we approach nearest to the understanding of pure worship, which is essentially contemplation. We shall have to return to this point. The same holds of goodness. It is obviously fatal to the realisation of another person's goodness of character that we should approach him from the utili-

tarian point of view. It is true that this is, in fact, exactly what is commonly done in our present so-called civilisation. We treat human beings as "hands," using them so far as it is commercially profitable to do so; we then throw them aside on to the scrap-heap. We ask what a man is "worth," referring, not to the worth of his character, but to his worth in the commercial and economic scale. Economics, indeed, which is an essentially utilitarian science, has been allowed to dominate the life of man, which can never really be confined within utilitarian bounds.

It is obvious that the only way to understand the real value of a person is to approach him not from the utilitarian, but from the appreciative standpoint. This becomes quite clear if we consider how we make our friends. There are some people who never come to see us except when they want to get something out of us. We do not readily admit such persons into the intimacy of friendship. We say to ourselves, "Here's old so and so again, I wonder what he wants!" Friendship can only be reached when the friend is sought for

his own sake—in other words, *via* the road of appreciation. It is only by approaching a person in this way that we can ever get to know him and to realise his true worth. This is only another way of saying that it is only thus that we can learn to love a person; *for love is nothing else but appreciation of a person for his own sake.* This holds good both of God's love for man and of man's love for God.

Again, the same principle is also valid in the realm of truth. The seeker after truth must rigorously set aside any thought of mere utility. His business is not to "twist the facts" to suit the convenience of mankind—still less his own personal convenience—but to follow the argument whither it leads. He must "sit down before fact as a little child." In a word, his attitude must be appreciative. Utility simply does not enter into the situation.

It follows, therefore, that when we say that the purpose of life is to worship, the first thing to be done is to abjure utterly the primacy of the utilitarian attitude. This is

not to say, of course, that utilitarian considerations have no place. That would be absurd. Man must consider ways and means. What is affirmed is that we must seek to adopt the appreciative standpoint *before* we pass on to the utilitarian.

The appreciation of beauty, of goodness, and of truth, however, is, in itself, by no means to be identified with fully conscious worship. It may rather be said to be of the nature of unconscious worship. That is to say, it involves an attitude which, when fully thought out, ultimately leads up to the appreciation of a Being who sums up in His Person all these forms of excellence. To follow out this line of thought, however, is impossible in a small, popular book. We are rather concerned with the practical carrying out in daily life of this worshipful attitude.

We have seen that appreciation as applied to a person is the heart of what we call love. The appreciation of God is no exception to this. The only difference lies in the magnitude of the object. Here it is utterly tran-

scendent. This is the distinctive characteristic of the form of appreciation which we call *worship*, which is the appreciation of the Creator by the creature. "Worship" was originally "worthship." God is absolute worth because He is the Creator. All created things are as dust in the balance compared with Him. Hence the word "worship" is, in the full sense, applied to Him only. The word "praise" suggests a similar train of thought. "Praise" is from the same root as "price." To praise anything is to recognise its price, or value, unless we are using flattery. To "praise" God, therefore, is to recognise His "value" as Creator. We must beware of being misled by human analogy here. When we praise human beings we sometimes flatter them, and so the praise is hollow and empty. It is impossible to flatter God, however, because He is *absolute* Worth. Even another human being may have depths of personality which nobody has ever sounded. How much more shall not the Personality of the Creator be "far above out of our sight."

If it is the work of a lifetime to know intimately and to appreciate the love of a human friend, must it not be the work of eternity to know and to love God? Here on earth is only the rudest beginning, as we dimly discern the unutterable Beauty, and the Eternal Goodness. Heaven, therefore, will not be infinite stagnation, but infinite progress in the knowledge and love of God. Meanwhile, on earth the chief business of life is to begin to acquire the art of worship. Beside this all other human purposes sink into insignificance.

It will perhaps appear to some that this way of looking at things is unreal and impracticable, the fad of a few ecclesiastically minded persons. It is, therefore, not unnecessary to point out that there was a period in European life when the attitude of worship was, to a large extent, central in men's thinking. These ages are known as the Ages of Faith. I do not wish to whitewash them after the fashion of some modern writers. There was much that was evil and cruel in that civilisation, but it was certainly spared the horrors which have resulted from

the frank abandonment of the authority of the Supernatural Arbiter of men and of Nature, with the present resulting chaos in commercial as in international life. It has been truly pointed out that the changed outlook is clearly illustrated by the civic mottoes of our great cities. Those whose foundation goes back to the Ages of Faith invariably reflect that Faith in their mottoes. Those founded in modern times almost equally invariably reflect a frankly non-religious and utilitarian standpoint. Contrast, for example, the mottoes of London and of Manchester. The former is *Domine dirige nos*; the latter, *Arte et labore.* Again, contrast the mottoes of Gloucester, where I am now writing, and Cheltenham; *Fides triumphat invicta* is the one, *Salubritas et Eruditio* is the other. This tendency is glaringly represented in the case of Scunthorpe in Lincolnshire, the most recent town in England to obtain a charter. The motto is: "The Heavens reflect our Labours;" [1] unconsciously a cynical contrast to the utterance of the Psalmist when he

[1] A reference to the glow in the sky cast by the factory furnaces at night.

sang, "The heavens declare the glory of God."

The fact is that experience teaches us as plainly as anything can teach that unless God is given the central place in human life, things never run smoothly for very long. We are, perhaps, too apt to lament our lost prosperity and to deplore the present unrest, instead of reflecting that the things which are happening are exactly what we might have expected, and taking the obvious lesson to heart. Certainly, they need do nothing to shake our faith. Indeed, did life run smoothly in these days, when God is largely left out of account, it would be very difficult to believe that He exists. Our present discontents, therefore, may well confirm our faith, while they drive us to greater sincerity of devotion. There is only one supreme problem in life to-day—or, for that matter, at any other time—and that is the practical problem of worship. Man is a worshipping animal, and if he cannot worship the true God he will (as we have seen) become merely futile, or else he will worship idols which turn to his own decay. My purpose, therefore,

as a human being may be summed up by saying that I must flee from idolatry in all its forms and cultivate the true worship of God both for myself and for mankind at large.

CHAPTER X

THE PERIL OF IDOLATRY

WE pass, therefore, to the consideration of the all-important question of idolatry. It is of two kinds: conscious and unconscious. It will be convenient to take the latter first. There is a sense in which all idolatry is unconscious, in that no man would deliberately worship a God which he knew to be an idol. When the heathen "bows down to wood and stone" he does so "in his blindness." When I speak of unconscious idolatry, however, I am not thinking of that. I am thinking rather of idolatry which is *totally* unconscious, because the worshipper does not realise that he is worshipping at all. Probably the best instance of this is to be found in Communism. It has been pointed out by Berdyaev and other writers that the enthusiasm and devotion which inspire the ardent Communist are veritably religious. He is prepared to sacrifice anything for what he conceives to be the perfect society. He scorns the calculating, selfish utilitarian attitude of mind; and, while with his lips denying God, with his heart he

is in fact worshipping Him. This attitude, while professedly utilitarian in the extreme, is in fact appreciative and worshipful; but, unfortunately, the Communist is worshipping an idol, *i.e.*, an unworldly conception of God. He is prostrating himself before what he conceives to be the ideal community. If a "true red" Communist, he is prepared to die for this ideal. Consequently he is adopting an essentially worshipful attitude, for by being willing to surrender his life for the establishment of the Communist state, he thereby declares in act, if not in words, that it is of superhuman worth. Thus we have the paradox of men and women with a religious enthusiasm for irreligion.

We have said that man is a worshipping animal, and such indeed seems to be the best way of describing him. If taken literally, this means that he is possessed of a specific religious instinct. There are difficulties in the way of this hypothesis (which we cannot examine here), but it is worth pointing out that it provides by far the simplest explanation of such forms of behaviour as that exploited by the ardent Communist. The

" drive " native to the religious instinct has, on this theory, been perverted into an abnormal channel, thus making him religiously irreligious. This type of phenomenon frequently happens where instinctive forces are concerned. Thus, for example, a woman to whom marriage is denied may become a devoted hospital nurse, thus " sublimating " her maternal instinct. Again, a pacifist may " sublimate " his instinct of pugnacity by making fighting speeches on behalf of peace! It is worth while remembering that the word " enthusiasm " means " God within." Man is the only animal which has enthusiasms capable of dominating his whole life. Even the militant atheist unconsciously bears witness to the fact that man is religious at heart.

The second broad type of idolatry may be called " conscious." Here we are concerned with actions which are consciously and in intention religious, but which are directed towards a God unworthily conceived. This kind of idolatry is that which is generally understood when the word is used. Unfortunately, however, it is commonly sup-

posed that these unworthy representatives of God must always take the form of carved or graven images. This is a great mistake. Dr. William Temple has rightly pointed out that, in a civilised country at any rate, a *mental* image is far more likely to become an idol than a *metal* image. We in England, for example, are not at all likely to regard a stone or a wooden figure as a deity and fall down and worship it as God. Our danger lies rather in false and unworthy *mental* images of God. Such mental images constitute a deadly danger, for they abound on every side. It is probably true to say that, judged by the standard of Christianity, the average Englishman is an idolater, since he worships a God who is unworthily and inadequately conceived. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate this danger. It is at the root of half the religious difficulties of the present day. There is a good deal of truth in the cynical remark that the average man has no objection to worshipping the Devil, provided he is allowed to call him God. We have said, 'Judged by the standard of Christianity.'

What is that standard? The answer is that it is the measure of the standard of Christ. That is to say, any conception or representation of God which falls below what our Lord taught, in word and deed, is to some extent idolatrous, because it is unworthy. He alone is "the image of the invisible God." In other words, in Him we find the only representation of God which can be worshipped without fear of idolatry. That is the essence of what we mean by the Incarnation.

This matter is one of such great importance that it is worth while to give some concrete illustrations of common forms of idolatry. I propose to deal with three. The first idol we must mention is the Vindictive God. This is very common indeed. When misfortune of some kind befalls a person, it is a very common experience indeed to hear it said, "What have I done to deserve this?" The implication of such an utterance is that God "pays us back in our own coin." If, therefore, we offend Him or transgress His Commandments, He will make us suffer for it sooner or later. This widespread misrepre-

sentation of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is probably largely derived from ignorance of the true nature of the Bible. It is undeniable that in parts of the Old Testament we do find such a conception of God, but that is all changed by the teaching of Christ, who, when He prayed for His murderers, showed in unmistakable form the true character of the Father. The majority of people have failed to realise that in the Bible we have the story of God's *gradual* revelation of Himself, leading up to the climax on the first Christmas Day; that is why they are subject to such unhappy misunderstandings. God is never at any time or in any circumstances to be regarded as less wise or less loving than Jesus Christ was during His earthly life. There was every excuse for men in Old Testament times if they thought of God as less than "Christian," but what excuse is there for those who profess and call themselves Christians to-day? They have only to read the four Gospels to see that the conception of the vindictive God is a parody of God; in other words, it is an idol,

and a far more dangerous idol than one carved in wood or stone.

Secondly, and in complete contrast to the aforementioned idol, is the tolerant and easy-going God, *le bon Dieu*, who is a "good Fellow," and who, therefore, will deal leniently with everybody and by no means be severe on any. This conception, while apparently more Christian than that of the Vindictive God, is in reality equally idolatrous. It undermines both God's righteousness and His love. It undermines His righteousness because it presupposes that He can wink at evil and treat it as non-existent. This, however, is plainly impossible for an utterly righteous Being. The same truth becomes apparent from a different angle in connexion with His love. For love is a vastly different thing from an easy-going tolerance. Any reasonably good human parent is in a position to understand that. If, for example, a father loves his child, he does not allow him to do as he likes: to be utterly lazy at school or self-indulgent at home, without trying in every way possible, apart from downright

compulsion, to lead him to follow a higher course. His very love for the child renders such an easy-going tolerance of the child's laziness and carelessness impossible. It may be possible for a schoolmaster (though hardly for a good schoolmaster) to adopt such an attitude, but it is certainly impossible for any father who is remotely worthy of the name. The very intensity of his love will make him desire, and unable to be satisfied with less than, the best for his son. How much more must this be true of the Loving God, whose love must involve "a passionate desire to raise us to His likeness."[1] Because God loves man so much, He can never leave man alone.[2] However far he may wander from Him, surely God will not leave Himself without witness in his heart, even though it means "the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched." The picture of the tolerant and easy-going God is a blasphemous idol. How can anybody really

[1] The phrase is Dr. Temple's.

[2] *Cf.* Francis Thompson's poem, *The Hound of Heaven.*

discover the true meaning and purpose of life if he is in bondage to such a base idolatry? He is bound to misinterpret his experience all along.

The third common idol to be mentioned is one which, happily, is not so frequent in England as in some other countries. It is the Nationalist God, the God of a particular race or a particular country. This type of idolatry is perhaps the worst of all, and leads directly to that modern Juggernaut, the Totalitarian State. We have said that this idolatry is not so common in England as in some countries—and we cannot be thankful enough for this fact—yet we are by no means entirely free from it. There are probably a good many people who think that the good God is an Englishman, even though they may not formulate their ideas in this way. Such people profess to think that though the truth of the Christian religion is valuable and necessary for them, as Englishmen, it is quite unnecessary for those whom they contemptuously describe as "the coloured races." The strange form of belief known as British

Israelitism is another illustration of the same set of ideas, whereby the very nationalism which was ultimately responsible for the Crucifixion is carried on into Christianity. The New Israel which our Lord came to found was not "British," nor that of any other nationality. It was, as St. Paul tells us, one in which there is neither "Jew nor Gentile, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female." In other words, it was to transcend every one of the deep divisions by which mankind had been kept asunder. No God who is less than absolutely universal, and unidentified with any single race or people, can be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but is, on the contrary, a dangerous idol. Even though we have been spared in England the horrors of the Totalitarian State, our religion is by no means free from the taint of nationalism. While so many who profess to be Christians are opposed to what is called "Foreign Missions," we have no cause for boasting. "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone." Moreover, should Totalitarianism

ever invade England, how many English Christians would stand fast in the faith and be prepared to suffer for it? Let him who is rash enough to do so prophesy.

These, then, are the three great idols of the present day: a vindictive God, an easy-going God, and a national God. So long as a person bows down to any of these idols, he cannot fulfil the true purpose of his life, as a Christian understands it. In other words, he cannot know God in any real sense, whom to know is life eternal. Everybody, therefore, who would fulfil the purpose of his being must constantly be on his guard against infection from these sources. The only safe remedy is a constant study of the mind of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. To put the same thing in another way, the only safe remedy against idolatry is a constant and persevering worship of the true God, which will act as an expulsive force against any sub-Christian ideas which may so easily creep into Christianity. We have next, therefore, to consider how this

worship is to be carried out. What exactly is involved in practice by saying that human life should be lived in the spirit of worship, or appreciation of the true God?

CHAPTER XI

WORSHIP

IT is customary to divide human nature into two parts, called the mind and the heart respectively. By the mind is intended the intellectual or cognitive aspect of man; by the heart, the emotional (or, to speak more accurately, affective) and conational. It will be convenient to adopt this classification in thinking of man's life of worship. A completely dedicated life is one in which all these elements in human life, according to their natural properties, are directed Godwards.

We begin with the mental or cognitive aspect of worship. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *mind*." This is something which is too frequently ignored. The mental, or intellectual, aspect of worship is apt to be either suppressed, or at least forgotten.

Before we consider the practical details of worship with the mind, we must pause to notice briefly the two ways in which this aspect of worship is left out. First, it may

be deliberately suppressed. The classic instance of this is found in the teaching of the founder of the Jesuits, St. Ignatius Loyola, who clearly laid it down as follows:

> To make sure of being right in all things, we ought always to hold by the principle that the white that I see I would believe to be black, if the hierarchical Church were so to rule it.[1]

The other way in which the worship of the mind is ignored is through ignorance or carelessness. There are many people who are sublimely unconscious that thinking has anything to do with worship. They regard religion as primarily a matter of "feeling"—a delightfully ambiguous word—and of good actions. It never occurs to them that God may expect them to glorify Him with their minds. Yet this becomes obvious as soon as it is recognised that religion means the dedication of the *whole* man to God. It is plainly absurd to omit the intellect. It is, in fact, equally absurd to suppose that we can glorify God by suppressing entirely—or attempting to suppress—any part of the

[1] *Rules for Thinking with the Church*, No. 12.

nature which God has given us. Moreover, it is easy to show what grave ills have always followed in the train of a suppression or an ignoring of thought. "Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as by want of heart."

There is a story of a man who was wont to pray with great fervour but with little imagination in a certain prayer-meeting. One evening he was entreating the Almighty for "more power." "Give us more power, Lord," he pleaded. A neighbour, kneeling beside him, who was rather wearied with his ramblings, murmured under his breath: "What he wants, Lord, is not more power, but more ideas." This story has a wide application. It is too often forgotten that before the prayer for power can be fully answered, there must necessarily be more serious thinking; for knowledge is power. But thinking has two drawbacks which are apt to make it rather unpopular. It is hard work, and is sometimes unsettling. The man who never does any head-work is inclined to be sceptical about this kind of labour, and in popular parlance "the working

man " is the man who works with his hands. In fact, there are few forms of labour more exhausting than concentrated mental effort. An interesting illustration of this is provided by the country yokel who, when called upon to sign his name to a document, sweats freely in the process. Man's unwillingness to think is largely due to man's laziness. Unfortunately, mental laziness easily escapes recognition, especially in the devout. A professing Christian would probably feel insulted if it were insinuated that he never prayed. As a rule such a person would not resent at all the suggestion that he never did any reading or thinking. Some clergymen, indeed, frankly boast that they never open a book. Yet, from the standpoint of Christian ethics, this is as culpable as the total neglect of prayer. To turn to God in petitionary prayer, for example, imploring Him to remove evils which arise from lack of thoughtfulness, is surely most irreverent. When an epidemic invades a village which has been careless about its sanitation, it is not fitting that recourse should be had to prayer alone. The

inhabitants must also look to the state of their drains. To take an example on a wider scale, it is unreasonable to complain to God concerning the intractable nature of our practical international problems to-day when a Treaty was constructed at Versailles which competent authorities at the time agreed was economically impossible. Consecrated thinking, then as now, is a vital need which is too apt to be ignored—with disastrous consequences.

Once more, thinking is often unpopular because it is frequently unsettling. Man, like the other animals, is apt to be a creature of habit. Especially is this the case where his affections are closely concerned. He usually resents changes, even though they may be changes for the better. Frequently he refuses even to consider them. A good instance of this conservatism in matters which touch our affections is provided by our burial customs. In several of our big cities there are, I believe, some dozens of different burial boards. Ultra-conservatism in such matters makes it impossible for people

to agree upon a common and intelligent policy. They prefer to cling blindly to ancient custom. Religion in all its aspects is subject to the same influence. Consequently, there is apt to be very little honest thinking about religion done by religious people. They cannot bear to be unsettled by new ideas. It is far simpler to exclude them and find some good excuse for doing so; this is usually easy enough. Experience teaches us that it is never difficult to find reasons for opinions which we wish to hold. Yet thus to be a mere creature of habit is to dishonour humanity. It is to sink to the level of the animal creation. As William James pointed out, "The limpet will return to the same sticking-place in its rock, and the lobster to its favourite nook on the sea-bottom. The rabbit will deposit its dung in the same corner; the bird makes its nest on the same bough." [1]

Again:

> The physiological study of mental conditions is thus the most powerful ally of hortatory ethics. The hell to be endured hereafter, of

[1] William James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. 2, p. 394.

which theology tells, is no worse than the hell we make for ourselves in this world by habitually fashioning our characters in the wrong way. Could the young but realise how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state. We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone. Every smallest stroke of virtue or of vice leaves its never so little scar. The drunken Rip Van Winkle, in Jefferson's play, excuses himself for every fresh dereliction by saying, "I won't count this time!" Well, he may not count it, and a kind Heaven may not count it; but it is being counted none the less. Down among his nerve-cells and fibres the molecules are counting it, registering and storing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out. Of course, this has its good side as well as its bad one. As we become permanent drunkards by so many separate drinks, so we become saints in the moral, and authorities and experts in the practical and scientific spheres, by so many separate acts and hours of work.[1]

Man, then, must learn to worship God with his mind. He must manfully resist the temptation to seek refuge in a blind authority or in a lazy conservatism. He must offer

[1] William James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I, p. 127.

to God a living and an open mind. Is this, however, really possible? To think means, in the best sense of the word, to be critical. It means constantly to be probing, examining, questioning, and experimenting. How is it possible to combine this state of mind with one of surrender and appreciation? It would appear that the critical and the worshipful states of mind are really mutually exclusive. When a man is engaged in critical thought, it is a positive hindrance to turn to the surrender of a prayer meeting. On the other hand, when engaged in a prayer meeting, scientific thinking is neither possible nor appropriate. It seems as if thinking and worship are mutually exclusive. This difficulty is well instanced by what happened at a meeting of theologians. They came to a deadlock in their discussion of a certain difficulty. One of those present suggested that the company should adjourn to the chapel and pray. However, another member stood up and protested that the atmosphere of prayer was antagonistic to the atmosphere of hard thinking. Whereupon

the chairman put to the meeting the proposal to have recourse to prayer. The resolution was lost and the meeting proceeded.

This incident puts the present difficulty in a clear light. The solution, I suggest, lies in recognising that the difficulty arises from a too narrow conception of prayer. The worship of the mind is indeed wider than what is commonly understood by "prayer," but not wider than what *ought* to be understood by it. Prayer should be made to include *all* forms of human (and, therefore, of intellectual) activity. What constitutes any form of activity a prayer is the *intention* with which it is performed. This intention is to glorify God. It follows, therefore, that the theologians in our story were really praying (or ought to have been) when they were discussing together. The proposed retirement to the chapel was merely to suggest another type of prayer.[1] It is in no way to the discredit of prayer that these two types of it cannot be carried on simul-

[1] If all those present had fully grasped this point no real difficulty would have arisen.

taneously. The life of mental worship must, however, include both types of prayer. Consecrated thinking is by no means an inferior type of prayer. In a sense, perhaps, it is superior, because what we may call the chapel type of prayer is a necessary preliminary to it. In both cases, there is surrender. In the chapel type it is a conscious and continuous attempt to lay oneself open to the Divine Will and to enjoy the Divine Presence through a common waiting upon God. In the thinking type of prayer surrender must also be made, although consciously, perhaps, only at the beginning of the investigation. The essence of this surrender is to exclude egoism as far as possible and to prevent unworthy motives in any form from coming in to pervert the course of truth and of justice. It leads ideally to an intellectual honesty entirely free from the influence of all self-seeking desire—something, unhappily, far too rare.

The first element in the worship of the mind, then, is the sacrificing of egoism in matters intellectual—a very different thing

from the suicide of the intellect. The really honest thinker, who is courageously and unselfishly following the argument whither it leads, is at any rate *unconsciously* worshipping God. If he follows this path for the glory of God—so that God may be found true and every man a liar—he is *consciously* worshipping. Unfortunately, thinkers of this order are not as common as might be wished. The history of human thought, as we saw in an earlier chapter, is marred by not infrequent and unseemly quarrels between men of learning, who have shown themselves to be very jealous of their honour. The utterly disinterested man of science, of whom we sometimes hear speak, is somewhat of a mythical creation. Nevertheless, there is much genuine worship offered in the name of science. The cancer specialist and researcher, for example, is, granting the right intention, as truly a worshipper in his laboratory as when he is singing hymns in church. It is said that the late Lord Lister never performed an operation without prayer beforehand in his private room. He

then rose from his knees and strode to the operating-table as to an altar. It is not correct to say that singing hymns is necessarily more religious than cancer research. It is merely a different expression of religion.

But *both* types of expression are essential. We must not be tempted to say, as some do, "Quite so: all honest work is prayer; therefore there is no need ever to go to church." Honest work is prayer only when it is rightly directed to the glory of God. In order that it may be thus directed, time must be given to special acts of self-dedication in fellowship with other believers.

Thinking, in the sense of scientific or philosophical thought, however, is not the only type of worship of the mind. There is an intuitive and contemplative type of thinking also, and it is of the greatest importance. The best way of grasping the significance of this is to think of artistic appreciation. Here the mind is engaged upon an intellectual operation which is the reverse of the scientific. Science endeavours to understand and appreciate its object by

analysing it and taking it to pieces. Art, on the other hand, appreciates its object by grasping it *as a whole*. That is the essence of all forms of artistic appreciation, and that is one reason why we put a frame round a picture. We thereby seek to indicate that it should be considered as a whole, within the frame. Doubtless, the appreciation of a picture can be enhanced by paying attention in turn to the various points of detail in it and seeking to interpret their meaning. Yet it remains true to say that the value and meaning of any work of art must be enjoyed as a whole. All partial meanings and interpretations of individual parts must be united in that wholeness of appreciation. This whole is a very different thing from the sum of its parts:

Not a fourth sound, but a star.

The "star" will appear only to those who surrender themselves to appreciate the picture as a whole.

From this point of view we can understand the intellectual appreciation of God which

comes in prayer. He is the Eternal Beauty and the Eternal Goodness. We kneel before Him to enjoy His presence in the same kind of way as we surrender ourselves to a picture or to an oratorio. "What do you say?" said one to a simple old peasant, who was wont to spend long hours kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament. "I don't say anything. I look at Him and He looks at me," was the reply.

The two great sources for this contemplation of God are the beauty of Nature and the pages of Holy Scripture. In all ages the heart of man has been lifted up to God by the wonderful works of Nature. It seems to be almost superfluous to give instances. The Hebrew Psalter is full of them. And, most striking of all, we find many instances in the writings of men who stand entirely outside the range of orthodox or institutional religion. We may take the unhappy Byron as an example.

> To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
> To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
> Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
> And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;

To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean;
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unroll'd.[1]

The other field of contemplation *par excellence* is the Bible. Here we see the goodness of the Creator revealed to man in a steady progression. In the Old Testament we have a wonderful account of the growth of man's power of appreciation of God. We see him gradually, amid many mistakes and misunderstandings, learning to realise His true character; we see him being prepared for the great day when God should come in the person of Jesus Christ to visit and redeem His people. It is, therefore, above all in the pages of the Holy Gospels that we have the supreme sphere for that worship of the mind which consists in contemplation of the love of the Creator. There is nothing to compare with this; it is unique. Without their continual aid let no man think to fulfil the true purposes of his life,

[1] Byron, *Childe Harold*, Canto II, 25.

which consists, as we have seen that it does, in the appreciation of the loving-kindness of God.

One of the weaknesses of life at the present day is that the practice of private Bible reading and meditation has seriously declined. In England to-day the majority do not seem to possess even a general knowledge of the Scriptures, much less that intimate knowledge which comes from brooding upon them. The loss is incalculable. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my paths." Part of the tribute of worship which we owe to God is that we shall lay ourselves open day by day to the influence of these sacred pages, even as we let the morning sunshine into our houses. Sometimes, indeed, we shall be led to examine them critically and scientifically. So long as we do not fail also to use them appreciatively (or, to use a not very pleasing expression, devotionally), nothing but good can come of this, always provided that our criticism proceeds from worshipful and not egocentric motives. The two types of the

worship of the mind find here, indeed, their highest meeting-place, if they are rightly carried out. Contrariwise, when they are defective in any way, it is precisely here that they come into most bitter conflict. The means of reconciliation between them is to free the mind from egoism. When the critical spirit is entirely free from egocentricity, there is no clash between it and the attitude of devotion, although, of course, it remains true that the scientific and the purely appreciative states of mind cannot operate fully at the same time. This, however, does not argue any logical incompatibility between the two. They are merely different activities of the spirit, even as sitting and standing are different activities of the body.

The true relation between the critical and the appreciative aspects of worship is best illustrated by a reference to the history of art. Ruskin in his *Modern Painters* points out that false art takes two different forms: on the one hand, what he calls the superseding of expression by technical excellence, and,

on the other, the superseding of technical excellence by expression. We must quote his own words :—

> Now, in the Post-Raphaelite period of ancient art, and in the spurious high art of modern times, two broad forms of error divide the schools; the one consisting in (*A*) the superseding of expression by technical excellence, and the other in (*B*) the superseding of technical excellence by expression.
>
> (*A*) Superseding expression by technical excellence.—This takes place most frankly, and therefore most innocently, in the work of the Venetians. They very nearly ignore expression altogether, directing their aim exclusively to the rendering of external truths in colour and form. Paul Veronese will make the Magdalene wash the feet of Christ with a countenance as absolutely unmoved as that of any ordinary servant bringing a ewer to her master, and will introduce the supper at Emmaus as a background to the portraits of two children playing with a dog. Of the wrongness or rightness of such a proceeding we shall reason in another place; at present we have to note it merely as displacing the Venetian work from the highest or expressional rank of art. But the error is generally made in a more subtle and dangerous way. The artist deceives himself into the idea that he is doing all he can to elevate his subject by treating it under rules of art, introducing into it accurate science, and collecting for it the beauties of (so-called) ideal

form; whereas he may, in reality, be all the while sacrificing his subject to his own vanity or pleasure, and losing truth, nobleness, and impressiveness for the sake of delightful lines or creditable pedantries.

(*B*) Superseding technical excellence by expression.—This is usually done under the influence of another kind of vanity. The artist desires that men should think he has an elevated soul, affects to despise the ordinary excellence of art, contemplates with separated egotism the course of his own imaginations or sensations, and refuses to look at the real facts round about him, in order that he may adore at leisure the shadow of himself. He lives in an element of what he calls tender emotions and lofty aspirations; which are, in fact, nothing more than very ordinary weaknesses or instincts, contemplated through a mist of pride.[1]

These two types of error in art provide a close analogy to the two false attitudes which men adopt in relation to the Bible. The superseding of expression by technical excellence exactly describes the state of mind of the ultra-critical person, who in his anxiety for historical accuracy in the Scriptures frequently fails to catch their spirit. The contrary error is parallel to that of the

[1] J. Ruskin: *Modern Painters*, Vol. 3, pp. 29–30 (Everyman's Edition).

ardent Fundamentalist who " refuses to look at the real facts about him " because " he lives in an element of what he calls emotions and lofty aspirations." Ruskin went on to say that it still remained to produce an art " which shall be entirely skilful and entirely sincere." [1]

In like manner, worship in its highest form requires a combination of technical and scientific excellence with unlimited devotion. The crux of this combination is freedom from that ego-centricity which leads the mind astray from both the path of truth and the path of loyalty. The real clash is not between what we have called the thinking and the chapel types of prayer respectively, but between ego-centricity and worship. The heart of worship is deliverance from egoism into the glorious liberty of the children of God, whose service is perfect freedom.

If the critic of the Bible is also a worshipper, he will be humble enough to know that he

[1] J. Ruskin: *Modern Painters*, Vol 3, p. 56 (Everyman's Edition).

may be wrong, and will not be too hasty to raise his voice against tradition in favour of new theories, or anxious to proclaim his originality from the house-tops. He will rest assured that truth is great and will prevail. He will not be particularly concerned that it should prevail *through him*. The really dangerous persons are the critics who are not worshippers. It is important to notice that here, as so often, extremes meet. The ultra-critic and the Fundamentalist are psychologically one. In each case their attitude is the offshoot of their (usually unconscious) egoism. The hasty, radical critic is led by ego-centricity to rush continuously after " some new thing." The Fundamentalist, on the other hand, is led by his egoism (once more, unconscious) to refuse to budge an inch from his position. *His* Bible is being assailed; *his* security is being threatened; *he* will not move. Doubtless, he says and thinks that it is for God's honour that he is jealous. Yet he is led to defend that honour by dishonest subterfuges and specious arguments. He is prepared " to tell lies for God." Emphatically,

he does not give the impression of mental honesty and straightforwardness. His attitude is not that of the worshipper. It savours too much of the Sunday-School teacher who was giving a lesson on the story in the Gospel where the paralysed man was let down through the roof. One of the children was puzzled and inquired how they managed to stand on the roof, never having seen anything but sloping roofs. Unfortunately, neither had the teacher, who, however, got out of this difficulty by exclaiming, " Ah, my dear child, when you are older you will know that with God all things are possible."

The worship of the mind, therefore, consists in the offering to God of a mind alert and open to influences on every side, but free from the prejudice of self-interest and the vanity of self-seeking. It consists in a loyalty to truth, goodness, and beauty, not in the abstract, but as gathered up in the adorable Person of the Creator.

> It fortifies my soul to know
> That, though I perish, truth is so.

This attitude of mind culminates in a

capacity for enlightened appreciation: that is to say, appreciation of a person concerning whom we have dared to try to know the truth. Love is not really blind. The highest love comes into play only when the fullest truth is known about a person. When the object of our love is another frail and sinful human being, this means *despite* the knowledge of the truth about him. But when the holy God is the Object of our adoring love, the more complete the knowledge the more easy it is to love. Of Him alone is it supremely true to say, To know Him is to love Him.

We now come to the worship of the heart. By this I mean the affective (or 'emotional') and conative aspect of worship. There is, however, a use of the expression by which it is taken to denote the intuitive operation of the intellect, as in Pascal's well-known phrase, "The heart has reasons." I am, of course, not using the term in that sense.

In thinking of the affective aspect of worship we must first of all distinguish between emotion and feeling. Popularly they are confused because emotions are, as a rule, coloured by

fairly pronounced feeling-tone. They are not, however, identical. Emotions are states of mind in which, whenever instinctive reactions take place, certain organic sensations are experienced or imagined. For example, the emotion of fear accompanies the instinct of flight and the emotion of anger accompanies the instinct of pugnacity. Feeling, on the other hand, is that experience of pleasure (or its opposite) which accompanies all forms of human activity. When the latter is unimpeded, we experience what is called pleasure; when it is hindered, we experience the opposite, which (we must notice) is not " pain." Pain is an organic sensation which may be actually pleasurable, as witnesses the fact that martyrs have sung for joy amid the flames. The obvious word to use for the opposite of pleasure is " displeasure." This, however, is commonly used to denote a mild species of anger. It has therefore become customary to speak of " unpleasure " on the analogy of the German *Unlust*. It would be a real gain if the word " displeasure " could be given its correct meaning.

This digression into psychology has been

necessary in order to enable us to think clearly on a subject in which the popular mind is hopelessly confused. If we say that the affective aspect of worship covers both feeling and emotion, we shall now clearly understand what it is that we are saying.

There is a very strong tendency to reduce religion to feeling. This is very dangerous, and it is noteworthy that Goethe puts this doctrine into the mouth of the Devil. When Mephistopheles is about to betray Margaret, she asks him if he believes in God. He replies:

Who dare express Him?
And who profess Him,
Saying: I believe in Him!
Who, feeling, seeing,
Deny His being,
Saying: I believe Him not!
The All-enfolding,
The All-upholding,
Fold, and upholds he not
Thee, me, Himself?
Arches not there the sky above us?
Lies not beneath us, firm, the earth?
And rise not, on us shining,
Friendly, the everlasting stars?
Look I not, eye to eye, on thee,
And feel'st not, thronging
To head and heart, the force,
Still weaving its eternal secret,

Invisible, visible, around thy life?
Vast as it is, fill with that force thy heart,
And when thou in the feeling wholly blessed art,
Call it, then, what thou wilt—
Call it Bliss! Heart! Love! God!
I have no name to give it!
Feeling is all in all:
The Name is sound and smoke,
Obscuring Heaven's clear glow.[1]

To reduce religion to feeling is to deprive it of all value. For all feelings, *as feelings*, are equal in kind, differing only in degree, as Jeremy Bentham rightly pointed out. As we saw in an earlier chapter, the pleasure of getting drunk is, *qua pleasure*, as good as the pleasure of singing hymns, provided that it is equal in quantity. The man or the woman who pursues religious practices for the sake of the pleasure to be derived from them is no better than the person who plays golf for the same end. To practise religion as a "pleasure-seeker" is to be a pleasure-seeker still.

It is curious how few people seem to grasp this point. Most people judge the value of their religious practices solely by the enjoyment which they derive from them. If they

[1] Goethe's *Faust*, I, Scene XVI (Taylor's translation).

enjoy them, they think that all is well. If they fail to do so, they think that something is seriously wrong. That is why they are thrown into the arms of that great enemy of religion, sentimentality. Once we reflect carefully upon the matter, realising that religion consists in the glad and joyful surrender of man's whole personality to the Father, it becomes clear that religion cannot consist primarily in the experiencing of pleasurable feelings. Plainly, the enjoyment of pleasurable feelings may be a real hindrance to true religion, since they tend to confirm those who enjoy them (if such persons are spiritually immature) in their self-centredness. The tell-tale phrase "enjoy yourself" makes this clear. Obviously, no healthy-minded person should enjoy *himself*: he should enjoy the various objects of his experience. But, supremely, he should "enjoy God," to use the phrase already quoted from the Shorter Catechism. In order to do this, he must get away from himself. Self-love is the deadly rival of the love of God. He can be weaned from self-love only by persevering continuance in religious practices

from which he derives little or no pleasure. The paradoxical conclusion therefore follows that the ' emotional ' aspect of worship consists —at any rate at first—in the offering to God of prayer which is accompanied by unpleasing rather than pleasing emotion. In other words, that person prays best who has ceased to be *dependent* upon pleasing religious emotion. It is, however, only in the earlier stages of the spiritual life that this paradox is true. When a person has been weaned to some extent from ego-centricity, he will be able to find an unselfish enjoyment in his religion by enjoying God for His own sake.

This is exactly what all the great teachers of the Christian religion have said. They have insisted that the most precious prayers in God's eyes are not *necessarily* those which we enjoy most. In the early stages of the spiritual life, they say, God encourages the young disciple by allowing him to find great enjoyment in his spiritual exercises. He is lifted up with emotion ; but these emotions are, in Luther's phrase, " nuts and apples for children." In other words, they are sent by God to en-

courage the young Christian. But he must not be allowed to become dependent on them. Consequently, it is man's invariable experience that they disappear sooner or later. Then follows a longer or shorter period of what is called " dryness," when the soul is dull and heavy and God seems far away. These " dry " periods are a great trial to the soul, and are a veritable " valley of humiliation " in which not a few lose heart. They are, however, the means whereby the art of worship is mastered ; for by their agency the soul is weaned from self, and is more and more directed Godwards. There are some people who have to pass many months and, in some cases, even years in such circumstances. With others, the dry periods may be comparatively short, but they are recurrent. Few, if any, escape them altogether. Apart from them man could never be weaned from his egocentricity to that God-centredness which is the heart of worship.

It is important to remember that it is possible to be extremely selfish in religion. Many " devout " Christians are, in fact, very

selfish. They enjoy a particular type of service, and suppose that all is well. Their enjoyment of religion, however, is very far from being an enjoyment of God. In literal truth, they are enjoying themselves. Of others they think hardly at all. If any suggestion is made to alter, in the interests of others, the services they enjoy so greatly they are indignant and not infrequently behave in a manner far from Christian. Everything must be made to contribute to their predilections (or, to speak more bluntly, fads) and their convenience. Although such people greatly enjoy their religion, they have scarcely begun to learn the a b c of worship. " He prayeth best who loveth best," and love is self-giving to the uttermost.

In speaking of the " emotional " aspect of worship, we have also to some extent treated of the conative, or striving, aspect. The popular mind is greatly at sea in connexion with these matters, and, as this is not a treatise on psychology, it is impossible to discuss them in any detail. It must suffice to point out that it is characteristic of living bodies to

" strive " towards a goal. Even a plant turns towards the sunlight. In like manner even the lowliest animals are driven by certain fundamental " drives " or impulses. Man is the same. This aspect of our nature is known as the conative, or striving. If man is made in God's image, this striving must ultimately be directed to God. So religion teaches. The hackneyed quotation from St. Augustine cannot be quoted too often : " Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee." In other words, the ultimate goal of this striving is that it should be *consciously* directed Godwards.

It is necessary to emphasise the word " consciously." For it is at least possible that " unconsciously " this striving is directed Godwards from the beginning of a person's life. This is only another way of saying that man may be possessed of a religious instinct. This is a matter about which the authorities are not agreed, and it cannot be discussed in a popular book such as this. From our present point of view it is not of primary importance

because, in any case, fully developed worship involves the conscious direction of the whole man, intellectual, emotional, conational, to God.

We have so far in our discussion made no reference to man's " will." We have spoken of the worship of the mind and of the heart as if these constituted the whole man; as if, that is to say, he consisted of a bundle of states of mind more or less loosely associated together. It will be asked whether worship does not involve the will and, indeed, does not mainly consist in the right direction of the will. The answer which must be given is, in a sense, in the affirmative. If, as some psychologists profess to believe, man is nothing more than a bundle of tendencies not held together by an ego or centre of personality, obviously no kind of worship is possible at all, seeing that there is no personality, in the true sense of the word, capable of rendering worship here on earth, to say nothing of the hereafter. Yet we must be careful not to speak of a person's " will " as if it were something separate and almost

detachable from himself. A man's "will" is the whole man in action. The will is, in very truth, the man. In the case of the majority this will is a very imperfect thing, because of the existence of conflicting tendencies in the soul. Only a perfectly unified and integrated personality would have a complete will.

It is the chief function of education to bring such a will into being. The small child has but a rudimentary will. He is practically a bundle of impulses. But he has the capacity or power of choice which enables him to control his body (within limits, which should gradually decrease), and to direct his attention voluntarily. By exerting this power of choice in the right way, he gradually fashions a strong will. It is, however, only as he learns to identify his choices with the Divine will that he achieves that "perfect freedom" of the strong willed: *cui servire est regnare*. The identification of the human will with the divine is, therefore, the climax of worship.

The purpose of my life, then, is that I may direct my attention Godwards; that I may learn increasingly to appreciate the beauty of

the Divine Goodness and yield myself to it in humble adoration ; that I may seek to share that appreciation with the other members of the Family of God ; and that I may endeavour at all times to co-operate with the divine plan or will. In more familiar (which unfortunately does not always mean better understood) words, my purpose should be to seek to hallow God's name, to hasten the coming of His Kingdom, and to do His Will, on the earth. That and nothing less is the purpose of my life.

CHAPTER XII

BROTHER ASS

WE have seen that, in the development of the human will, the power of choice must be rightly exercised. A person must choose to direct his attention Godwards. St. Augustine, however, pointed out long ago that whereas it is possible to say to one's arm " do this " and it doeth it, it is not possible thus to control one's attention. Thoughts are apt to be very refractory. The obvious course, therefore, seems to be to begin by controlling the body. In other words, our conscious worship should begin at the bodily level. We must pay careful attention to what St. Francis of Assisi called Brother Ass.

There are four attitudes which it is possible to take towards the body. We can ignore it; we can repress it; we can become a slave to it; and we can utilise it. The first of these attitudes might well seem to be impossible were it not that there is a large number of people in the world who think that they have succeeded in carrying it out. These are they who call themselves (for some strange reason)

Christian Scientists. Their creed teaches them that the body simply does not count; indeed, strictly speaking, I suppose, it does not really exist. All that really exists is Mind. Once a person has succeeded in dispensing with what they call "mortal mind," he is really rid of all his troubles. By "mortal mind" they mean the habit of regarding material things as in any sense real.

Secondly, we can repress the body, treating it as the great enemy. It is almost unbelievable to what extent this creed has been carried out.

Thirdly, it is possible to become a slave to the body. This is an intolerable bondage, when it is severe. That is why the ascetics, as we have seen, have been so fierce in their repression of it. The bondage of asceticism is sheer liberty contrasted with the bondage of self-indulgence. Those who begin by pampering their bodies come to realise sooner or later that they dominate them even as a spoilt child rules the household. Some people in course of time become nearly all body. It is possible to see men of this description lounging about outside almost any public-house. Their

noses, their complexions, their corpulent and bloated appearance generally make it evident where their chief interest lies. They live to eat, or rather, to drink, instead of eating and drinking to live. To be deprived of their chosen means of quenching their thirst is to such persons almost unbearable. Obviously it is impossible for them to begin to understand the real purpose of life until they have undergone a complete reorientation.

It must be remembered, however, that apart from such extreme instances there are many who are seriously hindered from living a full life by over-indulgence of the body. While being in no sense drunkards or "topers," their attitude is consistently self-indulgent. Creature comforts are to them a *sine qua non* of life. They are not prepared to deny themselves these things, or even, if they can avoid it, risk denying themselves for any cause or object whatsoever. This is only another way of saying that they have in practice—even if not in theory—reduced the purpose of life to being comfortable. Man's life may be—in the famous simile—like the

passage of a bird from the outer darkness through a warm and lighted hall into the cold and darkness again. At any rate they are going to do their best to see to it that the hall is well heated and lighted, and that there are plenty of good things on the table.

Unfortunately even this (by comparison) mild slavery to the body is greatly destructive of man's higher powers and ideals. Man does not seem to have been made for comfort, for as soon as he has succeeded in making himself comfortable there is something in him which leads him to an ever-growing discontent. He finds himself assailed by wars and rumours of wars. It may perhaps be possible for an individual person, within limits, to find satisfaction for a time at least along this path; it certainly is not possible for mankind as a whole. The body was not made to be man's master, but his servant. If properly treated, it is a wonderful servant.

We come, then, finally to the standpoint that the body is to be used as a servant or, more accurately, as an instrument. An instrument for what? The answer is: An instru-

ment for righteousness, or rather, for holiness. "As ye presented your members as servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now present your members as servants to righteousness unto sanctification," wrote St. Paul to the Romans.[1]

The first and most obvious thing which this involves is that a man should teach his body to worship, for by so doing he greatly assists the mind. Many persons find worship much harder than they need—and it is never easy—because they have failed to enlist the co-operation of the body.

One of the most familiar facts of experience is the influence of the body on the mind. The popular saying, "If your face wants to smile, let it; if not, make it," contains a great deal of truth. To turn up the corners of the mouth in a cheerful manner immediately induces a happier frame of mind. To turn them up in another manner makes one feel scornful and supercilious. To clench one's fists makes one feel more resolute and determined. The great psychologist, William James, relying

[1] Rom. 6^{19}.

upon evidence of this character, put forward the paradoxical theory that what we call emotion is nothing but this influence of the body upon the mind. The physical accompaniments of our emotional states, he taught, in very truth constitute the emotion. Tears constitute sorrow; laughter constitutes joy. We should not say we cry because we are sorry, but that we are sorry because we cry. Without endorsing this view, it must be admitted that the body has a powerful influence upon itself.

This fact which we have been considering can and should be utilised to assist man in his worship. Experience teaches that it is not always easy to acquire a worshipful frame of mind. The mind is difficult to control. Generally speaking, it is easier to control the body. The obvious practical conclusion follows that if we wish to have a worshipping mind, we should learn to cultivate a worshipful body. That is why—to take an obvious example—kneeling is a matter of real importance in worship. The attitude of kneeling is one of surrender. If we intend, therefore, to

surrender our minds to God when we pray, it is wise to begin by surrendering our bodies to Him by adopting the appropriate posture. It is, indeed, *possible* to pray in any attitude, but it is far harder (for example) to acquire a reverential state of mind lounging comfortably in an easy-chair. Doubtless, a great saint could pray standing on his head, but the average man is not a great saint, and prays only with difficulty at any time. It is therefore foolish to adopt a lounging or a squatting attitude in prayer, as so many do.

The broad principle holds good that a reverent body makes a reverent mind. This is quite as true as the converse, that a reverent mind makes a reverent body. Pascal once said that if you begin by making regular use of holy water, you will ultimately become a Catholic. There is much truth in this. We are influenced by our bodily habits far more than we generally realise. A man who consistently adopts slovenly postures in church is not likely to become a devout Christian. He is far more likely to become less and less regular in his attendance at divine worship.

It is a significant fact that the vast majority of that floating population which comes to church once or twice a year on public occasions never by any chance kneel to pray when they come. If such persons could be induced to offer to God at least reverent bodies on the too rare occasions when they visit His house, it is likely that their visits would tend to become more frequent.

There is, in fact, a most unreasonable fear of outward acts of reverence in religion. People talk disparagingly of "bowing and scraping" in church, as if outward reverence were positively wicked. Yet it is clearly not possible to be too reverent; and even if it were, it would be better to err on the side of reverence than on that of irreverence. Moreover, those who regard with scorn the claims of reverent behaviour in church are the first to insist upon the importance of outward demeanour in their Freemason's Lodge; and those who tilt against bowing to God's altar take it as a matter of course that one should bow to the throne of an earthly king.

Perhaps one reason why many are so much

afraid of outward acts of reverence is that they fear to be thought too religious, because they dread the charge of hypocrisy. We must endeavour to make men see that there is nothing hypocritical in offering to God a reverent body, provided the offering is made with a genuine desire to serve and worship Him more worthily. It is too often forgotten that there is an equal danger of hypocrisy on the other side. It is quite possible to affect an outward manner of behaviour which suggests an indifference which is far from being felt. In any case, he who would surrender his life to God as a continual act of worship must be prepared to risk being thought "pious." It is sheer cowardice to pander to public opinion in such a matter.

When the matter is carefully considered, an endeavour to offer to God at least a reverent body is in these days the reverse of Pharisaical. Newman once pointed out that the analogy with the Pharisees is a false one. The Pharisees paraded their religion because in their time it was "the thing to do," and in this way they succumbed to public opinion. At

the present day, to be negligent in matters of outward religious behaviour is " the thing to do." Those who follow the latter course, therefore, are the true descendants of the Pharisees, and not those who are careful to observe due outward reverence.

Those who assert that they are genuinely desirous of serving God, but hesitate to begin by offering to Him at least a reverent body, are making the mistake of the man who said that he would never enter the water until he knew how to swim. By their hesitation they are virtually rendering impossible the attainment of the goal which they profess to be seeking. They are making their bodies an enemy instead of an ally. The practice of religion is never easy, but there is no good reason for making it more difficult than it need be. " I beseech you, therefore," wrote St. Paul at the conclusion of a long religious argument, " to present your *bodies* a living sacrifice."

By the same token those who hold the view that it is useless and even wrong to pray or to go to church (especially to Holy Communion)

unless we are in a mood for it, are convicted of error. For what is a "mood"? A mood is a state of mind in which the desire for some object is unsatisfied. For example, a man who has received an insulting letter in the morning may be in an ill-tempered mood all day if he has had no opportunity of letting off steam. Moods, however, are created by our actions. A man who has never drunk a glass of beer in his life will never be "in a mood" to drink one. Once, however, he has acquired the taste, the more beer he drinks the more likely he is to be "in the mood" for more. Conversely, by giving up the practice for years, he may easily lose all desire for it and never be "in the mood for it." The same holds good for any form of experience. Darwin, for example, said that when he was young he was fond of listening to music, but that in his later life he was never "in the mood for it" because he had not been to a concert for years.

The same holds good of religious practices. It has been cynically remarked that the best definition of the average "C. of E." man is

" Ten years ago I went to your church, since when I have been to no other." The majority are so slack and erratic in their religious practices that it is hardly to be expected that they should often be " in the mood " to pray or to go to church. By never doing either of these things except when they are in a mood for it, they are adopting the very course of action (or inaction) which makes it less and less likely that they ever will be in a mood for it again.

It follows that worship must rest upon some rule of life. In this way the will is strengthened, and the desire for God increased. Apart from some such rule, the majority of persons will almost certainly fall away. The reason for such a rule is that thereby we are following the injunction of St. Paul and making our *bodies* a living sacrifice to God. Many are frightened lest such a practice should make religion mechanical. Doubtless there is some danger in this direction, but even a mechanical religion is better than none at all. The question is one of real importance and deserves some consideration.

First of all, let us get clear exactly what is meant by a mechanical religion. A purely mechanical religion is probably almost non-existent. It is typified by the Buddhist prayer-wheel, which turns with the barest minimum of conscious or unconscious attention from the worshipper. There is nothing corresponding to this in Christianity. The Christian who says the rosary *may* be consciously thinking all the time of something else, while his fingers tell the beads, but even so his *unconscious* mind is being directed Godwards. And this must always happen whenever a Christian utters vocal prayers, however mechanically. It is significant that Shakespeare puts into the mouth of the old fool, Polonius, the sentiment " Words without thoughts never to heaven go." This is to ignore entirely the subconscious side of prayer. It is a significant fact, which is worthy of reflexion, that when something is learned mechanically, we say that it is learned by *heart*.

It follows, therefore, that to make a definite rule of saying prayers morning and evening,

and even to say them in the most mechanical manner possible, is far from being a vain or a useless procedure, with one important proviso. There must be a genuine wish and intention to please and to worship God. Doubtless it will be said that, if this existed, it would be impossible to continue to say merely mechanical prayers. This may be true. But if we suppose an extreme case in which with the very best of intentions a man continued to offer purely mechanical prayers, it would be true to say that they were not by any means worthless. We must not be misled here by our Lord's much-misunderstood remark about avoiding " vain repetitions." This is a most unfortunate translation, there being no word for " repetitions " in the Greek. The reference is to the wrong kind of intention, whereby the devotee thinks to change the will of the deity mechanically. This is, in fact, the real danger of a mechanical religion; to suppose that one is doing something to change the will of God.

There is another point to be considered. It is usually forgotten that it is possible for a

person's religious practices to be mechanical without being frequent. It is, for example, possible to attend Holy Communion every Easter Day, and only then, in just as mechanical a manner as if one went every day of the year. Indeed, the danger is far greater. For, in order to do frequently a thing which is bound to involve real effort, one must necessarily exert one's deliberate will and choice. The religion of the indifferent man is, as a rule, far more mechanical, or, to speak more accurately, mechanical in a worse sense than that of the regular worshipper. The machine is just as much a machine if it works only once a year, as if it worked every day. A motor car is just as much a machine if it works by fits and starts, continually stopping in the road, as if it runs regularly and smoothly. The only difference between the two cases is that in the former it is a bad machine and in the latter a good one.

When this matter is probed to the bottom, it becomes evident that the issue is confused by the common error of supposing that religion is primarily an emotional affair. What

is being condemned, as a rule, when the dangers of a " mechanical " religion are being exploited, is a religion without pleasurable emotion. It is undoubtedly true that, when religious practices are carried out regularly day by day there is likely to be a less vivid emotional colouring than if they are only carried out occasionally, and when one is in the mood. We have, however, examined this point and seen the fallacy which lurks in it. Once we cease to be deceived by this, we can consider the problem of a mechanical religion on its merits. It then becomes clear that there is bound to be a mechanical element in every person's religion, merely because his body is a 'machine', and when he prays he cannot become a disembodied spirit for the time being. So long as we are aware of the dangers of allowing the body to become a master instead of being a servant, here, as in everything else, there is nothing really to fear in following a rule of life. Experience makes it clear that, without some such rule, religion becomes flabby and weak. The great value of a rule of life is that it upholds us at those

times when we are tempted to be slack. If one has a definite rule, for example, to pray privately every morning and every night, it will keep one to it at those times when, otherwise, by reason of hurry or tiredness prayers would have been omitted. A rule of life, in fact, is to the worshipper what ropes are to the mountaineer. When things are going well, they are not needed because he is able to stand on his own feet. But when his feet slip, they save him from disaster. Everybody who has sincerely tried to carry out a rule of life knows the truth of this analogy.

We must ask, in conclusion, what kind of a rule a person should adopt. It is plainly impossible to legislate in detail for everybody. Ready-made rules are somewhat like ready-made suits of clothes. They do not always fit. Nevertheless, there are certain broad principles which are of fairly wide application and these can be laid down. We may say, then, that for the person who wishes to follow the Christian way of life, a rule should be made consisting of the following constituents.

First, he should have a rule of private

prayer. This should include at least three times during the day—the morning, midday, and evening. The morning prayer may have to be brief, but it should never, in any circumstances, be omitted entirely. Even if there is time only to kneel down and say slowly and reverently the Lord's Prayer, that is infinitely better than nothing. To go out to meet the temptations of the day without asking for God's blessing and guidance is to ask for trouble. There is all the difference in the world between a day in which we have knelt down to ask for God's direction and one in which we have set out without a thought of Him. Many people, however, are finding it possible to give God more than a brief two or three minutes in the morning. That is one of the great merits of the modern Group Movement. It is teaching people that it is worth while to get up half an hour earlier in the day in order to hold communion with God. Certain it is that there is no time like the early morning for this purpose, before the distractions of the day come crowding in.

Having begun the day with God, it is im-

portant not to lose touch with Him entirely during it. It is a valuable assistance in keeping contact with Him to make a practice of praying at midday, during the luncheon hour. It is often possible to go into a church near at hand for this purpose, but it is not necessary. We should learn to cultivate the art of praying to God in the street or the shop or the office. We can silently lift up our minds to Him in praise, thanksgiving, or intercession. Midday is especially suitable for intercession, for it was at midday that our Lord hung upon the Cross in order to draw all men unto Him. During the Great War it was customary for many to pray at midday for those at the front. It was a great misfortune that, when the so-called peace came, this practice was largely allowed to drop. It might well be restored, if once more the bells would call men at midday to prayer. However this may be, the individual should make a rule of midday, ejaculatory prayer for himself. If he can cultivate this art, he will find himself turning thus to God at other times as well, and so he will begin to realise increasingly the meaning

of prayer. It cannot be stated too emphatically that nobody is likely to gain much understanding of prayer if he is content to relegate it to one minute in the morning and two minutes at bedtime.

The third time of set prayer should be the evening. Most people who pray privately at all do so at bedtime. It is important to notice that this is not really the best time for evening prayers. We are, as a rule, too tired then to pray in anything but a most sleepy manner. It is far better to say one's night prayers earlier in the evening, where possible. Especially is this the case if one is going out for the evening and is likely to come in late and tired out. It means taking a little trouble, of course, but it is a most valuable thing to do. It is worth while to add in this connexion that the bedside is not the ideal place for private prayer. Beds suggest sleep and not prayer, and if we are very tired when we pray the suggestion is apt to prove too strong. It is far better to have a table or *prie dieu* at which to kneel, and where we can keep our Bible and our books of devotion.

The second part of our rule should consist of a rule of attendance at Holy Communion. It is most important that this should not be left to passing moods. This often happens, and so multitudes fall away. Opinions vary as to the frequency of attendance. But I believe that the general mind of the Church whereby it is assumed that this shall be the regular Sunday worship for every Christian is entirely sound. This and this alone is Bible religion. The Bible knows nothing of once-a-month attendance. Experience shows that this is only too likely to degenerate into something less and less frequent. Those who make a rule of attendance once a week, at least, and begin their Sunday in this way, can alone testify to what it means. It has nothing to do with what is called "High Church." All sorts of Christians can testify to the value of this practice, which, it is gratifying to see, is largely on the increase. But, whether this or something else be the rule, a rule there ought to be. To ignore this is to incur the gravest danger of lapsing, the circumstances of life being what they are.

Thirdly, the rule should include regular Bible-reading. A certain amount of time should be set apart each week for this purpose. Some will spend a certain time each day. Others will find it more helpful to spend a longer time once or perhaps two or three times a week. However the details be worked out, it is certain that nothing can take the place of this. Since the Bible is not an easy book to understand, most persons will need some guidance. Fortunately, this is now admirably provided by the Bible-Reading Fellowship, which publishes every month a scheme of reading, with brief explanatory notes. These cannot be too warmly commended.

Fourthly, the rule should contain a clause about almsgiving. Most Christians have hardly begun to think out what this means, and are even more fortuitous in their almsgiving than in their prayers. Yet it is a regular part of a person's religion. Each person should think out what he intends to give, and give it as regularly as employment permits. In deciding the amount, one rough-and-ready rule is to give at least as much to

God as one spends on one's pleasures. If this rule were faithfully carried out, the financial problems of the Church would all be solved. Yet is it really asking too much? However poor a person may be, moreover, it is a rule which can be observed.

There is one final element in the rule, and that is self-denial, or fasting. This is apt to sound somewhat strange to the average Christian, and yet it is clear that fasting, in common with prayer and almsgiving, is one of the great duties of religion. It is found not only in Christianity, but also in all the great historic religions. Our Lord takes it for granted that His followers will perform these duties. He does not tell them that they must, but He assumes that they will. "When thou doest alms. . . . When ye pray. . . . When ye fast," He says. In the literal sense of the term, fasting means self-denial in food, and this is something which few persons would not find beneficial as well for the body as the soul. A modern physician has recently said—and his words are worthy of note—"The great, indeed, the only thing against fasting is its

extreme simplicity, and its freedom from any kind of danger." The modern Christian who thinks that he can dispense altogether with this age-long and well-tried religious practice is surely making a big mistake. As things are at present, the only fasting which is generally observed, on the whole, to-day, is the fast before Communion. That is one reason, at least, for not letting this go. Fasting, however, is akin to other forms of self-denial, which the Christian does well to practise. Without some rule of self-denial it is impossible for Brother Ass to be kept in his proper place. When he is allowed to get out of hand, the whole of a person's life is liable to go astray. He is a good servant, but a shockingly bad master.

Armed with a rule of this kind, the Christian can steadily pursue the great goal of life, which is fellowship with God and the saints. If he is wise, he will seek the advice and help of some trusted counsellor in making his rule. The average Englishman is far more of "a little Englander" than he knows in his ignoring of this need. As Dr. R. Allers has reminded us :—

> All great ethical or religious systems have emphasised the necessity of personal guidance, declaring it to be indispensible for a man's progress and the attainment of knowledge of what he is, actually and potentially. The sacred books of the Indians of all creeds, the wisdom of China and Islam, and the mystery-religions of classical times, have all stressed the need of a guide.[1]

Christianity is certainly no exception, beginning its existence with the Apostles, commissioned to *teach*. If any reader of this book has been helped in the practical and difficult problem of living, let him, as a next step, seek out diligently a wise guide. Any rule of life which he makes should be not for an indefinite period, but for a limited time—say a month, or, at the most, three or six months. At the end of the period he will renew it, and, if necessary, modify it in the light of his experience, being aware of the danger of too great laxity on the one side and too great strictness on the other. By thus making his rule for a limited period, he will not only have the opportunity of revising it from time to time,

[1] R. Allers: *The Psychology of Character*, p. 363.

but he will also be prevented from losing heart, if he should fail to keep it. For each occasion of renewal will provide the stimulus for a fresh start. "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much." [1]

[1] Luke 16^{10} (R.V.).

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The Editor would call the attention of the Reader to the following further volumes in this Series: "Our Need for God," by the Rt. Rev. A. W. F. Blunt, D.D.; "You Can Find God," by Edward Shillito; "How Can I Be Happy?" by the Rev. Desmond Morse-Boycott; "Mastering Life," by Peter Fletcher; "Can We Believe in God?" by C. A. Alington, D.D.; and "Does God Matter For Me?" by C. C. Martindale, S.J.